

The Communicator

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What Goes Round, Comes Round

By Eugene Gullason

An old cliché, but as all clichés seem to be, it was born of experience.

Islamabad, Pakistan, is a new city, created somewhere in the early 60s in the northern provinces of that country to open it up to Investment and Development. The Capital, since the creation of Pakistan in 1947, was Karachi, which had served well during the transitional years, but with the desire to expand and modernize the country and in keeping with the spirit of the desire to open the north, the entire Government plus all Diplomatic Missions were transferred to this new city, designed and built, by the same architect of Brazil's new Capital, Brasilia.. wide boulevards, monuments respective of the country's history, and parks were developed and indigenous gardens established, creating a city of tremendous beauty, an aspect of cleanliness and a quiet majesty. Homes, Hotels, Market places and Mosques were all newly constructed and strategically placed for ease of access by the soon to be residents .. brightness and beauty of the city was impressive as was it's location, at the very foothills of the Himalayas.

I arrived in 1970 to take over the new offices situated in a majestic hotel, Named "Shahrazad".. the offices taking up the entire top floor of that establishment, the 5th floor, with a panoramic view of the new city, and provided ease of access to the Government and Foreign Ministry directly across the wide boulevard, which were comfortably ensconced in a massive green space of gardens and fountains. Work place was most comfortable, bright and convenient. My home, though comfortable, was situated on the outskirts of the rapidly expanding city... sitting alone in a cleft of a hillside with an untended field on one side of it. A small home, and comfortable ... though unbeknownst to me for a period time, was soon to be a dangerous place to live as the field next door was a plantation for Marijuana... I always marvelled at how beautiful the plants next door seemed to look and how healthy they were for weeds... well at harvest time, every thug of repute was there to glean what he felt was rightfully his thus creating fights and midnight riots. Thus it was that I was soon moved closer to the office, in a developing area, a nice home, with large garden, a corner lot, with an immense open space across the boulevard which had not yet been developed and was to be a show place of gardens and fountains as the street, in front of my home, and bordering this expanse of empty property, was to be a ceremonial route named Mohammed Ali Jinnah.. after the founder and architect of Pakistan prior to partition. Across the street at the side of the house was another expanse of

Editors Ramble

By David Smith

This edition brings us a variety of interesting experiences (we won't take credit for the letter from the British Embassy in 1947!), and I'm certain you will enjoy them as much as I have.

I especially encourage those from the "EL" world to emulate our former director Buck and pen a few stories as seen through the eyes of someone from the technical world.

A reminder that membership renewals for 2005/2006 are coming up (Membership year is April 1st to March 31st). Click on "Membership" on your web site listed above.

In less than 8 months, our Reunion "Oh-Five" will be in full swing. Don't forget to mark the date on your calendar – September 23/24, 2005. Same place, same times as our Y2K reunion.

I continue to seek any photos that relate to our lives in the Foreign Service. A special thanks to Ray Fortin for a great batch of memories. Please search your albums for additions to what will certainly be a hit at the reunion. Happy reading.

property, awaiting construction of new homes which were soon to be underway.

On one of the rare days off that I was able to take, I was home relaxing in the evening when suddenly I heard arguments and raised voices outside the house. Going to investigate with my bearer it was related to us that a contingent of construction labourers across the street were without water for drinking, washing or cooking and were trying to access same from neighbouring homes and were being refused. Negotiating with them through the bearer I agreed they could have access to my water, but only for cooking and their own needs, not for the construction...for that they would have to await the contractors delivery of the tanks .. not a minor thing, as they were paid nothing during the time they were not working.. and every penny was very important to these itinerant workers .. however they agreed with the terms and proceeded to gather the water they needed. Later that evening I was summoned, along with my bearer, to partake of the meal they had prepared...a most delicious curry and Tandoori Pan (bread baked in a sort of oven dug out of the earth) .. it was absolutely fantastic as was the conversation and joking etc. I had enough Urdu to understand most of what was being said and answered questions they posed that evening about my life and life in Canada in general. Always got a friendly wave and a respectful "Salaams" whenever I passed by the worksite.

At a point in my posting, War Sabres between Indian and Pakistan began rattling, and stances taken, with rapidly increasing rhetoric broadcast on radio and reported in the media... Tension was high and we had been instructed to go into a "Brown out" exercise, in which no outside lights could be lit in the city, and heavy drapes were to be drawn across windows and minimum lighting to be used in the homes etc. The Embassy sent out advisories on travel to the area, and contingency plans soon drawn up for eventual evacuation of Canadian citizens should hostilities break out. Wardens were appointed, and meeting areas devised for rapid evacuation if necessary and a communications strategy developed so that we would know where every Canadian was at any given moment. The Brown Outs and preparations went on for weeks, when all of a sudden, an ominous silence in both the broadcasting and media reporting ensued. Nothing for a week or so... and then an official announcement that the Brown Out was over. A feeling of relief went through the community.

My bearer took off for his home village in the mountains near the old British Mountain retreat of Murree high in the hills some 30 kilometres from Islamabad, a weekend was in the making, and I was at work, a particularly arduous Friday, lots of reports being communicated to Ottawa, and it was not until 9pm that I was on my way out the door and was dumbfounded to exit the elevator into the lobby of the hotel to find it in nearly complete darkness with candles burning here and there. I asked the clerk what was going on.. and he announced grimly that war had been declared between India and Pakistan. A total Black Out had been announced that very afternoon (we had not been so informed) and that there were to be no lights showing anywhere in the city... and it was only then that I noticed the heavy black drapes on the glass doors of the hotel, and on all the windows .. blackout curtains everywhere. The clerk advised that I should get on home as there were vigilante groups roaming the city attacking and ransacking homes that did not respect the Black Out. I was in a turmoil for the routine was, when the bearer left for his village, he left the outside lights on at the house, plus a couple of lights inside the house. I had visions of my house being a total wreck by the time I got there.

I went to the parking lot and retrieved my motorcycle, and got a jolt as I started it for the headlight, run on dynamo, illuminated once the motor was running. I headed back to the hotel... borrowed a bit of black cloth to wrap up the headlight so no light was showing and then headed off to my home... driving blindly ..it was nearly pitch black for not a light was illuminated to even show the road and I was worried sick about the house... and did meet bands of roaming "committees" shouting at people and at places that had just a bit of light peaking through their curtains, and who also seemed in a crowd hysteria mode shouting anti-Indian slogans.. driving themselves to fever pitch. Avoiding these bands I continued via laneways and back streets to my home. My heart sank as I proceeded for there, at my corner lot, was a huge contingent of "committee" arguments and raised voices, chants and cries, it seemed incredibly tense, and I was torn between continuing on or turning away... there looked to be in excess of 200 people there .. it just seemed such a massive crowd to me, and an angry crowd ... but as I got closer, I realized the lights were still on in the drive, and inside the house.. no one had breached the gates or fence, and this rather encouraged me to continue .. When I got closer still, I was amazed to see why. Surrounding my home, armed with Lathi sticks and hoes and clubs, was the contingent of labourers from the construction site, plus a multitude of other labourers they had summoned from somewhere .. they had surrounded my home to protect it from the vigilantes. I parked my motorcycle down the street and walked into the crowd.. forcing my way through to the gate.. and was instantly surrounded by the labourers who pushed aside the crowd so that I could enter the premises .. I immediately

turned off the drive lights, and went inside and shut down all the lighting within the house, then came out to talk to the crowd. I explained to them the reason for them being on, and had to assure them that I was not a spy from the Indian side lighting the way for the Indian air force. It was incredibly tense for what seemed hours, but in reality could not have been more than 15 minutes...in the end, the crowd seemed satisfied, and even apologised to the labourers, and to me, and assured me I would be alright but that I was to ensure I had my "Dark out curtains (curtains) installed the next morning.

Shaking from the intensity of the confrontations, relieved at the resolution, I sank into a very large soft chair, with a very large Scotch and Water, and eventually calmed down enough to enjoy the rest of the night. As I sat, I reflected also on the fact, that a simple offer of water had such a powerful payback. Those labourers had in effect put their safety in danger to protect me... it made a powerful impression on me.. and simply affirmed what I had learned from previous experiences... What Goes Round Comes Round...sometimes 10 fold.

* * *

Of Cockatoos and Parrots (1997)

By Marty Byzewski



As a child growing up in backwoods Ontario, I was always fascinated by pictures of foreign lands. Their flora and fauna and especially colourful birds. The only time one seen these colourful creatures was in pet shops, behind cages, so one had the impression that this was how they lived.

How wonderful it was for me! Each morning I walked to work in Canberra, through a large nature park, having the parrots and cockatoos in all the trees. Wild! Noisy and free.

It was a wonderful experience.

* * *

My life and times in the Diefenbunker Aug 63 – Dec 64

By Bruce Davison

I had the pleasure to serve in the Bunker, a very interesting place to work. I was a cryptographer and our office was on the first floor. As you enter the door where Strad was located we were the first door on the left. Beside crypto work we also controlled the Circuits to Boddington UK and Washington DC. We also had in the room the radio circuits. A pony circuit to Transmitter site at Pert ON. We were responsible for setting up the other online circuits as well that were located on the same floor but in another location some distance away from the Cryptocentre. We used to drive the Brits in Boddington crazy when they wanted to change they would send a note and say come in the techs and we would say go ahead. They had to switch from room to room when they went from techs to ops. For the longest time they could not figure out how we did it so fast. It was just a matter of standing from the ops printer and moving to the tech printer at the other end of the room.

Being single we lived in, our quarters were on the bottom floor. Four stories underground. The mess hall and the canteen, and the Sgt's Mess were on the same floor but on the opposite side of the quarters. We were probably the in the best shape as any communicators in the system. To go to work or outside it was four floors up; we had a freight elevator but not allowed to use it. They had a great phone system in the Bunker; from any telephone you could make a page. So if you were looking for someone, you just called

and paged and had them phone you at your phone. Our theme song for the Bunker at that time was we all live in a Yellow Submarine (Beatles). The switchboard used to announce when the Bus came in from Ottawa for the shift change. They used to use "Now Hear this", but when a new CO arrived and was living in, he heard that and immediately went to the switchboard and told them that we were not a ship and to use "Attention Attention the Bus is in from Ottawa".

We as Junior Ranks were lucky we had a Junior Ranks club built out the back of the tunnel below the hill. They also built a hockey rink. Periodically a page would come from one of the phones "Now hear this DIVE DIVE" They also used to pull that with the Military Police when entering when the Blast Doors were closed. You had to ring the buzzer and when Identified they would open the big doors and you would enter and they would close and you would be in between and you had to confirm via an intercom that you were clear. Of course they would say Dive Dive. Sometimes it would take awhile before the MP's opened it. On their desk they had a sign if you want to know what the weather is look out the G. D... window.

I believe one of the Signal types painted a window in his room. All the beds, tables etc in the rooms were anchored to the floor. Nothing moved. We were shown the Movie "The Atomic Roof" about the building of the Bunker. Apparently if it was hit with a bomb it would shift with the blast the entire building was on springs. The Mess Hall was open 24 hrs a day, You could have something to eat at least 6 times a day. All married personnel who lived out, had meal cards for their shifts, which negated having to search each lunch bucket when they came on shift.

You had to pass through the Guard house on the way to the Tunnel. Having the Guard House outside, was a big help when it came to what to wear according to the weather. Before walking up four flights, down the tunnel and finding out it was raining or snowing, you called to the Guards and they would advise you. We had a very good Ball team, we played in the Military League in Ottawa, as well local teams in the towns around Carp. We also took the team to Petawawa for a game against the Squadron up there. We had 10 players and one Fan and we beat them. Eric Brown one of my neighbours went on to work with the Protocol division in External Affairs.

We had excellent laundry facilities, huge commercial washers and dryers. The dryers were very well built I was told that some of the troops took a ride in them. One very strange story, one night one of the fellows went to do his washing and found a bunch of women's clothes in the washer. We got to wondering on that one, found out later that one of the fellows from the switchboard who's wife was in the hospital had brought in the washing. That took the pressure off.

They used to store the bales of shredded paper at the back door of the tunnel. Someone must have dropped a cigarette butt and it caught fire as we were returning from the Junior Ranks club, although totally pissed, we sent one person to get the fire piquet and myself and other fellow went into the tunnel and grabbed the closet Fire Extinguishers and put it out. When the Fire Piquet arrived it was completely out. We did a lot of fire training in the Bunker, it was deadly running from the Fire Room up the stairs or down, with all your gear on Boots, pants and coat, and a Fire Men's hat.

We had some great times there. The bunch that lived in were super to work with and party with. We had one weird tech that would stay in all the time. He liked ping pong and they had a table. He was finally ordered to go out. Most of were out on a regular basis. We had a great relationship with the Legion in Almonte. Most of us were Active Service Associates, because they hadn't got to the Peace Keeping tours yet. We had a dart league with them as well as some Beer Ball Games.

I finally got to use the freight elevator, I was injured during a softball game in the left leg, we went back to the club and by then I could not walk. We got back into the quarters but the pain was unbearable. The team contacted the Duty Sgt and I was to be sent to National Defence Medical Centre in Ottawa. They put me on a baggage cart and took me up in the freight elevator. We had a panel van that we used. On the way into Ottawa we had to stop for gas at a gas station in the West End of Ottawa but they refused to accept a government credit because the government took too long to pay their bills. I and the driver chipped in our own money so we could get to the hospital and he could return to Carp, I was admitted and had an operation on my leg the next day. I claimed the money used for the trip back after I got out of the Hospital. Earlier I alluded to the Blast Doors, they were huge and I am not sure exactly how much they weighed but you could stop them with one finger if they were moving.

As I said it was a great place to work very modern with up to date equipment. Left there in 1964 and was posted to the Bunker in Nanaimo BC. Not much of a Bunker compared to Carp. Oh I forgot to mention that the people in and around Carp were great. There was a small General Store just up the road past the entrance to the Bunker parking lot. The lady who ran that was just like a second mother to a lot of the single fellows. We would go up there and chat and have a coffee. The town of Carp, pretty small in those days but as I said the people in the Bank and the garage were top notch towards the soldiers in the bunker.

The ball park we used, believe now in the Carp Fairgrounds. Most of the single people spent a lot of time in Ottawa and Hull Quebec, as well as Almonte. Both Nanaimo and Carp bunkers were a great place to get some sleep, all you heard with your door closed was ventilation system humming. Some people used to get mixed up with the times; we had one fellow show up at 4.00 am when we were on graveyard ready the 4pm shift. Living underground with no windows or view of the outside was normal for most communicators; if we had a building above ground with windows they would be blocked out or painted over.

I personally really enjoyed my stay in Carp at the Bunker, and most of my friends did as well. Of course we were young and single at the time. I forgot to mention the Phone system when you were away in Ottawa or Hull, from a pay phone you dialled 13 numbers went into the Bunker Switchboard and out and back to local number where you were and you got your quarter back after the call. It used to drive people foolish when you would dial all those numbers talk for a bit and hang up and get your quarter back. It just keeps coming back. I realize this is somewhat disjointed but wrote it down as it came to me.

* * *

Here's one to chew on

By Buck Arbuckle

External affairs provided many unintentional opportunities for personnel, while travelling on business, to charge an extra day or two for an unrecorded holiday at department expense. Therefore our accounts section in the Telecommunications Division was alert to this possibility though seldom found reason to challenge submissions from our staff. It is within this premise that the following story evolved.

One of our diplomatic couriers had just completed a trip around Africa and boarded a plane for London. He was no sooner airborne than he had what he believed was a severe reaction to a recent injection of disagreeable African cuisine and lost his stomach contents in the aircraft washroom. Unfortunately he became painfully aware that in the process he lost his teeth. What a predicament. What could he do? His bridge was worth hundreds of dollars and it disappeared down the toilet. Sheepishly he confided in the cabin staff who, in the best British fashion, said "Not to worry. The air crew would inform the ground crew at Heathrow, who would strain the waste, recover his teeth and send them to a medical lab for cleaning and sterilization". He would be informed where and when he could recover them, probably a day or two later. This would necessitate that he stay extra days in London with additional charges for hotel and meals. His subsequent expense claim reflected these extra charges.

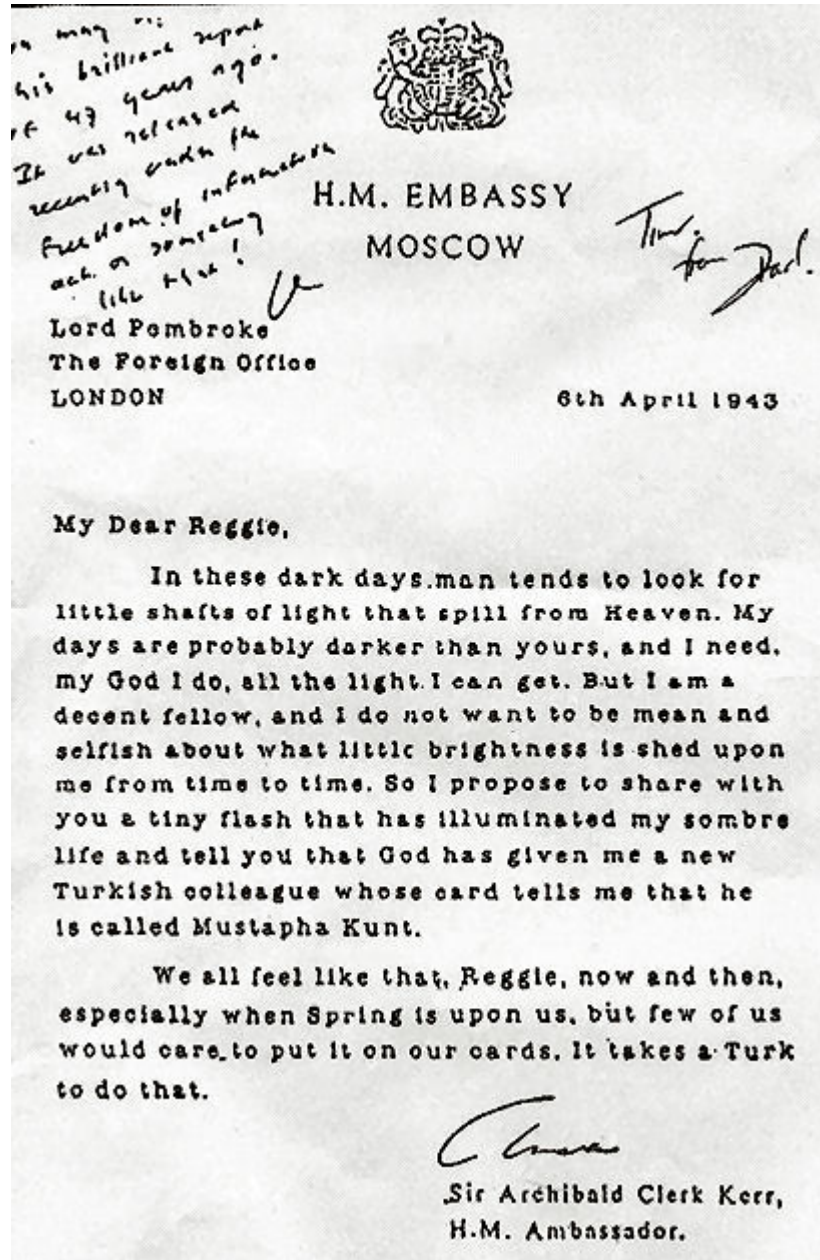
Our sharp eyed accounts section spotted this anomaly and inquired whether it should be approved. Of course the detailed story of the incident travelled ahead of the expense account so we were all aware of the circumstances. We determined to have a little fun and rejected these "exorbitant, unusual and unscheduled" items out of hand. After a couple of days and some honest concern on the part of the courier, the account was approved, saving the courier personal expense over an unavoidable and embarrassing situation. The joke was over and the courier happy. But when you work in a telecommunications environment, stories travel fast and are not necessarily related accurately each time. This one backfired.

In repeating the story, the fact that the expense account was finally approved was omitted and instead, the story emphasized the harsh, unsympathetic by-the-book attitude of the Division. The abbreviated story circulated far and wide and even found its way onto the pages of the U.S. State Department newsletter. It naturally became the subject of a few chortles between international couriers on their long and boring flights and the Division suffered a bit of an international black eye as a result.

Diplomatic Dispatches !!

Submitted by John Lang (Retired Trade Officer)

The written comments state: "You may enjoy this brilliant report of 47 years ago. It was released recently under the Freedom of Information act or something like that! - Editor



Final Comp "In memoriam"

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

- Serge Pelletier, January 1, 2005
- Steve Oliver (EL) September, 2004.
- Jack Tipton (EL) July, 2004
- Alice Wilkinson June, 2004