



Class of 65 Newsletter

Edition 53-Oct 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

This is a pretty meagre edition. I imagine everyone is in a funk with the end of summer. Anyway, time to buck up and let us know what you are all up to these days.

We have a little more on our Class' continuing harvest of Diamond Jubilee medals; some observations from **Ernie Cable** and **Gord Diamond** on their Baltic cruise experiences; and, part 2 of the information from **Dave Borrowman** on the Canadian Naval Memorial Trust.

Otherwise, that's about it despite promises of an article from one of our classmates who was a former Commandant at RMC, but who shall remain nameless.



Congratulations to **Alex Bovey** who was presented with the Queen's Jubilee Medal by Kerry-Lynne Findlay, QC, MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice. The citation read as follows: "Alex Bovey has a deep interest in the well-being of Canada and has volunteered thousands of hours to municipal, provincial and federal

community initiatives. A consummate volunteer, he has made significant contributions to British Columbia and Canada."

With all humility, I must also report that yours truly has also become a recipient of the Jubilee Medal, although in keeping with my largely anonymous naval career, I received it in the mail, so there is no accompanying

photographic proof.

I have only received two medals in my life, this being the second. The other - the Canadian Forces Decoration - also arrived in the mail (without the ribbon - supply was out of them!) when I was serving in Oakland, California.

My promotions were similarly without fanfare - when I was promoted from Sub-Lieutenant to Lieutenant I was on course with the Royal Navy and they didn't seem too interested in the career advancement of a mere colonial. The next step from Lieutenant to Lieutenant Commander was equally unheralded - that time I was on exchange with the USN and they were too wrapped up in their own careers to worry about someone from the frozen north, particularly one wearing a green uniform!

Promotion to Commander was also somewhat underwhelming. I was at Staff College and at the end of the course a number of promotions were announced (mine not included) and a raucous party ensued. Mine duly arrived several days later after everyone had departed the College for their next postings.

My last step on the ladder was similar - announced after I left NATO Headquarters and before I assumed my final posting.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not complaining. Everyone always seemed glad to see me go. I was always treated to a fine farewell party.

Board of Directors - RMC Foundation

At its last Annual General Meeting at the end of September, the Board of Directors of the RMC Foundation elected two more of the Class of 65 to its membership - **Terry Colfer** and **Fraser Holman**. They join **Jim Carruthers** and **Mike Houghton** to give the Class an impressive representation on this important gathering. Congratulations guys.

In our last edition, I reported on our recent Baltic Cruise. **Ernie Cable** has provided the following reminiscences of his own recent cruise to the same part of the world courtesy of a different cruise line.

Monthly Lunch - Ottawa "Branch"

The Ottawa-based gang held its monthly lunch at HMCS Bytown, the Naval Officers Mess, on 17 September. Despite a somewhat smaller gathering than usual, a good time was had by all as the occasion provided to catch up on participant's activities over the summer. In attendance were **Archer, Astley, Auns, Braham, Cale, Carruthers, Forbes (navy), Graham, Houlston, Jensen, Matte, and Spence**. Those of you in the Ottawa area are encouraged to join us for these monthly get-togethers. If you are not getting the notices, just let myself or Jim Carruthers know.

Our Baltic Experience

By 6601 Ernie Cable

There must be something in the air that attracted Class of 65 members to the Baltic Sea in 2012. Carol and I also took a 14 day Baltic Sea Cruise in the latter half of June on the Holland America Line ship, MV Rotterdam. We enjoyed a veranda suite on the Navigation deck, just aft of the bridge. The ports of call were very similar to your cruise and included Rotterdam, Copenhagen, Kiel, Hamburg, Berlin via Warnemunde, Tallinn, St Petersburg, Helsinki and Stockholm then back to Rotterdam.

As a precursor to our cruise we flew from Toronto to Amsterdam where we spent a very interesting three days touring the city. We were fortunate to meet a history professor from the University of Amsterdam who gave us a half day guided walking tour and we saw numerous sites that were off the usual beaten path for city guided tours. He gave us a better insight into the evolution of Amsterdam and its network of canals which were created by damming the Amsel River and hence the name Amsterdam. The tour highlighted the importance of sea trade with the Baltic countries and the Dutch East Indies to the evolution of the dominant merchant class in Amsterdam, and included a side visit to the "Red Light" district which played a prominent part in the thriving sea port.



We then journeyed to Rotterdam to join our ship and the start of our cruise. There is monument in Rotterdam called "The City Without a Heart" (see picture) as the heart of the city was bombed out during the Second World War, first by the Germans then later by the Allies. The old historic buildings in the city were totally obliterated and tall, modern glass and steel buildings have been built in their place. Today, Rotterdam is a thriving modern city, the world's largest seaport.

Hamburg was much the same; this old Hanseatic city was also totally destroyed during the war and has been rebuilt into a modern thriving sea port, Europe's third largest following Rotterdam and Antwerp. Similar to Rotterdam's "City Without a Heart" monument, Hamburg has left the rubble of St Nicholas church much as it was after the bombing to remind all of the devastation of war. We then took a short bus ride to Luneburg to show the contrast between a modern city and an ancient German town which retains most of its classic middle-ages German architecture. During the war the population swelled from about 4,000 to more than 70,000 as refugees fled from Hamburg.

The contrast between the old East Berlin and West Berlin was interesting. It was also interesting to learn that West Germans, in addition to their federal income tax also pay a five percent surcharge to finance the rebuilding of East Germany to bring it up to par with West Germany. This has caused some resentment among West Germans as they view the former East Germans receiving more than their share of infrastructure improvements at their expense. No wonder the Germans have qualms about financially bailing out Greece, Italy and Spain.

In Tallinn, Estonia, it was interesting to learn about life under the German occupation during the Second World War which was followed by the Soviet occupation during the Cold War. We visited a family dairy farm which was confiscated by the Soviets and turned into a collective farm with the farm family being forced to live in a nearby, bland collective apartment block and

to work on their former farm under the direction of the Soviets. At the end of the Cold War the newly established Estonian government helped the family buy back into their former farm, rebuild and turn it into a prosperous enterprise. This farmer was a fascinating entrepreneur; the week before we arrived, the President of Estonia presented the him with an award for having the best dairy farm in Estonia.

The Estonians are still wrestling with the divide in their 1.4 million population. About one million have a deep Estonian heritage and want to see Estonia develop as an independent sovereign state and about 400,000 who have a long Russian ancestry and want to keep their links with the Russians. The latter are called "Radishes", Estonian on the inside but red on the outside.

We saw much the same opulence and degeneration as you did in St Petersburg. In Finland we visited Helsinki as well as the old Finnish village of Porovo to contrast the modern with the old. We were surprised to learn that Finland has two official languages, Finnish and Swedish. Similarly, in Sweden we sailed through the Swedish archipelago, toured Stockholm and visited the ancient Swedish capital, the town of Sigtuna. Then sailed back to Rotterdam via the Danish Great Belt, the Skagerrak, the Kattegat and the North Sea.



Gord Diamond has also provided the following brief summary of his cruise to the same area. Gord and Irene actually boarded the same ship that Jan and I sailed on and took the next cruise, the last of the season before repositioning back to the West Atlantic.

"We thoroughly enjoyed our cruise as well. We had a couple of sprinkles; one at night in Copenhagen, when it didn't matter and one for about an hour in Helsinki, when we were inside. The rest of the trip we had sunshine every day and we saw all we had planned and more. I guess St. Petersburg (the Hermitage and the palaces) and Oslo (Viking, Kon Tiki and Fram ships; and, the Viggeland Sculpture Park) were highlights for us.

On arrival in Oslo there was a nice surprise awaiting an aging airman like me. I looked from our balcony as we docked and there was an F-104 and an F-5 (which I flew) right on the dock below. As we walked into town we came across an F-16 and the centerpiece of their display, the new F-35. The Royal Norwegian Air Force set up their Air Force day displays right down town around the harbour. Later in the day the French Air Force aerobatic team, the 'Patrouille de France' arrived and did a full show right over the harbour and the Emerald Princess.

On return to Copenhagen, we flew to Paris, rented a car and toured the WW1 battlefields of the Somme, Vimy, Ypres, and Passchendaele and then the WW2 D-Day Beaches and airborne landing zones. Both were impressive because of the sheer scale of effort and very sobering because they filled so many cemeteries with so many dead - particularly WW1!"

Canadian Naval Memorial Trust - An Update (Part 2)

By 5990 Dave Borrowman



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

This second article 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.canadasnavalmemorial.ca/>

The Naval Memorial Project

By Ted Kelly, Chair - Memorial Action Committee

Members of the CNMT new and old are probably quite aware that the

fundamental object of the Trust is to preserve *HMCS SACKVILLE*. In the years since restoration, the efforts of many have been directed to that goal, but progress has often been of the one step forward, one step back variety. So, in an effort to bring all trustees up to speed, I thought a review of the Why, What, Where and When of this preservation effort would be helpful in understanding where we are today, how we got here and what lies ahead.

First, **the Why!** - It will soon be 27 years since a small group of former naval officers formed the Canadian Naval Corvette Trust to acquire the former *HMCS SACKVILLE*, restore her to her wartime configuration and operate her as a naval museum. - One might have asked those enterprising gentlemen why "*SACKVILLE*"? She was hardly the most impressive vessel that fought under the Canadian Flag and unlike Britain's *HMS VICTORY* or the American *USS Constitution*, she was not the major participant in a pivotal event. She had of course been in the thick of the convoy battles and had distinguished herself in a number of U boat engagements. But more than that, the founders of the Trust recognized that her significance lay far beyond that of her own service or that of the gallant men who sailed her.

The passing of the British North America Act in 1867 and the Statute of Westminster in 1931 marked the points in time when Canada was accorded recognition as a fully distinct national jurisdiction. History however, has shown that it is not the words of a document that shapes a country.



It is rather, the deeds and accomplishments of its citizens, from which the substance and character of a nation are drawn. *HMCS SACKVILLE* is the symbol of one such achievement, perhaps the most significant in Canada's short history.

HMCS Sackville

In the years prior to WWII, the Royal Canadian Navy, short of 30 years since its inception was a 'rag tag' organization lacking in almost every aspect. It was seen by the government of the day as of little importance and by its own members as an appendage of the Royal Navy.

The change that occurred in a few short years represented an extraordinary

achievement for Canada as a country and the RCN as a national institution. Key to this transformation were the efforts of the thousands of Canadians who developed the Navy into a capable self-reliant force at sea - one which bore the brunt of battle and provided the leadership in what became the seminal victory in the path to eventual triumph in WWII.

It is fitting that *SACKVILLE*, as the last corvette, is Canada's naval memorial and that she is preserved, such that Canadians in the future may know their heritage and remember the deeds of their forebears.

The What! - It has long been recognized that preservation of *SACKVILLE* requires that she be protected from the elements, which means putting her under cover. The ship was part of the original Queens Landing Project (QLP), which was a joint effort with the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic and the private developer the Armour Group. After reviewing the developer's concept of the project and commissioning a detailed technical study it was determined to be in the Trust's best interests to withdraw from the private sector part of QLP. This forced a re-think.

After reviewing the possibilities, it seemed that the best approach for the Trust was to go it alone. John Jay, the Chair at the time, sought and received support from the Province of Nova Scotia, the City of Halifax, and the federal government, through the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA). With this degree of encouragement and the support that was evident in talks with representative groups from the private sector, the board under the present Chair Hugh MacNeil approved the Naval Memorial Project (NMP) as the best the way forward.

Closing Notes

I hope everyone enjoys a good Thanksgiving (the annual turkey cull) and gives some thought to some words of wisdom that they might like to share in the next and future editions. The bank is currently empty.

All that is, for our monthly litany of **Drolet's Military Wisdom**:

If you hear me yell; "Eject, Eject, Eject!" the last two will be echos.
If you stop to ask "Why?" you'll be talking to yourself, because by then
you'll be the pilot.'

Pre-flight Briefing from a Canadian F104 Pilot