



CLASS OF 65 NEWSLETTER

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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

In this issue there is nice mixed bag of stuff including an Army perspective of Rick Johnson's beloved Hercules from **Rudy Roelofsen**. There is also the first of a series of short recollections of Royal Roads and RMC life from **Doug "Copious Cope"**. Finally, we finish off **Rick Archer's** self-defining summer of '64 that began in Edition 2.

Before getting into those more substantive things however, there are a couple of address changes to pass along. **Bill Whitfield's** e-mail has changed from dellwhit@telus.net to dellwhit@rogers.com. **George "GAS" Brown** advises that he has recently retired and that his previous e-mail addresses, including the one in Belgium, have died. His new e-mail is bea_george@comcast.net. There must be a story somewhere in there Gas. Let's have it.

John Hilton is also pulling the pin. He is retiring from the Canadian Public Service Agency at the end of May and his home e-mail is kiwicookie@sympatico.ca. Fats, John will no longer have an excuse for missing the Class lunches!

Speaking of which, a recent lunch gathering here in Ottawa involved the following: **Jim Cale, Brian Davis, Phil Bury, Ed Sanford, Gord Diamond, Charlie Emond, Quiller Graham, Jim Astley, Fats Carruthers, Hugh Spence, Vil Auns, Gord Forbes, Ken Clarkson**, and yours truly. Lots of fun as usual with conversation varying from tax shelters to golf games to old times. I was pleased to see Quill since we hadn't seen each other since boxing days. I used to deliberately gain weight to stay out of his weight class.

Hi-jinks on Ottawa Links

By 6439 Hugh Spence

Seven capital city classmates, five of them ex-navy, braved a frigid but eventually sunny day for 18 holes at the Greensmere Golf Club at the end of May. Grinning beerily after their round are (l. to r.)



Ken Clarkson, Hugh Spence, Mike Braham, Pete Cooke, Pete Houliston, Fats Carruthers and Richard Archer. Hugh, Mike, Fats and Pete H. formed the "Gatineau reunion" foursome, (missing only non-golfer Jim Cale who also served with them on HMCS Gatineau just after grad.)

Pete C. was champ of the Cooke, Clarkson, Archer threesome, while Mike was the old steamer quartet's Cock of the Walk.

There were to be two foursomes on the day, but Waine McQuinn unfortunately came up lame and scratched at the last moment. No word at press time as to whether he had to be put down.

A Pongo's View of the Herc and Other Things

By 6472 Rudy Roelofsen



I hadn't felt inspired to submit anything until I read Rick Johnson's stories of his time on Hercs, and it brought back memories of the Army days. Reading of Rick's experiences at Rivers, Manitoba, it occurred to me that he may have been part of the crew on one of the five brief Herc flights I took to make my five required jumps. After graduation we took a six month Young Officers' course at the RCE School in Vedder Crossing near Chilliwack. It was convenient being that close to a major centre like Vancouver, as there was a good supply of nurses and recreation options on the weekends. A number of us pitched in to rent the main floor of a house at 10th and Main for the odd weekend party and just overnighting instead of doing the 60 mile drive back to Chilliwack at night.

After the course I was assigned to 3 Field Squadron just up the road. The CO there was Major Archie Brown, a keen young "A" streamer. I have some wonderful memories from the two years I spent with the Field Squadron. Besides the bridge camps (building bridges and ferries at night), and the annual exercises in the Wainwright and Chilcotin training areas, I was troop commander, along with Gerry Ennis, of one of the two troops that built about 25 miles of road from Hanceville to Konni Lake in the Coast Mountain foothills of BC. Talk about growing up fast!

One day in the Fall of 1966 Archie popped his head into my office and casually said, "You want to go to the jump school, don't you Rudy?" Was I going to say no? It was the dead middle of Manitoba winter when I arrived in Rivers by train in mid-February 1967. As I recall, it was a three week course, which is a long time to be considering your fate-- to jump out of a perfectly sound airplane. But, as everything else in the Forces, this was done very thoroughly, with plenty of conditioning and training in technique, starting with jumping off a table, graduating to a mock tower, where you jump in a harness from the equivalent of a third storey window--a bit like the zip line experiences you find at resort areas now, with a ten foot freefall thrown in, and then being dropped from the jump tower with a pre-deployed parachute.

By the time the first real jump is due, you've been convinced it may almost be fun--until you find yourself sitting in the uncomfortable Herc seats that Rick mentioned, knowing the moment of truth is only minutes away. There was a fellow on our course who backed out at that point. I guess he wasn't as easily brainwashed as the rest of us! I was #4 in the "stick". The commands "stand up" and "hook up" (to attach the static line) are given, followed by "ready", at which point the first man takes his position at the open door. On the word "go" the stick of twenty or so men starts to shout "one-two" in unison, taking a step forward every time they say "one". Your last "two" will find you in the doorway, and the last "one" will launch you into the freezing Manitoba air, about 1100 feet above the frozen tundra. We were required to do five jumps, with and without equipment, both day and night, and from the rear equipment ramp as well as from the door.

It's fun to think that a fellow class member may have been crewing the Hercs that delivered us on that course. My only other experience flying in a C130 was "flipping" with an RCE buddy, Steve Norman, from Whidbey Island in Washington State to Los Angeles, on our way to San Diego, whence we intended to invade Mexico via Tijuana. We each started with \$100. When we got down to \$50 we started to head back. The American military welcomed us as if we were their own, and they had empty planes flying all over North America!

Rick also mentioned Trenton, Ontario. When our class was graduating, the unification of the Forces was getting underway, and my posting after 3 Field Squadron was as Deputy Base Construction Engineering Officer at CFB Trenton, working with a great role model, Major Fred Hull of the RCAF. I retired from there in July of 1968, and headed back to Vancouver to marry Helen, whom I had met in Chilliwack, and to start my civvy life there. The next 40 years would be another installment.....

It is a Very Small World

By 6611 Doug "Copious" Cope



In June of 1962 after miraculously surviving my first year at Royal Roads, the Navy gave me 30 days leave before I had to report back to be tortured all over again. With little money and nothing else to do I decided to don my new naval cadet uniform and hitchhike home from Victoria to Toronto (OK, I had to pay for the ferry ride to Vancouver.).

The first couple of days went well and by the morning of day three I was standing forlornly on the Trans-Canada highway in southern Saskatchewan. Forlornly, since until Saskatchewan I had been getting a ride about every fourth or fifth car. However, as I stood on the prairie that morning I realized that it could take most of the day for five cars to even drive by.

Kicking dirt and feeling sorry for myself I noticed a pickup truck approaching on the other side of the road. When the truck was abreast it screeched to a halt and a young guy stuck his head out the window. "Cope!" he yelled. I looked up and yelled back. "Wright?" It was my Royal Roads Class of 63 term-mate **Richard "Dick" Wright**. Apparently I was only about two miles down the road from his family's farm.

At Roads that year I was in Fraser Flight, One Squadron and Dick was in Vancouver Flight, Four Squadron. He also lived in the strange rarified air of the upper deck of Nixon Block, a place I had seldom had courage enough to visit. As such we had seldom seen each other and other than at sports and punishment parades had seldom met. However, luckily for me the Roads seniors had demanded that all first year cadets know every other cadet's name, junior and senior, within two weeks of joining. Ergo, Dick and I did know each other.

Dick took me home where his parents treated me to a fine breakfast and two hours later I was back on the road east in a much better frame of mind and marveling at the truly small world we live in.

The Summer of '64, Part 2

By 6585 Richard Archer



In Edition 2, I recounted my 1964 summer training expedition in HMCS *Yukon*, which took me from Amsterdam to Londonderry, Belfast, Plymouth, Las Palmas, and finally to Halifax before returning home to Newmarket, just north of Toronto. As full as it was, that expedition was only half of my summer that year.

In early August I was resting at home when the door bell rang. Who should be standing there but **Dallas Mowat, Roger Chiasson, John Dodd and Tom Bailey?** In the driveway were two cars, a late model Ford Thunderbird convertible and a full-size (ie, huge) '59 Pontiac convertible. The Thunderbird was glorious, but the Pontiac looked a little the worse for wear, with four thoroughly bald tires. "Are you ready to go?" asked Dallas. In a flash it came back to me, even if vaguely. Just before breaking up and heading out to summer training, I had agreed to help these guys drive used cars from a Toronto wholesaler to dealers in Winnipeg (the Thunderbird) and Vancouver (the Pontiac). It had been brave beer talk on my part, and I thought it over...for about five seconds. "Sure", I said, "just let me pack."

After my sojourn around the Atlantic I was used to travelling light, but thankfully I did remember to throw in my khaki naval uniform and cap. "Oops," I thought just before going out the door, "Mom and Dad aren't here." So I quickly penned a note, which said, "Gone to the west coast. Back in a week or so." Ah, callow and unthinking youth!

I hopped into the back seat of the Pontiac. Tom was driving and John was in the front passenger seat. With Roger, Dallas and the Thunderbird following, we drove towards a stop sign on north-south Yonge Street, which was also Highway 11. At the stop sign, Tom asked me, "Well, which way, left or right?" "That all depends," I replied, "on whether you want to go south or north of the Great Lakes." There was some mulling of this over in the front seats while the Thunderbird behind us beeped its horn impatiently. Finally, John observed that the car wholesaler in Toronto had insisted that the Pontiac pass through Moosomin, Saskatchewan on the Trans-Canada Highway. Indeed, Dallas had been given a form to be

stamped by the truck weigh station there. Something to do with the wholesaler's insurance. The Thunderbird beeped again.

"If we're going to be staying in Canada," I said, "then turn right". Tom did so, and we were off.

John quickly brought me up to date. "These two cars are to be delivered to Vancouver and Winnipeg respectively. Two deposits of \$60 have been paid to the wholesaler, which will be reimbursed by the receiving dealers on safe arrival. The plan is to go non-stop to Winnipeg, drop off the Thunderbird, and then all five of us will use the Pontiac to go on. Tom and Dallas are going to Calgary, while I'm heading home to the BC Interior. After dropping the car off in Vancouver, Roger is heading to Victoria."

John then asked me an obvious question. "How far are you headed?" "Victoria too", I replied. But I didn't have the same incentive as the others - home and/or girlfriend. After my year in the *Venture* program and two years at Royal Roads I liked Victoria, but I hadn't maintained contact with any girlfriends there. I suppose I was just taking advantage of the opportunity for adventure. It dawned on me that I hadn't yet thought about how I was going to get back.... I mentally shrugged my shoulders. If there was anything the Navy (especially foreign ports) had taught me was that where there's a will there's a way...and that sailors like me seemed to have charmed lives

At the first gas stop, the five of us put our heads together. Rather than maintain constant contact between the two cars we decided to proceed independently. We agreed to rendezvous next outside the main post office in downtown Sudbury. We put both tops down and headed off, and we soon lost sight of the Thunderbird. Roger had told me that in the Thunderbird, the wind draft with the top down was quite severe and so they had experimented with different speeds. They had found the wind died down nicely at about 100 mph!

Needless to say, Roger and Dallas arrived in Sudbury well before us, but we made contact and set out again. I can't recall whether we established further rendezvous points, say in Sault Ste Marie and what is now called Thunder Bay, but the three of us in the Pontiac fell into a routine that saw a driver on for two hours, sitting in the passenger seat ostensibly to keep the driver alert for two hours, and sleeping in the back for two

hours. By this time it was the middle of the night, and seeing very little other traffic we pushed the speed on the pitch black highway.

By next morning we were north of Thunder Bay, and it was raining. It was my turn to drive. On a curve, the car started to slide - the bald tires had finally lost their grip and were making a horrendous screeching noise. In a flash we were spinning around, and the car tipped up on two wheels at about a 45 degree angle. Tom and John, tumbling against the dashboard and window, woke up sleepily to ask what was going on. Finally the two wheels on the ground hit the gravel shoulder and the car slammed down heavily in the ditch. Fortunately for us - this was a convertible, remember, and in the days before seat belts - the car landed upright.

We got out shakily and had a look at the car, steaming and ticking in the rain. It looked like we had dodged another bullet in that the car had missed landing on any of the numerous tree stumps that were in the ditch. However, a rumple in the bodywork suggested that the frame might be bent. This wasn't the only near-death experience I had in my 36 years in the navy, but I believe it was the closest call.

A local came running out of his house, asked if everyone was alright and said that he'd called a tow truck. As we stood there, another car, this time filled with a young family, started to slide and spin at the same spot we had. We scattered...but unlike me the driver managed to get his car back under control.

The tow truck arrived, and pulled the car out of the ditch. It started up just fine, and the only after-effect seemed to be a slight wobble in the right front wheel, which we later changed for the spare.

I don't recall how we again met up with Roger and Dallas, but it was probably at the Winnipeg dealership. They were of course worried about us, as we were very late in arriving.

The five of us piled into the Pontiac, and headed west to our date with the truck weigh station in Moosomin, just over the Saskatchewan border from Manitoba. But just before we got there, the Pontiac's engine announced, with a severe clanking and blue smoke, that it had had enough. We crept into the village of Moosomin, and located the one and only garage.

This of course forced some decisions. Tom, Dallas and John were all heading home. We decided that they should go on, while Roger and I would stand by the car, get it fixed, and drive it the rest of the way to Vancouver. The three of them gratefully went out to the Trans-Canada Highway and flagged down the first Greyhound bus heading west, while Roger and I talked to the garage mechanic.

An estimate for repairs was made and this info was cabled to the dealer in Vancouver, who thankfully cabled back the required funds. But it would take at least two days to make the repairs, so the two of us canvassed the local motels and settled on a very comfortable room for \$6 a night.

The next morning I was looking at the map and noticed that the next town up the highway was Broadview, Saskatchewan. This I knew to be the home town of fellow Royal Roads cadet, **Don Rask**. I looked in the telephone directory and there was the family name. I called and identified myself as a fellow cadet of Don's, and we were invited to drop by. Roger and I hitch-hiked to Broadview, which unlike two-elevator Moosomin, was a three-elevator town, and found our way to the Rasks. It turned out they were the proprietors of the local cinema, and besides a nice meal they treated us to a free film. This was a pleasant interlude for us, for which we were very appreciative. When we made our way out to the Trans-Canada to hitch-hike back, we were picked up by the local Mountie in his police car, who said his older brother had attended RMC some years before. He gave us a ride back all the way to the motel.

In due course the Pontiac was ready, and after our call at the truck weigh station we set off. 24 hours later we were in Vancouver. The trip was reasonably uneventful, with only the occasional hitch-hiker to make a change in the routine. Instead of the dealership we actually delivered the car to the dealer's home, got the returned \$60 deposit cheque, and headed for the bus terminal to catch the next bus that travelled by ferry over to Victoria.

On arrival at the Victoria bus terminal, Roger said farewell and headed off. I contemplated my next move.

When I was at *Venture* I had been introduced to a family that lived in a big house in Victoria, near the border with Oak Bay. A friend of mine who had failed out of *Venture* had boarded there. The family invited me to

stay with them any time I wished, and I took advantage of this welcoming offer at every opportunity, such as stand-down weekends in my two years at Royal Roads. All I had to do in return was handle some chores around the house, like trimming the shrubs. The husband had died during my second year at Royal Roads, leaving the widow with two young children. I didn't know how I would be received, but I gave her a call. No problem; I was invited right over.

It turned out that the lady of the house now had a live-in nanny plus a young English immigrant as a boarder. Not to worry, however; I was put into the same small room under the eaves that the kids still called "Richard's room". I wasn't asked to do any chores, but more or less out of tradition I tidied up the garden and so on. I also caught up on my sleep and wandered the back roads of Oak Bay, especially the beautiful sea fronts. After a couple of days, though, I knew it was time to head home.

I dressed in my navy khaki uniform, made my farewells to my hostess and family, caught the city bus to the bus terminal, the ferry bus to Vancouver, and finally a taxi to the Air Force Air Movements Unit on the edge of Vancouver International Airport. At this point I looked in my wallet. These were the days before credit cards and ATMs - I had only \$5!

At the AMU I was lucky. Actually it was the beginning of a lucky streak that took me all the way home. The guy behind the counter at the AMU said he could get me on the east-bound service flight only as far as Edmonton. There was no guarantee after that. "I'll take it," I said. Why was I lucky? Well, I wasn't in possession of either one of the essential documents needed for service air - a travel order or a leave form - and the guy forgot to ask for one.

But in Edmonton I was bumped. There was a special flight later that day heading east, but unfortunately the airman behind the counter this time asked for a document. Without one he refused to give me a boarding pass.

"Hmmm", I thought to myself, "what now?" The only solution seemed to be hitch-hiking from Edmonton back to Newmarket. This idea didn't daunt me as much as might be expected - after all it would be another

adventure, and I had heard of some Royal Roads cadets who had hitch-hiked from their homes to Victoria.

But it was lunch time and the first order of business was to get some food. With my suitcase I set out on foot for the officer's mess. Unfortunately, there were a few rain showers around and enroute to the mess my uniform became a little the worse for wear. After picking up my meal, which in those days was *gratis*, I sat with a flight lieutenant and a pilot officer and asked if I could borrow an iron for the uniform. The pilot officer graciously gave me the key to his room in the mess. During the meal, I told my story and asked directions to the Trans-Canada highway. I confess that I embellished my story slightly: I said that I had lost my leave pass, and was heading back to RMC.

"Come with me," said the flight lieutenant, "I'm the Squadron Duty Officer." He took me over to the bar where there was a telephone. He called the dispatcher at the AMU. "Can I authorize the embarkation of Cadet Archer on the flight leaving later today?.... Okay, make it so."

So after pressing my uniform and returning the key, I headed back to the AMU. The aircraft was a 60-seater VIP Yukon, mostly empty, heading east to Ottawa after delivering some politicians to Alberta. I stretched out in first class.

At the Ottawa AMU, they were just closing up shop in the early hours of the morning and I asked how to get to the highway to start hitch-hiking to Newmarket. A corporal said he was heading that way and gave me a ride on his way home. He dropped me off in the west end where the Queensway then ended and Highway 7 started. I stuck out my thumb, and largely because of the uniform, I didn't have much difficulty catching rides, including a couple of large gravel trucks that had notices saying "No Riders" stuck to the windshields.

Just southwest of Peterborough I was picked up by an American family who had been vacationing in the Haliburton region. Besides the father and mother, the family included an young teenage son and a good-looking girl more my age. The father and I exchanged information, with me telling him that I was naval cadet at the Canadian equivalent of the US Naval Academy and West Point. The family, he said, was from Cincinnati.

We stopped for gas and got out to stretch our legs. The girl and I went into the station, and she put some coins in the old-fashioned red Coca Cola machine. The Coke bottle that emerged was the original pinch-waist type. She sat on a metal folding chair, stretched out and languidly laid the bottle to rest on her belly and between her breasts.... Message received.

As we approached the outskirts of Toronto, the father said, "Why don't you come with us to Cincinnati?" My mind flickered between the coke bottle, the \$5 bill still in my wallet, and my obligation to spend some time with my parents. Although sorely tempted, I had to respectfully decline the kind offer. But they generously drove me right to the front door of my parents' home in Newmarket.

I had been gone about a week, and I don't know what my parents made of my strange comings and goings. They certainly seemed to take it in stride. I still had more than two weeks to go before I had to report to RMC, and my Dad, who was a technical officer for the Toronto DND Technical Services Detachment, and then doing some on-loan inspection work for the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, found me a job where I helped manufacture pre-fabricated houses for the Inuit.

Finally in early September I reported in at RMC (where I learned from Dallas that, the \$60 deposit refund cheque from the Vancouver dealer had been cancelled - we fellow travellers shared in his reimbursement). My Summer of '64 was over. After the experiences of my summer training in HMCS *Yukon* and the west coast trip, I was like (and admittedly about as mature) as a kid in a candy shop - I could see adventure in every direction.

Nonetheless looking back on it now, there was a downside: I couldn't wait to get RMC out of the way and get back to sea and further adventure. Truth be told, I worked only just hard enough at the fourth-year academics to get me through. But at least initially, I also couldn't wait for a fellow cadet to ask me, "And what did you do, Richard, over the summer?"