



Class of 65 Newsletter

Edition 65-October 2013



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 Editorial staff still lacks the linguistic skills to produce a bilingual version.

Editor's Corner

Hello again. I trust you are all getting your grumpy old man costumes dusted off to scare the kids on Halloween. We have lots of bits and pieces this month in addition to **Phil Bury's** third letter from Sicily and a report by yours truly on a recent cruise to the Black Sea.

First of all, **Fras Holman** sent along the following note and accompanying picture: *"It is a rare day that one sees the image captured of a man outstanding in his field, and when it is someone we know it is really a special day. I attach the photo from this morning's Globe of John Adams for the possible wider interest of the class. Not sure what he was saying at the time."*



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Terry Colfer passed along the following: " Attached is a pic taken this weekend at a restaurant in Kingston.

Included are: Tony Goode and Pat, Frasn Holman and Sandy, Mike Houghton and Nancy, Jim and Gail plus Lynn and I.

Occasion was the annual meeting of Board of Directors for the RMC Club and RMC Foundation. Tony is with the Club and the rest of the crew are with the Foundation. In fact, Jim was elected President of the Foundation this weekend."



It looks like everyone was having a good time. That said, thanks to all of you for making such an impressive Class presence in these important activities. Congratulations Jim on a well-deserved election.

The following are excerpts of a message sent from Australia by **6368 Hugh Landerkin** to Georges Wilson: " While cleaning out my office (sometimes referred to by me as my "Man Cave") last weekend, I came across some of my slides that my late mother took, from CMR days.

This is one taken by her, if I am correct, when we trooped the colour for the GG, His Excellency Georges Vanier, in the Fall of 1962. I believe I am on the far inside of the

second row, closest to the residence buildings, and Brother Kincaid is one person closer to the camera. In the row in front of me, in the middle is, I believe, Marc Jette, the son of our then commandant.



I was saddened to learn in the last RMC note that my old friend, Dick Ouellete, 6351, passed away. I last saw Dick when he came up to our family's cottage at Danford Lake, Quebec, north of home town Ottawa, to see me, after my kidney operation in the summer of '62, at the National Defence Medical Centre in Ottawa. This arose from a serious injury occasioned the day after we trooped the colour, as we could then don football pads for practice. That injury put the kibosh on my budding military career, but all's well that ends well!

I am enjoying retirement from the judicial bench, and am about 75 % recovered from last fall's back operation.

I plan on spending at least two months in the sun, first in Kauai, then in the San Diego area, to avoid the worst of our "Wet Coast" weather this coming late fall and winter season.

In the previous item, Hugh mentions **6416 Peter Kincaid**. Well, it just happens that **Georges Wilson**, our super sleuth, had recently sent me the following biographical sketch that he had received from Peter:

6416 Peter Kincaid, Champlain Squadron 1960-62 (RCN)

How amazing to see your familiar names after 50 years! Georges Wilson of Montreal rang me the other day and said he was sending details of my former colleagues in Flight 9.

It was in January 1962 that I left CMR for HMCS Hochelaga in Montreal. I spent until September that year there working off the dead horse and quite enjoyed it.

Here's a brief summary of what I've been up to since then. I'd be interested to get something similar from each of you.

1962-1968: UBC, BA and LLB. For this period I was in the RCNR and got to the rank of lieutenant. Also drove a Black Top cab in Vancouver on the weekends.

1968: got Commonwealth scholarship to do LLM at University of Sydney. Drove an old army truck from London to Accra across the Sahara on my way to Sydney.

1969: living at St Paul's College, Sydney Uni, and doing my LLM. Met my wife Diana, also on a Commonwealth scholarship from King's College, London, and doing her LLM.

1970: drove a VW kombi from Bombay to London with Diana and got married in London. Worked at a law firm in Vancouver until Jan 1972.

1972-73: drove in two Land-Rovers from Vancouver to Cape Horn and back.

1973-75: Lecturer in Law, University of Papua New Guinea, Port Moresby.

1976: Di and I drove our Land-Rover from the Cape of Good Hope to North Cape in Norway, and then on to Vancouver.

1977: got a job as Senior Lecturer in Law, Macquarie University, Sydney. Did this job until I retired in 1999, by which time I was an Associate Professor. In 1977 we bought a rough stone cottage on 60 acres on the northern outskirts of Sydney.

We've been developing that ever since.

1995: drove across Russia with our two children, Hilary (then 17) and John (then 13) in our Land-Rover camper van.

2001: Di and I took the same Land-Rover from here to Vancouver drove across the north of Alaska and Canada to Labrador and Newfoundland. On the way stopped in Montreal and parked on the former parade ground of CMR. Can you imagine doing that in our day?

2005: drove across China and India in the Land-Rover

2012: turned 70 and took the L-R to Japan and drove from one end of it to the other for three months.

Rod Mackinnon sent along the following additional comments on the controversy raised by Victoria Edwards on a "Frigate flag" that was explained by **Rick Johnson** in Edition 64.

"I should have responded when the query from Victoria Edwards regarding the new Cdn. flag and the Stone Frigate first appeared in the Class Newsletter, but I did not, and alas that copy is now deleted from my inbox and computer. Probably not important anyway, but Rick Johnson's comments about the Frigate flag and letterhead got me thinking.

The comment which gave rise to the query was an excerpt from a column that regularly appeared in the Marker from the autumn of '63 until we graduated in '65, under the pen name of "The Little Man". I was the Little Man in Le Rempart at CMR, and brought him to RMC. The then Editor in Chief of the Marker was the late Gord Reay, who rose from Senior Cadet to LGen, before losing his life in a jeep accident (I think) in Germany (Croatia actually) after he had retired. Gord loved the "Little Man" and agreed to keep publishing the column and to keep the author anonymous, if not necessarily a secret. BUT his condition for doing so was to be allowed to write the odd column himself, using the Little Man byline. He, like me, liked to chuck a bit of s..t now and then. The column in question was written by Gord, and so he cannot now tell us what he was referring to. But he did feel that the Frigateers were a bit elitist (for no good or sufficient reason we could think of), so if he could take a swipe at them, he rarely missed the chance. And, as I recall, we all thought at the time that the new flag was merely a bit of politicking by the Liberals then in power.

Rick Archer had the following comment on the picture in our last edition of the 1964/65 Boxing Team: *"I particularly liked the photo of the RMC boxing team circa 1965. That's me seated on the far right. Unlike you, I was defeated in my two fights home and home against the University of Toronto -- by a guy who turned out to be an American named Jim Rock. He lived up to his name, because even though I knocked him down, he won on points. I was in the 152 lb class, whatever that was called.*

As a footnote, at the annual sports dinner that season (I remember that none other than Danny Gallivan was the keynote speaker), I was the official boxing representative and got to shake the hand of guest George Chuvalo (or more accurately to have my hand disappear in his), and have my picture taken with him...which I've never seen.

Keep the sports team photos coming!

The following is the third of **Phil Bury's** letters from Sicily:

"I'm writing this in a pleasant hotel outside Regalbuto. The 1943 approach to Regalbuto from Agira was extremely difficult and resulted in many casualties, which we commemorated with our roadside markers as we marched to the city the other day. The town itself was heavily shelled and was one of the most severely damaged of the campaign. There is in the histories a striking picture of a Canadian bulldozer clearing a way through rubble for the Division's support vehicles. The city now shows little of the damage, and looks like your everyday Renaissance / Baroque Italian city, except for some marks on the walls which might be bullets or just the effects of restricted maintenance budgets. The hotel overlooks some beautiful scenery, including an artificial lake created in 1970, which probably covers part of the route taken by the left flanking movement that enabled the eventual taking of Regalbuto.



March into Regalbuto

By the way, the best and most readable story of the campaign is Mark Zuehlke's "Husky", and for every day Mark has prepared a summary of the Action of the Day and each morning he briefs us on the ground. So although this is definitely not a battlefield tour, we do get historical context. The Action is read in Italian, with the names of the fallen, at

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each day's municipal ceremony by one of the CMR / RMC officer cadets, in period uniform, who are an invaluable component of our support team.

Our entry into each town remains a thrill for me, and I suppose for each of us. Since we come in remembrance, perhaps we shouldn't think of it as a triumphal entry, but it certainly feels that way. As we enter, typically with the Sindaco (mayor) and council, police chief and local dignitaries, we invariably draw crowds, and by the time we get to the main piazza, there is always a big crowd. Usually a committee has been preparing for weeks or months before, and in most towns we see posters on the wall announcing the event. Of course our presence in each town, and the experience generally, would not be what it is without 1st Canadian Pipes and Drums, the small but talented group formed on the spot as we began, but quickly transformed under P/M R. Stewart, H&PE, into a cohesive and well tuned band.

The three pipers and two drummers are a bunch of very likeable young men gathered for the occasion, who play as though they had been practicing together for years. They play us into town and at the various ceremonies, often one or two will play us into and out of each hourly halt, and one of them plays each time we dedicate a cluster of markers.

Although we are a bunch of civilians, by now when we follow the pipes and drums even our free spirits fall into step. This is of course more difficult when we're behind the town council, but not impossible. However, when we are joined by the bishop all bets are off, and we proceed at a suitably dignified pace.

We walk mostly down secondary and tertiary roads, occasionally little more than cow paths. We are usually escorted for safety by police, the locals or the Carabinieri, but still some roads aren't safe and we have to detour. The scenery is usually rural, with the variety lying mostly in whether we are in a valley or high in the hills. The land is intensively farmed, with wheat on the higher slopes, cattle and goats on the rougher ground, and lush orchards (some no doubt the same that were picked over by passing Canadians seventy years ago) in the valleys and lower slopes. Some land is used only for grazing, or is perhaps unused, but it is remarkable what sort of ground these people can get a tractor onto.

We've seen some of the donkeys of yesteryear, but few.

Everywhere the scenery is striking. By now we are principally in mountain country, and the vistas are everywhere impressive and vast - ruggedly beautiful, to use a cliché, all browns and greens. For a week now, whenever we are on high ground, we see Etna, ever closer, always with a plume of smoke and steam trailing horizontal and ruler straight to the south.

We see many abandoned houses on the hillsides, some of two stories, looking as though they had been quite comfortable. All are built of the stone so common in these parts, that

somehow matches the earth. It always seems sad to see an abandoned house. I suppose they're the inevitable consequence of farm mechanization and aggregation, and some rural towns suffer from severe unemployment. In addition to the common greeting of "Buon giorno" which lasts into the late afternoon and often all day; "Buona sera"; and "Buona notte"; I've discovered that a common local greeting is "Salve!!", which is of course ancient Roman. I've taken to using that for variety as we greet bystanders on the way by. The orchards produce a remarkable variety of excellent fruit. For breakfast today I had, amongst other things, three different kinds of plum, all delicious. The funny little doughnut-shaped peaches are remarkable. We've occasionally bought them from a tiny stand or from the back of a truck as we pass. Different sorts of melon, including two kinds of watermelon, are also favourites.

Every town has a band. Generally they are remarkably good. The one in Valguarnera was not only able to keep step with our pipes and drums and marchers, but was able to maintain that step when it was their turn to play, a pretty impressive trick for even a military band (and the drum major was in heels). The band in Raddusa not only played suitably at the noon ceremony, they favoured us with a remarkable classical concert that evening.

As this excellent adventure is drawing nearer its close, I continue to be impressed by the hard work and talent that has made - is making - it happen. More impressive yet is the emotional impact of standing on this blood-soaked ground and thinking of the fine young men who came here, of the sacrifice they willingly made, and of the lives cut short. I've been to many Remembrance ceremonies and funerals, but standing near where these men died, and hearing their names, ...

This experience had been tiring for all of us, and draining in other ways. But I'll feel sad when it's over.

Finally, Jan and I have just returned from a cruise to the Black Sea and I thought I might provide a brief summary of this incredible experience.

We started our journey by flying from Ottawa to Montreal to get our connecting flight to Athens. We were confronted by a long delay (over 4 hours) in Montreal which due to its almost Monty Pythonesque nature will be the subject of a second article in the next edition. Suffice to say, I strongly recommend that if any of you are flying anywhere that you avoid Air Canada's new Rouge subsidiary!

Being so late I was nervous that our scheduled transfer from the airport to the hotel would not work so it was great relief when we arrived to see a chap standing there with

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our names on a board. The smooth efficiency that we have come to expect from cruise lines had kicked in.

We stayed overnight in Athens, before joining our Holland America ship, the *Prinsendam*, in Piraeus the next day. *Prinsendam* was smaller than the ships we had sailed in for our previous two cruises and lacked some of the glitz associated with the bigger vessels. That was offset by the very personal service available, the opportunity to meet and get to know more of your fellow passengers, and the usual high standard of food and other amenities. She was also fairly venerable by today's cruise ship standards, being launched in the 1980s. She was suffering from a couple of mechanical difficulties - one stabiliser was not working (fortunately this was not a factor), and the stern thruster was not working (this came into play later).



We set sail in the evening of 3 October and arrived in Volos, a town on the North East coast of Greece the next morning. We had booked tours of each port of call and in Volos this included an interesting local archaeological museum (most of Greece seems to be a vast archaeological dig!). Apparently Jason of Golden Fleece fame came from Volos. Our tour also took us to a quaint village in the hills overlooking the town where we got some spectacular views.



Village in hills above Volos

Setting sail that evening, we spent the next day at sea transiting the Aegean Sea, the Dardanelles (at night -we came back through the straits during the day at the end of the cruise), the Sea of Marmora and the Bosphorus on our way to the Black Sea and our first port of call there - Sinope, Turkey.

The transit through the Bosphorus was our first glimpse of Istanbul, an immense city of somewhere between 12 and 20 million people depending on who you ask. It was just a sampler for the port call scheduled for later in the cruise.

We anchored off in Sinope due to the marginal dock, the absence of tugs, and our defective stern thruster. As a result we were tendered ashore in the ship's boats, an evolution that went more smoothly here than on later occasions.

For Janet and I, Sinope was our first taste of Turkey (with a capital T). It is a relatively small fishing town, distinguished as being the site of the naval battle of Sinope in 1853 that precipitated the Crimean War. Once again we visited a couple of local museums and took a tour of the local countryside. Our lasting impression of Turkey is of the very

secular nature of its Islamic religion that is much less rigorous than in other Moslem nations such as Afghanistan.



Sinope Waterfront (includes part of old Roman fortification)

That evening we weighed anchor and sailed for Sochi, Russia, the site of the upcoming Winter Olympics in 2014. Once again we anchored offshore due to lack of adequate pier space for our 673 foot vessel. Of passing interest as we came to anchor was a nearby Russian naval vessel that appeared to have suffered a major fire onboard as evidenced from the following picture.

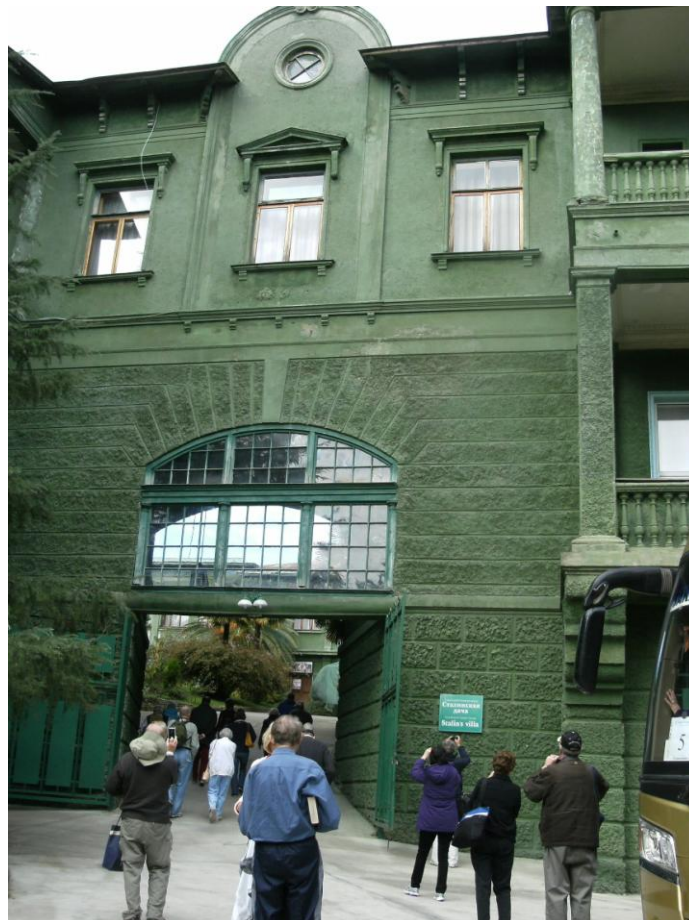


Russian warship on fire?

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Sochi was unlike the other two Russian cities I have visited - St Petersburg and Moscow. There was no visible sign of the poverty of the general populace and everywhere looked clean and generally upscale. This was most certainly due to the upcoming Olympics (apparently Russia has already spent 5 times more that London did for the summer Olympics) and also due to the fact that it has long been a favourite vacation spot for the Russian elite.

One of our visits here was to Stalin's dacha, a large, but rather austere place painted in an awful "Stalin green" so that it would blend into the surrounding forests. For me, there was a little too much memorializing associated with this place. Given his grisly record, I think it should have been torn down and remembered with a simple plaque!



Stalin's Dacha

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Due to fairly heavy swells, tendering ashore posed a problem, particularly since the bulk of the passengers were fairly elderly. The captain, a Brit with seemingly endless patience met this and several other manoeuvring difficulties with great aplomb and skill.

Following this Russian interlude we spent another day as sea as we made our way to Sevastopol, Ukraine. This is a city and region with considerable history of fairly recent conflict - the Crimean War and World War II and there are monuments to both everywhere. Also, despite Ukraine's independence following the end of the Cold War, Russia maintains a very visible presence in Sevastopol as the home port and headquarters of its Black Sea Fleet.

While in Sevastopol we drove to Yalta to visit the Lidavia Palace where the 1945 World War II Conference was held. En route we passed the Crimean War sites of the Battles of Balaclava, Inkerman and Alma. Other sites of interest were the Red Church, high up on a craggy mountain, the Swallow's Nest (a palace built by a Tsarist prince for his mistress), and Gorbachev's dacha where he was held under house arrest during Yeltsin's coup.



Red Church



Swallow's Nest



Lidavia Palace

Our next port of call was Constanta, Romania. This is one of the largest ports in Europe and home to the Romanian Navy. Most of the navy was alongside looking spotless - not surprising since they rarely go to sea due to a lack of funding for fuel!

That of course, is an endemic problem throughout Romania and signs of crushing poverty are everywhere with little apparent change from when I visited Constanta in 1995. This was probably reflected in our tour selection that took us out of the city to visit an ancient archaeological site of a Roman encampment and a triumphal monument to Emperor Trajan. We also visited the Monastery of St Andrew which is built around a cave church reputedly founded by St Andrew himself. While there, we enjoyed a filling, simple lunch prepared by the monks.



Trajan's Monument

Roman Encampment

St Andrew's Monastery and Cave Church

From Romania we moved on to Bulgaria. Our original itinerary had us anchoring off a small town called Nessebur, but high swells decided the Captain to move us 20 miles down the coast to the town of Burgas where we were able to go alongside.

Like Romania, Bulgaria is poverty-stricken. Our tour guide was quite bitter about the end of Communism and the failure (as yet) of capitalism to relieve the situation for the general population while the former elite get rich. As he said, *"the population of Bulgaria was 9 million at the end of the Cold War and it is now 7 million. The best and the brightest have left the country."*

We got to see the problem at first hand when we drove into the country to visit the village of Goritsa. There we visited the local church, a villager's house for some local treats (including a fearsome alcoholic drink of uncertain origin), and the town hall where we met the mayor and had a brief discussion.



Bulgarian Real Estate



Goritsa Church



Kitchen

Having decided that we weren't going to live in Bulgaria we set sail again, back through the Bosphorus to Istanbul. A breathtaking city that cannot be described adequately in a few

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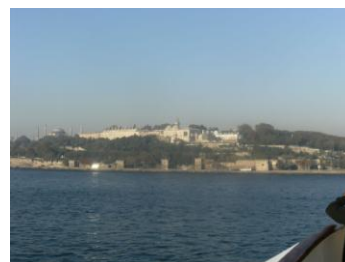
words. Highlights of our visit were tours of Hagia Sophia, the Blue Mosque, Topkapi Palace and the Grand Bazaar, but they barely scratched the surface of this great city.



Hagia Sophia



Blue Mosque



Topkapi Palace

After leaving Istanbul we proceeded back through the Sea of Marmora and transited the Dardanelles where we were solemnly treated to the monuments and forbidding landscape of the Gallipoli Campaign of 1915.

On a more upbeat note, our next and final port of call was Mykonos, a beautiful Greek island where we spent a relaxing day touring the island and soaking up the Geek sunshine.

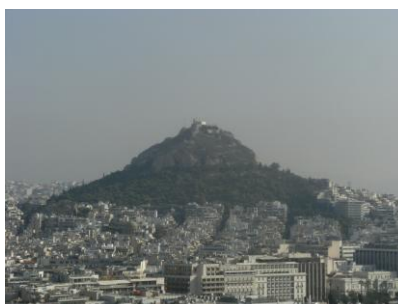
Once back in Athens, Jan and I spent an extra two days there and took advantage of the Hop on Hop off bus service to get us around. Rather like Istanbul, there are countless amazing things to see and experience in Athens although the most spectacular has to be the Acropolis,



Acropolis



Parthenon



St George's Monastery

The flight home was uneventful and concluded the trip of a lifetime to some truly remarkable and historic places that we never thought we would ever see. Sorry I rambled on a bit, but as you might imagine, this has only been a brief overview of a much broader experience.

Closing Notes

That's it for another month. Thanks to our many contributors - keep those articles and snippets coming. Until next month, stay safe.