



Class of 65 Newsletter Edition 63 - August 2013



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Editor's Corner

In our last edition, we reported the sad passing of classmate **Gary Umrysh**, and carelessly made a mistake in the announcement - Paul is Gary's son and not his brother as reported. My apologies to Gary's family.

This is a special issue. **Phil Bury** has been participating in Op HUSKY 2013 and has agreed to share some letters that he wrote about the experience to friends and family. They are both interesting and moving. In this issue we will provide some background plus Phil's first letter, with other letters to follow in the next issues. Before we get to that however, a couple of other notes. **Doug Busche** and **Roger Chiasson** both gave rave reviews to **Doug Cope's**, "Roadants".

We also received a couple of other book reviews. **Dick Wright** provided the following, *"You may not have heard of Graham Hancock but he is one of my favourite authors. I have a copy of the hard cover edition of his new book "War God" and I highly recommend it. It tells a story about the land of Mexico in the early 1500s when the Spanish Conquistador Cortez met the ruler of the Aztecs, Montezuma in what is now Mexico City. The novel tells a story that is darn close to the historical facts, and it is amazing - almost unbelievable. Do check it out and let me know what you think."*

From **Gaetan Dextraze**, *"I have just finished another book that will be of interest particularly for the Air Force types. Titled, "The Untold Story of Canada's Cold War Maritime Hunter", it is the story of the Canadair Argus (CL-28, CL-107). It is a 189-page book in large format, with many pictures.*

One of the two authors is Major (Retired) Bert Campbell. He served in the RCAF from 1966 for 42 years as a navigator, including many years on the Argus.

The other author is Major (Retired) Cary Baker. He was Army, but his father was Captain Gary Herman Baker (1940-2005) who flew the Argus in the 70s and 80s.

Some of our classmates may have known either or both of the two authors since they served in the same time frame as them.

Here is the link for this book at Chapters/Indigo."

http://www.chapters.indigo.ca/books/the-canadair-argus/9781927003060-item.html?ikwid=canadair+argus&ikwsec=Home&qcs_requestid=OCHKD13oLvLkCFdPm5wodY3sAAA

Bob Walker has provided the following interesting information from the Kingston Whig Standard about a new program at the College.

In addition to all of its academic diversity, as represented by this year's various graduation /convocation degrees and programs and levels, is RMC's increasing cultural diversity.

Essentially, the program is the Canadian Armed Forces / National Defence's support of development of Aboriginal youth. Each fall, usually about 20-25 Aboriginal teens are selected from across Canada to commence this one-year program at RMC that combines academics (essentially completing high-school graduation equivalency sufficiently to qualify for university entrance), military training, sports/fitness, and diverse Aboriginal histories & practices. Not all of these young Aboriginals are enlightened about their own cultures.

Those who choose to complete the year, 14 of them in 2013, then can opt to go home, to return to their reserves or communities, to join the Canadian Forces in the ranks, or to enter RMC in first year, joining up with the new recruit class in September, as five will do this year. Their aspirations will be to complete the full 4-year program, graduate with a degree, and start a commissioned career in the Forces. As the article indicates, the first Aboriginal Youth Program intake was only 5 years ago and the first degreed graduate, a female Aboriginal, completed that year and subsequently convocated from RMC this year with her 4-year degree and received her commission in the good old Royal Canadian Navy.

Bob also provided the following Post-Script.

After emailing you, I started reading my earlier, 24 June, MACLEAN'S. I was surprised to see a 7-page special interest feature on "Living" that addressed Canada's Aboriginal Peoples. Numerous stats on population numbers, age distributions, education levels, etc., were listed. The University of Regina, Calgary's Mount Royal U & Queen's U (with 100 Aboriginal students annually at Queen's) were identified for their special Aboriginal programs. RMC was not, probably because a 1-yr Aboriginal "prep" year with 14 "grads", only five of them staying on, isn't exactly big news compared to other universities with larger Aboriginal populations.

We have also been presented with a mystery and hope that some of you "Frigateers" might be able to shed some light.

The following was received from Victoria Edwards, via **Waine McQuinn**. Victoria writes for e-Veritas.

I came across a curious passage about a Canadian flag controversy which I hope you can expand on for e-veritas. The passage is in Royal Military College of Canada - Review Yearbook (Kingston, Ontario Canada) - Class of 1965

http://www.eyearbook.com/yearbooks/Royal_Military_College_Canada_Review_Yearbook/1965/P age_147.html

"Frigate Bigots maintained the status of "most easy-going" Squadron for another year. They harassed the Wing generally, silently stealing away with Mike's eagle after having lost the Frigate Liberty Bell and "Jayne Mansfield" for some time and periodically raising Spider pennants to the masthead and to the top of Mackenzie Building. The conspiracy to delay the raising of the new Canadian flag resulted in a "levy" being imposed upon the Stone Boat, in return for a distinctive Spider pennant."

Background

* The flag of Canada was officially adopted on February 15, 1965 per the Flag Day plaque at RMC (attached), "Near this Parade Square, in March 1964, while viewing the College Flag atop Mackenzie Building, Col. the Hon. G.F.G. Stanley, then Dean of Arts RMC, first suggested to Col. the Hon. J.R. Matheson, then MP for Leeds, that the RMC College Flag should form the basis of the National Flag. The two

collaborated on a design which was ultimately approved by Parliament and by Royal Proclamation adopted as the National Flag of Canada as of the 15th of February 1965."

Queries

- * Why were the cadets of the Frigate reluctant to raise the Canadian flag?
- * What flag did they raise on the Frigate instead? E.g. Canada's former official flag, the Union Jack; the RMC flag; the Frigate Spider pennant
- * How long did the 'conspiracy' to delay raising the flag atop the Frigate last? E.g. hours, days, weeks, months
- * What did the levy consist of? E.g. did the Frigate lose their Spider pennant?
- * Does the spider pennant, and/or a photo of the pennant flying on the Frigate or Mackenzie Building, still exist? I'd love a copy for e-veritas.

Finally, it is time to get to **Phil Bury** and I will let him tell his tale.

HUSKY 2013

By 6339 Phil Bury

Background:

Operation Husky was the beginning of the liberation of Europe, the allied invasion of Sicily on 10 July 1943, to be followed by invasion of the Italian mainland a month later, and almost a year later by the invasion of Normandy. Along with the UK and US forces, 1 Canadian Division - 25,000 Canadians - fought in Sicily, including my father, who, thank God, came home alive. But in Sicily alone, there were over 2,000 Canadian casualties, of whom 562 were killed or died of wounds. Of course everyone seems to have heard of the landings in Normandy, but 91% of Canadians don't know about Sicily. Op Husky 2013 is an attempt to redress that shameful ignorance of our history. In spite of a very capable information campaign, most Canadian media seemed to have no interest, and it was only by accident that I heard about the project from a friend.



As part of Operation Husky 2013, a group of us followed the path of 1 Canadian Division from the landing sites on Pachino Beach to the site of the last Canadian battle in Sicily, in the town of Adrano. Before the landings, the ships carrying most Canadian motor transport had been sunk by U-boats. So they walked. So we walked. Along the way, we

planted small clusters of markers, prepared beforehand by Italian and Canadian schoolchildren, one for each of our fallen, as near as we could get to the place where he died. Each day we finished our march in a town liberated by Canadians, and were greeted by the populace and town dignitaries, and held a remembrance service. It was quite an experience, and I think it has changed each of us a bit.



OP Husky 2013 March into Regalbuto

I should add that the cost of the whole project (we marchers paid our own way) has come to about half a million dollars, not all of which has yet been covered by fundraising. There are still contribution and sponsorship opportunities, such as the sponsorship of an individual marker or in some other way. I should also mention that the support of Canada Company has been vital, and I invite anyone who can to support that organisation.

More information about the Sicilian and Italian campaigns can be found in excellent books by the distinguished historian Mark Zuelkhe, who was one of our marchers: *Operation Husky, Ortona, The Liri Valley, and The Gothic Line*.

Mark has also written about the Northwest Europe campaign that followed the Normandy landings. The Canadian official history: *The Canadians in Italy 1943-45* is a fine source, out of print but available at second hand sources and on the web. There are a number of scholarly papers, but I haven't been able to get hold of them yet.

Finally, for a brief summary of the Canadian role in Op Husky 1943 see the following video http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=haKIfoHQ-7Q&feature=player_embedded

Letter 1

I'm sorry I haven't written sooner. Life has been remarkably full, and internet access rare and at best uneven.

Our progress across Sicily has been a great success. The march has been demanding (43C yesterday and before; ~20km both days, largely uphill; it'll get worse) but the scenery breathtaking and the people friendly. Most seem to know why we're here. The receptions each day in the towns liberated by the Canadians has been warm - emotional in fact - and elaborate.



Assoro, Sicily

Any misgivings we had, if any, about being viewed as a conquering enemy are gone. Everywhere we are greeted as the liberators. They want photos with us and Canada flags and pins; the mayor meets us at the edge of town with the town band and a police escort; we proceed together into the main piazza and lay a wreath before a large crowd. Last night in Raddusa there was a concert in our honour by a remarkably good local amateur orchestra - classical music which was pronounced excellent by people who know. Typically there is a civic reception, on occasion, an elegant multi-course lunch (we seldom bother with supper) and often a guided tour of the town or presentation by historians, who know much more about the campaign than, I'd guess, more than any more than a dozen or two

Canadian historians. We are well covered by the Italian and European media, who follow and interview us daily. We have not seen any representative of the Canadian media; we're well abreast of coverage in Canada, which is regrettably scant - both of our current efforts and of the campaign and sacrifice which we attempt to commemorate. This isn't for lack of news. We have an excellent professional (but as a volunteer, of course) communications manager in Steve MacKinnon, who puts out frequent press releases, and updates the website daily.

This brings me to an appeal: the whole point of why we are here is to inform and educate Canadians. If any of you have any public or media access, please use it. The source is www.operationhusky2013. There you'll find a wealth of information about the 1943 campaign, as well as our humble efforts of today, including day-by-day updates both of what happened seventy years ago (by Mark Zuehlke, the distinguished historian, who is one of our marchers), and what we did yesterday. You'll also find Facebook and Twitter links.

Anyone is welcome to publish this letter, in any medium.

If any of you lost a family member in Sicily, please let me know.

Regards from sunny Sicily

Philip

(Editor's Note: The pictures used come from the Op Husky 2013 Web Site - an excellent site!)

Closing Notes

Special thanks to Phil for sharing this tremendous pilgrimage with us. He has provided three more letters that will be included in the next issues of this Newsletter.

If any of you are able to respond to any of Victoria's questions, please feel free to pass them through me for onward transmission.

Stay in touch and keep those articles coming.