



Class of 65 Newsletter

Edition 52-Sep 2012



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

We are back after a month's breathing space. Jan and I just returned from an 11 day Baltic Cruise and I'll take this opportunity to share some of our thoughts on that excellent experience. That might prompt **Gord Diamond** to do the same when he and Irene return from the same trip, same ship immediately after ours.

There are several other inputs this month that are probably of more general interest. Our scribe, **Hugh Spence** suggests signing on for a petition to gain recognition for volunteer service. **Andy Nellestyn** joins the growing list of Class members being honoured with the Diamond Jubilee medal.

Roger Chiasson provides a look at his initial naval service experience, and **Dave Borrowman** follows up on his previous input on the status of HMCS Sackville.

That looks like a pretty full plate so we'll start with Hugh's input. In an e-mail to former naval classmates he draws attention to an effort to create a Governor General's Volunteer Service Medal for Veterans (GGVSM), thereby reinstating a tradition that ceased in 1947. He invites us to consider signing the petition that may be found at <http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/volunteer-service-medal-for-our-veterans.html>.

One of the local Ottawa newspapers recently reported the awarding of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee medal to **Andy Nellestyn**. The article read, in part, as follows:

EMC news - Two residents of Stittsville and a resident of Richmond have received Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medals.

They were presented along with 13 others to residents of Woodlawn, Ottawa, Almonte, Kanata and Carp by Carleton-Mississippi Mills MP Hon. Gordon O'Connor at a ceremony on Parliament Hill on Thursday evening, July 19.

Receiving these Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medals were ... **Colonel Andrew Nellestyn**, ... resident of Stittsville



Colonel Andrew Nellestyn was the co-producer of the 52-episode documentary "The Veterans" which premiered to high acclaim at the Canadian War Museum's 2011 Remembrance Day program and has been adopted in Ontario schools as part of their Remembrance Day programs.

Col. Nellestyn has received many honours for his contributions to the military and his international work including the Professional Engineers of Ontario Citizenship Award. He was made an honorary citizen of Egypt by then-president Anwar Sadat and he has been inducted into the Order of St. John of Jerusalem with the rank of Officer.

Ready Aye Ready - the Start of a Naval Career

By 6606 Roger Chiasson



Upon graduation from RMC, we were sent to Pre-Fleet training. As the term implies, the training was designed to give us the rudiments of the Naval officer's profession so that we could be somewhat useful when we joined our first ship. That said, Pre-Fleet training was only the tip of the iceberg in what was to become a life-long learning experience.

The first phase of training was spent in HMCS

Hochelaga, the site of the Navy's supply school, located in Ville Lasalle, in the west end of Montreal. Here we were taught the Navy's supply system, as well as administration, two obviously essential aspects of support for the fleet. However, far from either coast, the importance of supply and administration was somewhat lost on aspiring young naval officers, so we were not well motivated, and more or less "went through the motions" of 5 weeks of mind-numbing classroom instruction.

Although Montreal had many attributes that would appeal to any sailor, HMCS Hochelaga was quite isolated from these attractions, and, although room and board were provided by the Navy, Sub-Lieutenant's salaries could not have survived too many "runs ashore" in what could best be described as a "target rich environment" for anyone looking for bars and evening entertainment. In those days, drinks in the Naval mess were cheap, so we tended to spend our evenings playing liar's dice and imbibing perhaps more than our wallets or our constitution should have endured.

For those of you who may have been living under a rock all your lives, liar's dice is played with five dice engraved with images of playing cards - 9, 10, Jack, Queen, King, Ace. The dice are kept in a box, with a lid, and the dice are rolled, with the lid closed, by successive players. The dice land in a random poker hand, known only to the player who just rolled. He declares a poker hand, and passes the box to the next player, who either has to call him a liar, or roll to a higher hand. The box has a convenient shelf on which dice can be held and not rolled, while the remainder are rolled to (hopefully) reveal a hand that is equal to or higher than the one "called". If a player is called a liar, but in fact has the hand that he claimed, the accuser has to buy him a drink. If the reverse is true, then the accuser gets the reward. It doesn't take much imagination to predict how rowdy the game gets after several rounds of drinks!

Having survived HMCS Hochelaga, the next training stint was at the Leadership School in HMCS Cornwallis, Nova Scotia. This was more like it. Although some of the training was in the form of classroom instruction (the usual topics were covered, such as the hierarchy of needs, leadership theories and styles, etc.), we spent a lot of time on the parade square. Many

hate parade square drill, but I was one of the few that thrived on it. Of course, having spent four years in military college, we were hardly new to the parade square, but the challenge was to overcome the tendency to drive our feet through the parade square when we halted or turned, as we had been taught at MilCols. Naval ships' decks are metal, which would have made military college drill physically demanding, but pounding decks in crowded ships is also noisy, and ships work best (and sailors off watch sleep better) when things are quiet.

So Naval drill is more of a "shuffle" than the authoritative, macho impression military college drill is meant to impart. Also, Cornwallis was a manning depot for the Navy, where recruits off the street were moulded into sailors before their first assignment, whether at sea or ashore. The base had an air of purpose that simply was not present in Hochelaga. Nevertheless, Cornwallis, situated on the shores of the Annapolis basin, between Annapolis Royal and Digby, was even more isolated than Hochelaga. So liar's dice occupied our evenings again.

Finally, we proceeded to Halifax to undergo the bulk of our pre-fleet training. Our training was conducted at HMCS Stadacona, Canada's largest military base, even to this day. It was, and still is, the site of the east coast Fleet school, where sailors and officers acquired their technical knowledge. Like Hochelaga, the training in Stadacona was entirely conducted in classrooms. One can imagine, without having been subjected to the pleasure, how exciting lectures on paint can be! Actually, paint is a very important subject for people who live and work in steel ships that float and move in the very corrosive environment that is salt water. And, contrary to most of my classmates, I found the lectures very interesting, if only for the reason that the Command Paint Officer, a very reserved, older gentleman knew enough about paint to talk about it for several days! I was grateful for having paid attention, since later in my career, as an engineering officer and Naval overseer in shipyards where Naval ships were refitting, paint and corrosion were an important aspect of my responsibilities.

However, the usual funk of classroom instruction became the mantle we had to bear for yet several more weeks before we could set foot aboard ship.

I do recall one very pleasant event, compliments of Rear Admiral James Landymore, commander of the East coast Navy. Our training officer, a Lieutenant Commander who acted as our "mother hen" during our pre-fleet phase, recommended that we follow the usual protocol, after our arrival in Halifax, which was to drop off our "calling card" at the admiral's house, which was directly across the street from the wardroom (the Naval mess). As I recall none of us had printed calling cards, since we never thought we would use them, and, besides, we couldn't be bothered with the expense. The training officer said that an index card with our hand-written name would suffice. So most of us followed the training officer's advice, even if we thought the gesture was somewhat useless and archaic. It seemed to us to be just another of those rules of etiquette that had no relevance in a modern Navy.

I'm quite sure that the training officer knew the pay-off for this archaic gesture, but he didn't let on. The admiral had a hobby farm in West Lawrencetown, to which he would eventually retire, located on the outskirts of Halifax, on the seacoast. A few weeks after we had deposited our calling cards, we were invited, with our wives and girlfriends, to a dinner and dance party at the admiral's country residence. I don't recall much of the party, but I can say that those who defied the training officer's advice were sorry, because it was one of the best parties we ever attended. In retrospect, it was a very clever trick on the part of our training officer to teach us the value of tradition and gentlemanly etiquette!

Canadian Naval Memorial Trust - an Update (Part 1)

By 5990 Dave Borrowman

(Editor's Note: In the interests of space, I have divided Dave's input into two separate articles. The second will appear in the next edition)



Back in 2009 I submitted a short article about HMCS Sackville and the CNMT. The following is the first of two items (hopefully) of interest to all of our class, navy types or not. Both items are excerpted from the current issue of ***Action Stations***, the HMCS Sackville Newsletter.

I include the first since it involves a classmate, and also because it refers to the second article *(to appear in the next edition of the Newsletter)*.

The second is a report on the current status of the efforts to create a permanent, world class memorial structure to house Sackville and to honour all the Canadian sailors who made the ultimate sacrifice (think Vimy Memorial?).

For further information and to join in the effort check out this website:
<http://www.canadanaavalmemorial.ca/>

Executive Director's Update

By Doug Thomas

Our office on Bedford Row in Halifax, just above Sackville's summer berth near the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, is now painted out by a team of keen volunteers, furniture, carpeting, and office equipment will soon be set up, we are now searching for an administrative assistant and we anticipate the office will officially open in April. Any information on new telephone numbers or email addresses will be promulgated in *Action Stations*. As previously mentioned, the office is primarily in support of the Memorial Project, but general Trust activities will take place from there also.

We will soon hire a Manager for the Memorial Project. The PM will be responsible for project definition and organizing an architectural design competition for this exciting development on the Halifax waterfront. You will hear more about this in future Action Stations and at our AGM on the 6th of July, which will be held in the Officers' Mess in CFB Halifax. Please see Ted Kelly's report on the **Naval Memorial Project**. (*Ed. Next edition*)



Finally, we are always happy to have volunteers to help out with our many activities. Recently, Ross Thompson stepped up to the plate and will assume the role of Gift Shop Manager from Don Mackey. We always need guides to help with tours while the ship is at her summer berth - this can be very fulfilling - and we have a number of projects in the works that just need some additional "horsepower" to get them underway. If you have some extra time to devote to the Trust, please call me at 902-721-1206 and we can discuss what might be available.

Pictured: ROMEO group of volunteers who painted the new office space - L-R: Roger Chiasson, Ward Skinner, RAdm ret'd Dave Morse, VAdm ret'd Dusty Miller. Absent from photo George Borgal

Our Baltic Cruise

By 6364 Mike Braham

On 17 August, my wife Jan and I, along with my brother Dave and Lynda from Carberry, MB, set out for a Baltic cruise. We left the house in style via a stretched limo before flying from Ottawa to Copenhagen via London. We stayed overnight in Copenhagen in a very nice old hotel with huge, comfortable rooms so we were quite rested when we boarded the Princess Cruise Line ship Emerald Princess at 1300 on 19 August.

We had cabins with balconies on the 15th deck which turned out to be a lucky placement. Most of the action on board was either on our deck (swimming pools, movie theatre, live show theatre, breakfast and lunch buffets, bars,

ice cream and pizza parlours, etc) or on the Promenade Deck (Deck 7) which gave ready access to virtually everything else (more bars, dining rooms, casino, shopping, and on and on).

Our first port of call after sailing in the early evening of the 19th was Oslo, Norway. I had been there many times during my service career but had not been back since 1987. It was a new experience for the other three. Since we were only to be in most ports for a relatively short time, we had arranged guided tours in all ports of call but Aarhus, and this proved to be a good decision, allowing us to see the highlights in the time allowed.

Oslo is a typically nice clean modern Scandinavian city with a lot of well maintained heritage to make it interesting. Unfortunately, the weather did not cooperate and it rained cats and dogs. However, we didn't allow it to dampen our spirits and, after a bus tour of the city we visited Viggeland Park



that contains an amazing collection of sculptures by a single man depicting the circle of life. The Holmenkollen ski jump provided us with an excellent panorama of the city and we concluded our tour with a visit to the Viking Ship Museum where a number of Viking ships and artefacts have been recovered and preserved.

After sailing that evening, we arrived in Aarhus, Denmark early the following morning. We had decided to tour on our own here - the city is not too big and the centre was within easy walking distance from the cruise ship terminal. None of us had been there before so it was a completely new experience for all of us. It is Denmark's second city and has a strong Viking historical background. This was reflected by an interesting Viking Museum located in the basement of a bank that had been built on the site of an archaeological dig. Another highlight of our visit was the Resistance Museum, a fascinating look at the local resistance movement during the Nazi occupation.

Warnemunde, Germany was next. This is the port for Rostock in the former East Germany. We took part in the tour from here to Berlin via a three hour

train ride chartered specifically for the ship. Once in Berlin, we took in the sights - Reichstag, Brandenburg Gate, Checkpoint Charlie, the remnants of the Wall, Humboldt University, and a host of other interesting places in this vibrant city. After a long, interesting, but tiring day we made our way back to the ship on the train.



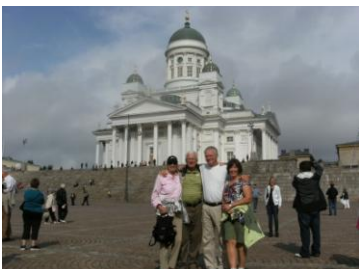
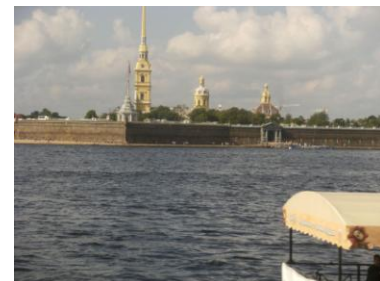
We spent the next day at sea before arriving in Tallinn, Estonia on 24



August. This turned out to be the surprise jewel of the trip. I had visited Tallinn in 1991 and found it interesting but drab. What a change had occurred in the intervening twenty years. The city had taken on a whole new aspect - buildings had been painted and the city projected confidence and vibrancy. In the process, it

has managed to retain its links to the past and is chock-a-block with interesting architecture.

St Petersburg, Russia was our next stop - a 2 day layover. Here we took part in a 2 day marathon tour of the magnificent sites that make up this city - St Peter and Paul Fortress, the Winter Palace, the Hermitage, the Cruiser Aurora, the Peterhof Palace, and many others that barely scratched the surface of the opulent life style of the Tsars in the St Petersburg area. That life style is however in stark contrast to that of most today's St Petersburg residents who live in grim, crumbling apartment tenements. It appeared that the height of Russian glory was attained by Peter I and that it has been downhill ever since.



Helsinki, Finland was a nice respite after the hectic pace in Russia. Here we took a relatively

short bus tour of this very pleasant city and visited some of the highlights of its turbulent history and relaxed in the market bordering the inner harbour.

Stockholm was next. Another dynamic, historically significant Scandinavian city that is enhanced by the stunningly beautiful entrance to the city through the thousands of islands of the Stockholm Archipelago. Another bus tour showed us the highlights of the city including the Vasa Museum commemorating a large wooden warship that sank in the harbour on its maiden voyage; the Royal Palace where we watched the changing of the guard; and, a visit through the old part of the city.



Finally, it was over and we were back in Copenhagen. We spent our short time there walking the many pedestrian-only streets while dodging the armies of cyclists hurtling along at high speed. We also took in the Tivoli Gardens which was a trip down memory lane who had been there as a young girl a few years ago!

As much as the places and things we visited and saw remain a memory, one thing that sticks in my mind was how smoothly everything went. We had booked everything through a travel agency in Carberry and the arrangements were perfect. The organisation aboard ship was exquisite in every detail. Without any fuss or bother they make sure that you know where to be and when and then provide someone to lead the way.

Another thing that struck me as a former naval person was the competence of the ship handling. The Captain maneuvered that huge ship without apparent fuss or bother through a number of very tight situations without the aid of tugs in a manner that would have made most destroyer captains I knew blush.



All in all a memorable experience. We are now thinking about our next cruise and potential ports of call, although we will need a couple of years to recover from the excess of fine food and liquid refreshments.

Closing Notes

That's it for another month. We'll look forward to hearing from Gord if he has any additional or contradictory comments on his Baltic experience. I should also point out to the person who promised me an article on his experience in Haiti that I haven't forgotten. Dave, sorry to split your input - the second part will be in next month's edition I promise.

I haven't badgered anyone for input for awhile but it will become necessary if the silence continues.

And finally, this month's wisdom from **Tom Drolet** - 'Without ammunition, the Air Force is just an expensive flying club.'

Unknown Author