

The Communicator

**Newsletter Volume IX,
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The beginning of the end for the CM group

Editors Thoughts
By David Smith

I doubt I shall ever forget 1976 when the model 40 teletypes were introduced into our lives. Here we were being offered equipment for the first time that was in essence a basic computer. No clacking keys, no ribbons to change and with the ability to overtype, cut and paste and store copies on a magnetic tape – it was akin to your first love in that it was something you never forgot! Typing was no longer drudgery and with the peace and quiet, it allowed us to listen to the radio playing over the intercom for the first time without the noise we had lived with for decades. Little did we realize at the time however that this technology would spell the end of our world as communicators in the years to come. It was only a matter of time before real computers would be introduced into our world, and by simply connecting them to a high speed tape punch/reader, we had only to ask the secretaries of the day to pass us a floppy disk thus eliminating the need for retyping. While basking in the euphoria of such developments, it wasn't long before we realized that real computers were "CM eliminators" and while we continued to enjoy the reduction of our workloads, it wasn't long before it dawned on us that management was already counting the savings to be realized by eliminating an entire group of dedicated workers.

The upcoming edition of "Bout de Papier" – a PAFSO production, has as its feature article, a story written by Kurt Jensen (DFAIT retired). Kurt was encouraged by Ray Fortin to write such an article which he did. This was reviewed and edited by your newsletter staff of one. The title: "Getting the message out - 50 years of Telecommunications in DFAIT". Finally an article has been published in an official magazine which highlights our contributions to the Department and it is with many thanks to Kurt for penning the article and to Ray for his initial suggestion that we look forward to seeing a copy which I will reprint in the next edition of "The Communicator". In the meantime enjoy this newsletter. Happy reading.

Those infamous pants

By Buck Arbuckle

The following episode only involves communications as a conveyance for official correspondence relative to the incident. However the following is an excellent example of the banter which showed the department did have a lighter side. But let's get on with the story.

Charles Ritchie was High Commissioner to London. Few would deny that he was an excellent diplomat and his Saville Row wardrobe lent credence to the details he pursued to promote his position. He had just taken delivery of a brand new suit when the department asked him to accept a forthcoming posting as the head of Canada's delegation to the United Nations in New York. In preparation for the move to New York he decided to fly over to inspect his accommodation and otherwise assess the lay of the land.



On arrival in New York he turned in his suit to be cleaned and pressed. Lo, he only got back the jacket. The pants were nowhere to be found and for recompense the cleaners made an unacceptable offer that in no way reflected the value of the suit. He couldn't wear an impeccably tailored jacket with an odd pair of pants so he considered the whole suit a total loss. Having exhausted his patience with the cleaners, he then decided to seek satisfaction from the department. After all, his trousers went missing while he was on an official trip, so should not official reimbursement be due?

Mr. Ritchie listed his loss as an item on his expense account. No way. The department refused. This started a lengthy exchange with each party steadfastly refusing to budge. Tiring of the department's lack of sympathy for his unfortunate predicament he finally proclaimed that should the department not accept his claim he would travel to Ottawa and picket the East Block (the then bastion of External Affairs) in his shorts. Did this stir the department to implement the necessary procedures to deter such a demonstration on Canada's hallowed Parliament Hill?

I do not know whether the account was ever settled but if someone could enlighten me perhaps we could finish the story.

* * *

Coping with the unexpected

By Buck Arbuckle

While I was on posting in London we received a large consignment of new cypher equipment from the British, twenty-four cases in all. I volunteered to act as courier to Ottawa and use the opportunity to discuss outstanding questions with headquarters. All necessary arrangements were made to reserve a flight for myself and space for the shipment.

On the day of departure, I arrived at Heathrow, checked in, paid a small fortune in excess baggage charges and escorted my shipment through to the baggage area. While waiting to be boarded, word came through that my flight was

delayed four or five hours due to mechanical problems. There I was, stuck in the baggage area without even a comfortable seat to sit on.

I called the baggage room supervisor and explained my problem. I asked if he had a secure lock-up that I could use till flight time while I went back into the relative comfort of the departure lounge. He pointed to a locked enclosure which seemed suitable and called over a couple of baggage handlers who moved my shipment to the entrance. Unlocking the door I could see the secure area was already full with little room left, but the supervisor instructed the baggage men to remove multiple cases so that my diplomatic shipment could be moved in. He locked the door and gave me the key. My shipment seemed secure so I left for the departure lounge. After attending the loo queue, I made for the dining room and otherwise relaxed until near flight time.

Back in the baggage area I casually enquired of the supervisor as to what might be in those cases he had removed from the lock-up. He responded that they were just bank notes destined for some African country. Money. Lots of it. Boxes full of it, probably worth millions of dollars, just piled up, unprotected on the baggage room floor. I was somewhat astounded. But now I had to consider tips for these men who did me a great service. My pockets were not deep enough to tip 10% of whatever those bank notes might be worth or even what my shipment was worth, so I gave five pounds to the supervisor and a pound each to the baggage handlers. They must have been pleased for they waved me a cheerful good-bye as I boarded the aircraft.

During the flight I reflected on several scenarios. There had recently been a heist worth millions from Uplands airport in Ottawa. Now what if there was a heist at Heathrow in the coming months. I had had the key to the secure area for several hours, certainly long enough to have had a copy made. Surely in the event of a robbery I would have been a prime suspect, or an accomplice. Gratefully I heard nothing more and was pleased that I did not have to disclose what I considered questionable procedures in the luggage area.

But my immediate problem was getting from Montreal to Ottawa. Not to worry. I was met at the aircraft by a truck and two RCMP cruisers which formed a convoy from Montreal right to the East Block in Ottawa.



Staff in New Delhi – April 7, 1967; Photo submitted by Joe MacPherson - names below

BACK ROW FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: R. K. Lowe (Security Guard - SG), Gord Hildebrand (CM), Dean Prosser (CM) Jerry Vorias (Consular Officer), P. Lalande (CR), Bill Hastie, (SG), George Alderson (Sgt. Driver/Asst to Mil Attache Col. Jack Watts), Len Chatwin (Head of Trade Section?), Joe MacPherson (CM), Stan Dabrowski (EL), Trevor Chappell , Ian Bruce (CM).

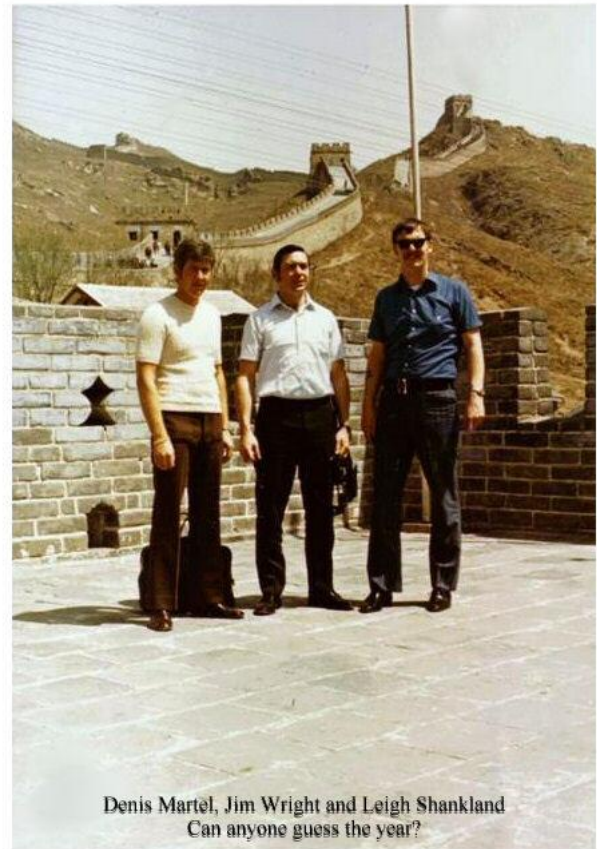
MIDDLE ROW L to R Ed Smith, C. Lauziere (?), Roger Bougie (AS - Admin Officer), Eric Wang (FSO), R. Parlour (?) Roland Mitchener (HC), Group Captain/became Colonel with integration, Jack Watts, (Mil Attache), Allan Millard, (FSO - Economic), Jim Puddington (FSO - Post Security Officer), Ken DeWolf (Consular officer or Trade Officer), J. Scott (?), Jerry Clark (SG),

FRONT ROW: Helen Singh (Locally Engaged Secretary/Clerk ?), Marjorie Sen (same as Helen Singh), Gerry Potvin, (CR), Muriel Gordon (Sec or Clerk - Consular Section), S. Martin (Sec/CR), Sylvie Plouffe (FSO), B. Stokes (?), D. Campbell (?), Muriel Lefebvre (Sec or CR), ose Danesewich, (Sec/Cr Consular), and Gerry Albert (CM). Three staff members were absent when the photo was taken and just for the record they were: D.B. Hicks (Deputy HC), Len Legault (FSO - Legal Affairs), A. Drew-Brook (?).

Memories of Beijing

By Denis Martel

A story about my stay in the PRC: As you mentioned Canadians were sort of the first Westerners there at that time. So one morning on a day off I decided to walk the surrounding of the Hotel (Xin Ciao I believe) and take some photos. I didn't get far before a crowd of youngsters coming out of nowhere were encircling me. I tell you it's a scary feeling having about 30 8-12 year-olds forming a circle around you and saying things you can't understand but you feel from the tone of their voices that they're not saying you're my friend. Then they started pulling on my camera to take it away. I was trying my best to hold on to it while keeping my calm and smiling so as not to make things worse. In no time two military men arrived and questioned the kids as to what was going on and they started chanting very loud and in unison what sounded like "he was taking pictures". The only English word the military men knew was "passport" and the only Chinese word I knew was "Xin Ciao hotel". So one military man took my passport and they escorted me to the hotel. While the military men were discussing my situation with a man at the reception I asked what was happening and to please hand my passport back. They said "no problem sir", please wait in your room. I actually was quarantined in my room until the evening when they phoned me and said you may come to the reception to retrieve your passport (with lots of excuses). They never did tell me what happened but I found out at the Embassy that I was taking pictures of what I thought was the entry to a subway while it was actually the entry to a bomb shelter. Things you do when you're young.



Denis Martel, Jim Wright and Leigh Shankland
Can anyone guess the year?

* * *

The road not taken

By Bob Alexander

It was with shock and awe that I learned on a recent visit to my local Harley boutique that my 1993 Electra Glide is already obsolete, parts wise. Oh well, out with the file and hammer. But obsolete or not she still provides a good ride and to reaffirm that I rode out for the East coast in search of fun and adventure on the open road. The object of the exercise was to attend Rolling



Thunder in DC, after pausing for a small libation with a friend in String Prairie, Texas, before joining up with a few riding buddies in Florida on the way. My timing was based on a steady 500 miles a day but as events unfolded and it became clear that I was not averaging anywhere near that so the ride turned into a simple scoot down to Las Vegas and back.

Day one started out great with that satisfying click of T-bag straps snapping home and the rumble of a long strokin' twin in the cool morning air. I was on the road riding fast, riding free. It felt good to be back in the saddle again. I was on the throttle as the ramp clanked down and I shot off the ferry on the back wheel. Unfortunately that had more to do with overloading the bike on the back end rather than any real surge of power. But that doesn't matter right now. I was on the road and ol' Beauty was up on the cam and just a wailin'. I made 95 miles that day. Next morning I got tangled in the eiderdown which made for a late start and a 200 mile day. Day after that I paused in mid afternoon at Mt. Shasta for a small libation and, on request of riding buddy Andy on the same ride the year before, to see if the lovely Carol was still tending bar at our favourite watering hole. She wasn't, having been replaced by the even lovelier Cherie. I made a mental note to skip this bar if Andy comes with me next year 'cause once he gets a load of the even lovelier Cherie I'll never get him back on the road.

So this guy sitting at a table behind me overhears me asking the lovely Cherie about the weather down through Susanville to Reno. I really didn't care about the weather; it was just a thinly disguised excuse to make the lovely Cherie bring her cleavage down to my end of the bar. He said he had just ridden up that very route and the weather was greatly improved. Lassen Park is up at the snow line but warm weather was predicted for the next few days and the remaining skiff of snow at the sides of the road was fading fast. He wasn't riding a Harley so I didn't bother to ask him his name but soon we were buying beers back and forth and telling lies about great rides to here and there. After a while it became apparent that neither of us was going to log any more miles that day. It was a 300 mile day. My daily average was getting better but it wasn't getting better enough fast enough.

Eventually it became clear that the 500 miles-a-day average wasn't going to happen and at this pace I would be too late to catch the rally. So I bagged it and stayed over in Lost Wages for a few days. Staying in a casino and out of the sun for a few days seemed prudent since I had picked up a rather nasty sunburn coming across the desert from Reno. I don't know if I just didn't put on enough sunscreen or if it had something to do with the bright yellow sticker on my blood pressure pills warning users to avoid direct sunlight. I kept the pills out of direct sunlight but maybe that's not what the sticker meant. Let's see, ride across the desert while avoiding direct sunlight. I'll have to study on that concept for a bit. Maybe I should consider riding a Jap bike so I could legitimately wear one of those sissyfied full-face helmets. My face was so red even the normally discreet bartender had to remark on it. My nose turned purple and swollen with blood oozing from cracks in at least two places. How bad was it? It was so bad that as we passed while crossing the lobby a young lad grabbed his mother's hand and screamed "mommy, mommy, it's the crew from the Black Pearl". So I hung around the casino at

Treasure Ivan and stayed out of the sun. I was idly feeding money into the in-bar poker machine so the bartender gave me a free beer. Later, in the quiet of my room, I realized that that free beer cost me 45 dollars. Next time I'll pay for the beer and skip the poker machine.

It was an uneventful ride as rides go, dumping the scooter in the middle of "the Strip" notwithstanding. I was cruising Lost Wages in stop-and-go traffic and zigged when I should have zagged, went into a slow speed wobble and over I went in a heap. A guy in a pickup truck stopped to help me pick up the bike. Why is it always a guy in a pickup truck who stops to help? It was clumsy but to be fair you have to remember that the sidewalk was packed from casino to curb with short-shorts and cleavage. So it was a case of picking myself up, dusting myself off, and heading for the nearest bar. I rode off in search of the Double Down.

The Double Down bar is a pleasant little establishment going for what appears to be an early Chinese laundry theme with various and sundry articles of ladies undergarments stapled to the ceiling. They also feature an eel martini and promise if you can keep the first one down the second one is free. Now there's a bonus. I stopped there with a riding buddy a couple of years back and we bonded with Mongo the bouncer. Mongo carded us so we tipped handsomely and thereafter we could do no wrong. (There's nothing more annoying than ordering the seniors lunch and they don't even card you.) With Mongo on duty our bikes were safe. Hail, we could have left our bikes idling and they'd be safe. "Mongo watch new best friend's bikes. Someone touch, Mongo kill !" Imagine our surprise on entering to find a young teenager shooting pool. Apparently someone told Mongo to check IDs but neglected to tell him what to do with the information thus gathered. But in the end I couldn't find my way back to the Double Down so my point is moot.

The only other event worthy of note was hitting a swarm of bees somewhere in Oregon. A quick br-r-r-r-rt and I was bug mash from knees to knuckles. The windshield just suddenly went opaque with a thick smear of bug mash that quickly dried to a hard glaze. And of course there's always one that just tips the top edge, spraying my face with its bodily fluids. At first I was worried that a few bees might just be stunned and were now nestled in my crotch, slowly coming back to their senses already mad but my attention was focused on the remains of two that found their way onto the inside of my sunglasses. One was junk but the other seemed reasonably intact and was fluttering slowly down the lens. Since I was running 80 mph at the moment of impact it was less likely that he was only stunned and more likely that he was sliding down in a treacle of his own making but in my sudden hyperventilating panic I was pretty sure it was a killer Rambo bee driving himself on with that last bit of adrenalin to fulfill his self appointed destiny of plunging his stinger into an eyeball before he dies. But when something touches my foot it doesn't matter if it's a piece of seaweed or a great white, I still scream like a girl.

All in all it was a good ride with sunny weather down and back. There's always next year for Rolling Thunder. Ridin' fast, ridin' free, ridin' on.

* * *



Mystery photos: Send your guesses to your editor at drdee@sympatico.ca - Names and years



Profiles – Bill Neelin

A summer email from Bill

Hi Dave: I have finally decided to pull the pin - 12 June is my last "working" day and 08 Sept my last official day. No real plans for retirement but heading off to Newfoundland for about 15 days in June/July - after the old timers' reunion at Leitrim. The next big thing is the World InterHash in Kuching, Borneo 2010. That should be an interesting holiday.

You asked for my work history:

RCN/CAF

Enlisted in RCN Feb 15 1962 - HMCS Prevost, London Ontario

Feb - June 62 HMCS Cornwallis (basic training)

Trade - Radioman Special

July - Dec 1962 HMCS Gloucester (Trade group 1 training)

Jan - Oct 1963 HMCS Coverdale

Oct - Nov 1963 HMCS Gloucester (EW training)

Nov 63 - May 64 HMCS Skeena

June - Dec 64 HMCS Qu'Appelle

Jan - Jun 65 HMCS Gloucester (Trade group 2 training)

July 65 - July 66 NRS Frobisher Bay

Aug 66 - July 68 NRS/CFS Bermuda



with amalgamation of Canadian Forces trade changed to CommRsch 291 and base designations changed from Naval designation to 'Military' designations.

Aug 68 - Oct 69 CFS Gander
Sept 68 - Feb 69 CFS Alert
May 69 - Oct 69 CFS Alert
Broken time Nov 69 - Jan 70
Jan 70 - Aug 75 CFS Leitrim
Jun - Sept 70 CFS Inuvik
Jan 72 - July 72 CFS Alert
Sept 75 - March 78 CFS Gander
Feb 76 - April 76 CFS Alert
Oct - Nov 76 CFB Summerside (JLC training)
Jan - Jun 77 CFB Kingston (TQ 6A training)
April 78 - Feb 82 CFS Masset
Feb - April 80 CFS Alert
Mar - Aug 82 Retirement leave

EXTOTT/DFAIT

Sept 87 - Sept 89 Fort Pearson (MITC)
Classification Communicator CM on determinate (term) basis
Sept 89 - Jan 94 Canadian High Commission London England
Canadian Embassy Addis Ababa Ethiopia (Temporary

Duty)

Seville Spain (EXPO 92[?])
while in London indeterminate status
Feb - Oct 94 Ottawa SIGNET training
Classification changed to Computer Specialist - CS
Oct 94 - Aug 97 Canadian Embassy Damascus Syria
Sept 97 - July 99 Fort Pearson (SXTT)
May - June 99 Micro Mission installs; El Salvador, Managua, Tegucigalpa
Aug 99 - July 2002 Canadian High Commission Nairobi Kenya
Support trips to Addis Ababa Ethiopia , Kigali Rwanda, Khartoum Sudan
Aug 02 - July 04 Canadian High Commission Islamabad Pakistan
Aug 04 - Aug 05 Fort Pearson (SXTO) ESMAIT & FSITP training
Sept 05 - July 08 Canadian Embassy Abu Dhabi United Arab Emirates
Support trips to Kuwait City Kuwait, Amman Jordan, Dubai UAE, and Damascus Syria
Aug 08 - Sept 09 Fort Pearson (AITO)
12 June 2009 Last working day
08 Sept 2009 Last official day

An interesting thing while with this department, apparently I was the first term to be posted overseas in the department. While in London my terms kept being extended and between June and October of 1993 I had both a letter of termination in one hand and a posting extension past the termination date! I was told to just keep going to work in London, finally made indeterminate in November of 1993. Not as impressive as some but I have done quite a bit of travel.

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Final Comps "In memoriam" – 2009

Members and friends of the CM/EL community to whom we have said goodbye



Kenneth Thomas 1930 – 23 June, 2009



Robert R. (Bob) Lafortune - 10 June 1940 – 10 Sept 2009