

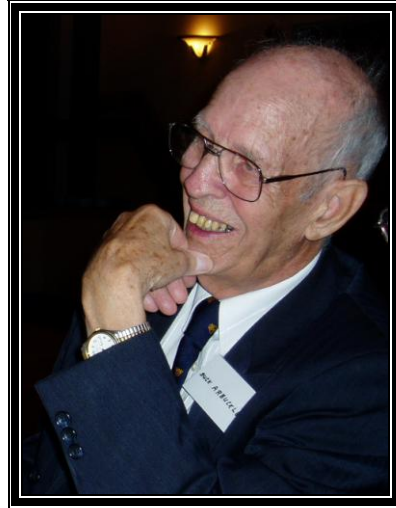
# The Communicator

"Collectors edition"

## Newsletter Volume XI, Final Edition Spring 2012

*In this issue:*

- ❖ Editors Final Thoughts
- ❖ The last of " Buck's Beauties"
- ❖ B.Y.'s short stories
- ❖ Gary's Flying Machines
- ❖ "Snippets"
- ❖ "Memories" by Terry Hayes
- ❖ Growing up in Holland
- ❖ Sovereign to Tiananmen
- ❖ Where are they now?
- ❖ Final Comps



**Thurlow Ernest Shirley Arbuckle 1927-2011**  
**Director of Telecommunications Division 1975-1982**

### ***Editors Final Thoughts***

*By David Smith*

Yes, these are truly my final thoughts - the last edition was only a practice run. So where to begin with this "Collectors Edition" - this may be a challenge.

Looking back when the first edition published in the spring of 2001, I often reflect on the many wonderful stories and experiences our colleagues have shared with the rest of us. It was actually in the very first edition that mention was made of a story about locking someone in a Comcentre and you will find this story is included in this edition. As with Doug Wood's schoolhouse in Sovereign, some things come to an end and with the last articles, stories, snippets and photos now included in this final edition, it's time for me to turn to other things. There was no expectation that the newsletter would enjoy a ten-year run but I suppose we should have suspected it might, given that one can never let it be said that Communicators can't tell stories. The past ten years have provided us with fascinating tales and at the same time, they provided a good historical peek into our careers with good old DEA/FAC/DFAIT. No matter what Foreign Affairs is called now or in the future, it will still continue to provide a treasure trove of experiences from which these stories arise. Will they be the same as ours - hardly, - but they will provide a window to the world of "life in the Foreign Service". When I tell younger folk about

being a communicator - or my favourite title, "Communications specialist" and tell them about how we sent secrets whizzing - no, strike that, nothing whizzed in our time - around the world after spending hours converting a few lines into figures called Book Cypher, their eyes roll up in their heads and you can see them saying to themselves, "Why didn't he just use a laptop and the internet or text the message with an iPhone"! Yes folks, we are now the "old timers" we used to talk about when we were young and it does tend to bring a smile to my face and I'll bet it does to yours as well.

One thing that hasn't changed are the colleagues we worked with. Something I learned early on in this game is that CM's are like snow-flakes - no two are ever alike. Can anyone argue with that! It was precisely because we were a bunch of --- well, interesting individuals that life was always packed full of intrigue and surprises. Working shift-work, and performing duties which in my view were often way beneath our capabilities in the comcentres of the East Block, the Pearson building and around the world were only tolerable because of the interaction we had between us. In later years, when more ladies chose to become communicators, their presence contributed very nicely to the variety that only a group of communicators could provide. There was a time when there was a mind-set within the halls of External/Foreign Affairs that communicators were best seen but not heard. Certainly this was underlined in Roger's story found in this edition. But amidst these challenges, we persevered and accomplished so many good things to the point whereby DFAIT was left but no option but to acknowledge that we were indeed "Good and Faithful Servants". There were some real milestones which we now look back upon with wonderment. The vast improvement in technology was very appealing but in the end, it was advances in technology that "did us in" whereby in the mid 90's the last CM turned out the lights in the "Box" and NOCAMS was no more. All that remained was for Lou Berube and Larry Lackie to dismantle the NOCAMS enclosure where so many had spent so much of their lives and move on to either retirement or work in the IT world which so many did. As of today, we have just nine former CM's left still working for DFAIT in one capacity or another. Each of you has your own view of those decades and I certainly have mine but it should be obvious by now that I, along with so many of you wouldn't have missed it for the

world.

I simply can't sign off and close down the newsletter without recognizing a few individuals that just have to be singled out for their contribution to our lives and as your editor I am taking the liberty of doing that now:

The first person is our friend and colleague John Kruithof. For those that haven't yet done so, I strongly encourage you to request ([drdee@sympatico.ca](mailto:drdee@sympatico.ca)) a copy of "The Diplo Status Story" which has recently grown to a total of 89 pages and every section is a page-turner. ( It's quite readable from the screen). John Kruithof and his helpers dramatically changed the face of diplomacy and if anyone would like to question that statement, just look at what has happened since the infamous day on March 23, 1988 when our Minister of the day, Joe Clark, issued instructions to all DFAIT missions that the time had come to recognize that all employees deserved the right to equal treatment by granting us Diplomatic status. And no, the smooth transfer to diplo status didn't happen overnight as anyone serving in Washington until 1993 will certainly remember. It took five years to put things right in the USA and this only happened because of folks who were motivated to see these wrongs finally righted. Other countries began to take notice and to follow the lead of DFAIT and that's how John Kruithof along with his posse of dedicated helpers both within and external to the Communications group changed the face of history to the point where the Vienna Convention is no longer a document to be used to accord second class treatment to workers who were sharing the same risks and challenging conditions as everyone else. John took considerable time to put this long document together and aside from being a wonderful historical document (you can bet DFAIT doesn't hold such a document) it is riveting reading and for those of us who have been long retired, a good read is always a bonus.

The second concerns two colleagues and they are the webmasters of our two websites, George McKeever and Stan Fockner. As an often heard saying goes, "In the beginning there was nothing" and there wasn't. George McKeever took it upon himself to rectify that, followed shortly after by Stan Fockner. They have given us a forum to look back in time, a place to display photos and stories, an opportunity to leave messages and to refresh some failing

memories. I hope these website continue on for many years providing the Chinese don't hack in and steal all our secrets.

The final person I simply have to mention and express my eternal gratitude to is a man most of you have never heard of and won't even know. That person is Jerry Proc. Who is he? For those with computers, you can read his Bio here: [Jerry Proc's Bio](#). For those who aren't fond of PC's, Jerry is many things but his day job sees him working as network support specialist for Bell Canada. One could easily be fooled into thinking Jerry had obviously spent years in the military or even DFAIT, such is his ability to quickly produce historical documents dealing with our previous lives. He has done so in spades and because of Jerry, our entire world both in the military and in DFAIT has been fully documented on the web and that's only scratching the surface. Photos of the East Block comcentre, former comcentres abroad, crypto machines, ALL of our crypto systems in detail - the list is endless. No, he didn't just pull these things out of thin air and there are a considerable number of our former colleagues who worked with Jerry to ensure our former lives would not disappear without a trace. It's all there on the web now and Jerry's ability to research and flush out the minutiae that a good researcher needs to do was nothing short of astounding. I suspect he is one of the most prodigious webpage developers in the business. So Jerry, my hat and the hat of every one of my colleagues is off to you with a huge acknowledgement of your contribution towards our cause of documenting the working lives of every CM that ever worked for External/Foreign Affairs. Thanks does not even begin to acknowledge your generosity, kindness and help to all of us.

So there you are. Those are the folks I did not wish to forget and then simply traipse off into the twilight without them knowing their efforts were truly appreciated. Naturally, every contributor to the newsletter is owed a huge thank you for taking the time to pen your memories and for allowing us to share in those adventures. The newsletter would have simply not existed otherwise. The situations described in these stories may not always have been by choice and some were downright dangerous but they were all incredibly interesting so for every colleague who was kind enough to not only make the newsletter a reality but to keep it going for ten years, Thank you/Merci Beaucoup. And with that, I wish you all "Happy Reading"

## **The Cocktail Party (and other stories)**

*by Buck Arbuckle*

Most cocktail parties gradually fade into the background of long lost memories. Few are ever brought forward as a significant event worth recalling, but of course, there are exceptions. The one I recall was held shortly after WWII, and was a pleasant enough party among friends eager to pursue a friendly evening with lively discussion over a generous supply of potent liquid refreshments.

The party was held just a short drive from Bonn, in the suburbs of Cologne, Germany, a city flattened by bombers during the war. It was little more than rubble pushed off the main roads to allow what little traffic there was to move about. Some stores, even jewellery stores, were operating in marked stalls set up on the side of the roads while construction crews rebuilt the buildings behind them. My host was a retired bomber pilot who had flown many missions over Germany and had actually contributed to the devastation of Cologne. For me this was a great chance to meet other veterans like myself and exchange reminiscences on wartime activities. The party was really rolling along when the doorbell rang and my host answered the summons. There on his doorstep were two nuns, immaculate and beautiful in their traditional habits. They spoke English and were seeking donations to be used to repair war damage to the Cologne cathedral which was about the only building left standing in the city. It was only fortuitous that the cathedral escaped serious damage from all the carpet bombing raids. My host explained that he could not possibly make such a donation. "After all," he said, "I am suffering a wartime disability and am still carrying a heavy tax load levied to have the thing knocked down".

Such is the aftermath of a long and bitter war.

## **The Mile High Club**

Our diplomatic couriers provided us with a wealth of stories about unusual occurrences, some of which have already appeared on these pages. They always experienced something different, worthy of reporting, whether or not it had any bearing on their duties.

Couriers flew first class, a concession well earned and often repaid when airlines overlooked extensive excess baggage charges. As a first class passenger he would be last to board the aircraft after supervising loading the mail and first off so he could supervise the unloading. In this instance, after completing his check-in procedures, passport control and overseeing the

loading of his mail, our courier was comfortably ensconced in the sparsely populated first class cabin.

Seated across from him a young couple sat side by side, reading issue magazines and newspapers. As the drinks were served they folded up the reading material and began exchanging glances. It became amply apparent that a certain excitement was brewing that needed very personal attention. This was sensed by the cabin staff but they felt it was beyond their assigned duties to throw cold water on the participants; instead, it would be far more interesting to watch the anticipated developments. Discretely, they began passing out blankets and pillows, a move welcomed by the young couple. Well hid under the blankets, there was no stopping them now. Hormones were racing. Pulses were pounding. Locked in love's embrace, they were oblivious of those around them, being preoccupied with their own role in the unfolding drama. Those passengers who were unable to watch could certainly hear. The cabin crew kept walking back and forth with drinks or anything else they could think of. The captain made several quick trips to the washrooms. Everyone was casting furtive glances in the direction of the action, intent on seeing this thing through. Soon the frenzy subsided, the excitement dissipated and the cabin settled back to near normal. The captain resumed his driving. There is little doubt that this couple had fully qualified and met the stringent requirements of membership in the Mile High Club. But whether KLM ever presented them with bona fide membership certificates has never been confirmed. These certificates are extremely rare and as such it would seem they are certainly worthy of some sort of special presentation ceremony. At any rate our courier did not wait so see what happened.

After a few days the courier was preparing for his return trip. Checking in at the KLM counter at Schiphol Airport, he casually inquired what entertainment was scheduled for the return flight. The whole KLM establishment knew precisely what he was talking about and it was several minutes before they regained their composure and processed his ticket.

### **The Royal Flush**

The Queen was about to dedicate Foreign Affairs new Lester B. Pearson Building. The ninth floor, with fully equipped kitchen was designed for VIP entertainment, its perimeter a fresh air promenade with beautiful view of the surrounding area. A small personal lounge with washroom facilities was created for Her Majesty, but a final walk-around revealed that the floor to ceiling windows provided an unobstructed view inside. With only hours to spare, the department

corrected the oversight with heavy drapes, thus ensuring that the Queen's private privy would not reveal more of the Royal personage than was officially desirable.

### **And it came to Pass**

When Pierre Trudeau was Prime Minister he required a new swimming pool for the official residence. A controversy arose as to who was going to pay for it, Trudeau, the taxpayer or private enterprise.

One day when he was entertaining a group of VIPs at the residence, the Chinese ambassador looked out of the window at the confluence of the Rideau, Ottawa and Gatineau Rivers. He called Mr. Trudeau over to the window, gestured at the great expanse of water and asked, "Is this the swimming pool that all the fuss is about?"

### **Those Inimitable Couriers**

In those days when the Diplomatic Courier Service was a major part of our organization, consuming a huge chunk of our Telecommunications budget, there were unexpected spin-offs. It happened like this.

I was nominated to join an administrative conference in Washington, D.C. to exchange views that may be useful to both the State Department and External Affairs. Our delegation comprised senior officials from our administrative offices such as ADM administration, director general of finance, personnel, etc.; in general, bigger wheels than I was. Appropriate airline and hotel reservations were made.

It was the day of departure and we were all set to go. Enter the Courier Service. At the airport Air Canada extended "noblesse oblige". I was standing in line with my seniors when the ticket clerk rescued me; I was directed to leave my colleagues and go to the first class check-in. Not wishing to challenge Air Canada's wisdom, I accepted their direction. After checking in I entered the VIP lounge just a little bewildered. When my flight was called I was escorted to a waiting car and driven 60 feet to the aircraft. I was ushered on board ahead of other passengers, including the rest of my delegation who stood watching me. Taking my seat in first-class I watched sheepishly

as my colleagues filed past to the tourist cabin. There I was, low man of the totem pole, travelling first class on government business while they travelled tourist. I could feel the tension, the animosity, the suspicion as they filed by my seat. Knowing my schedule, those inimitable couriers had asked a favour in my case, and Air Canada really laid it on. Shortly after take-off the stewardess came by and noted that I had been bumped from tourist class to first. She smiled and asked “What the hell did Air Canada do to you?”

The rest of the trip was as might be expected. We met with the Americans, talked, wine and dined, and generally had a good visit. Then it was time to return to Ottawa where Air Canada was at it again. I was led off the aircraft first and ushered through Immigration and Customs ahead of the rest. I must say I enjoyed the treatment but that wasn't the end of it.

Back in the department those colleagues that I travelled with, or should I say travelled in the same aircraft with, instigated an investigation. They were certain I had raided the public purse for all those extra privileges and needed assurances that no unnecessary or additional expenses were charged. The airline tickets were upgraded at no cost and, of course, my expense account was clear, very much on the conservative side so there was nothing untoward found by the “investigation”. No first class favours were paid for and the investigation petered out. Meanwhile the courier section had a good laugh at the special attention extended by the airline and the temporary discomfort the department inflicted upon me but no harm done.

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## **A collection of short stories**

By Marty Byzewski

### ***The City with No Trees***

I never thought that I would see a place without any trees. To someone from America it sounds foreign. The sight is amazing to any traveller who embarks from an aircraft in Ankara Turkey. It would appear that over the years the population of this city has foraged for firewood on the outskirts of town. The end result is miles and miles of desolate and barren hills without a tree to be seen. I don't know what they will do in the future for firewood. McMillian Bloedel would be proud of the people of Turkey.



### ***The Fastest Taxi Driver***

While on Temporary duty in Bucharest Romania my partner Vince and I were heading into town one beautiful morning to do some work at the embassy. As usual we hailed a cab and away we went. The guy driving was amazing. This man had no fear. We must have been driving around 100 kilometres an hour, through intersections, around corners and through pedestrian areas. I could only hold my breath and look at Vince with helpless eyes. I knew what he was thinking and this guy could not understand English. Fortunately Vince and I arrived in one piece. There is a God!!

### ***Flying with a pilot Trainee***

One day I left Budapest, bound for Bucharest, with my partner Vince on Hungarian Airlines flying in an old TU-134A. This is the Soviet copy of the DC-9. These aircraft suck with all kinds of loose things, mist emitting from the air vents etc. Well we circled Bucharest, once and then did our final approach. Now I have flown in a lot of different types of aircraft and this approach was very different. We were fire balling in at a tremendous speed. My life flashed before me as I knew that we were goners. I'm sure we hit the deck at about 150 knots. Fortunately I am here to write this version of the story. I'm sure he used all the runway to stop the pile of junk that we were flying in. I'll always remember that hot landing. God damn commie bastard behind the stick.

### ***An Evening in Shanghai!***

I had an interesting 10 days in Shanghai while on an equipment installation. The city is very vibrant and alive with zillions of people. The heat and humidity are always there with the city nothing but one big construction zone. One Saturday I hooked up with 3 girls from the Consulate and we went out for a wonderful evening on the town. We started at the Peace Hotel near the Huangpu River. On the fifth floor was a fantastic Chinese restaurant where we had this exquisite food. After the two hour meal we proceeded down stairs to the first floor and watched Shanghai's famous Jazz band playing. Later that evening we walked along the pedestrian walk way along the Huangpu River. The temperature was perfect, the air clean and lots of Chinese Junks plying the waterway. It was truly an evening I will remember forever as being special.

### ***The Town of Polite Robots***

Speaking of Shanghai and its masses, traffic and crazy atmosphere, I was once in a city of Polite Robots. I was doing some work at our Consulate in Osaka, Japan and was really enjoying the visit. What made Osaka so unique was the attitude of its people. I can see why the Japanese made such

good and loyal soldiers. No Jaywalking, everyone polite and such order in such a big city. It reminded me of 1984 where big brother is watching and controlling everyone who are afraid or programmed to be so ah!!!! Japanese.

### ***How many people can you pack on a 747?***

Now I don't know if you have ever asked yourself the mind-numbing question. How many people can you fit into a Boeing 747? Believe me lots! Japanese Airlines (JAL) showed me one day how it is done. I was flying from Tokyo to Osaka which takes about 40 minutes. Well we started boarding and boarding and boarding. Hundreds of little people being packed into little seats row upon row. I believe I was the only one on the aircraft that was over 5 feet tall. I was in the upper bubble and normally this area holds about 35 seats. The entire aircraft was carrying about 600 people. On that day I learned how a sardine felt packed into a tiny tin.

### ***Opening day at Macdonalds Moscow. (Or how I cheated with my Diplomatic Passport)***

In 1990 I spent four months in Moscow at our embassy running the communications centre. Well on March 31st a major event occurred when the first MacDonalds decided to open their doors after much ballyhoo and construction. I arrived on Pushkin square sometime in the afternoon and was horrified to see a line up about a mile long swinging around the corner and down the street. Now I really had my heart set on a (Beeg Mac) pronounced in Russian but I did not want to become a statistic and wait for hours to eat. So I cheated. I walked up to the door and showed the military guard my Diplomatic passport and he let me go to the head of the line. It was probably the only time that I was glad that I had that document so I could cheat the masses! It just proves what the west had been saying for 50 years that communism sucks! Power to the Passport!

### ***The Nuns with the Rubber Boots!***

One year when I was living in Paris I made a pilgrimage to Lourdes which is situated in southern France near the Spanish Border. The city had a kind of circus-tourist-carnival-sideshow atmosphere as being a saint, as Bernadette was, makes for big bucks; God or no God. One has to be in this town to realize the power of sell!. More religious gee-gaws then Pope John Pole sells personally in St Peters Church in Roma. Well we proceeded to do the town in style buying all kinds of trinkets for the troops at home. On the second day we spotted what was perceived to be a holy fountain. Hordes of people were filling all different kinds of containers as it was rumoured that St Bernadette herself had

drank out of this fountain. No matter that the fountain contained all kinds of various babbles such as money, shoes etc. Well this was really funny to the curious bystanders. The one thing I do really remember about the scene was all the nuns wearing rubber boots. Is this what you call wearing protection!!

### ***The Lady and the Turkey!***

The first time I flew to Port-au-Prince from Miami I was very nervous. It was my first trip to the Island where there were a lot of political problems. It was an American Airlines flight and there was complete pandemonium in the airport. A little background at this moment would help. At that time, as it still exists at this moment, things were very hard to obtain and very expensive to buy in Haiti because the local currency is considered soft. So with that in mind, everyone who flies to Miami wants to return to the island with as much as they can carry including tons of hand luggage. Well you can imagine what some people will try to carry on board so they can bypass the luggage weight limit. It was a frigging joke. I never saw more plastic bags, cardboard boxes etc carried by so many people. On board the luggage racks were full, under the seats were overflowing. So people had to carry things on their laps as there were no other areas to put them. I went to the bathroom and passed a lady who had a butterball turkey on her lap(Frozen).Now I really believe that that bird was in the lap of luxury! Gobble Gobble!

### ***What's in a name?***

I flew out of Frankfurt one time with my partner Al Couture (Al Creature) on to Ankara Turkey. We were doing a C1 equipment installation and I was there to upgrade the software and teach the masses on how to operate this system. During the first morning we met with the CPM (Local Embassy Committee) including the ambassador who was really a nervous type guy who wanted to know exactly what we were doing there and what we had in mind for their communications future. Al give his speech about the hardware install and then it was my turn to baffle the masses with my footwork. I went on to describe the system and how it operated and would save them countless hours over the old system. I fielded many questions during the hour and everything was going fairly smooth. Now anyone who knows me knows that I am a bit of a wise en himer at times. It has always been in my nature. Some lines are just too good to ignore. Well during my speech I mentioned I would be installing some WordPerfect macros I had built for auto-paging telegrams and other wonderful things. Well the ambassador piped up. "Gosh all this new technology. Hardware; macros, I don't even know what a macro is"? Being in my best form I stood up and said directly to him using my two hands spread apart about two feet! " A macro. Thats a fish about this big"! Everyone broke up in laughter. I

really don't know whether the Ambassador was impressed or what. I could see that Al wanted to crawl under the table.

### ***The Gas Fields of Washington***

This story is a bit off the wall so anyone with a weak stomach should stop reading at this point. (But I know you will not). I was travelling with my brother Bernie and my sister Izzy from Thunder Bay Ontario via Minnesota, North Dakota, Montana, Idaho and then Washington state. Of course in our wisdom we decided to drive straight through which took us about 33 hours. Well it was early on the second morning somewhere near the Idaho/Washington border that we decided to stop for a pee break. Izzy went her way and Bernie and I went the other. The place was empty so Bernie and I did our business all the while laughing and talking. Bernie finished before me and left me alone. Unknown to me there was some poor guy in one of the stalls who I assume was waiting for us to leave before he performed his magic. I guess he thought that we both had left because all of a sudden a wailing gas escaping sound started to emit from the stall. It started with a low hissing sound and built up over a period of about 8 seconds to the loudest I don't know what sound. Sounded like a rocket explosion. There was a brief silence and then a loud Whew!! emitted from the stall. I started to laugh inside. I ran out of the bathroom and into the car. I was hysterical. I was laughing so hard when I tried to explain to Bernie and Izzy what had happened . It took me about 10 minutes to calm down. Boy that was the best laugh I ever had in my life.

### ***The Man with the Hat!***

Well on our return trip from the west coast Bernie, Izzy and I decided to drive straight through from Banff. Man Izzy and I were tired as Bernie was the only one smart enough to get any sleep in the back seat as Izzy and I did not want to miss anything. Well somewhere the next morning we decided to stop for a coffee and donut. We were wasted and in a giggly mood. We entered the donut shop and Izzy whispered in my ear. "Check out the hat". I looked side ways and there was this local yokel with the funniest hat I had ever seen. It was a cross between Robin Hood and the mad hatter. Well we started to laugh. We tried to order but could not talk. Bernie was so embarrassed. Izzy and I had to leave the store and continued laughing the rest of the morning. You had to be there and tired.

### ***Is There a Doctor in the House?***

After I had completed my two month temporary duty in Bangladesh I returned to Canada via Delhi/Doha/London/Ottawa on a British Airways 707. After a short flight from Dacca we landed in New Delhi India to pick up some passengers. It was really hot on the runway and they kept us in the airless aircraft which was really packed. I was sitting with a young Indian girl who was a Doctor when the P.A. system announced “ Is there a doctor on the aircraft? “ Please announce yourself to the nearest Stewardess”. The young girl excused herself and went to offer her help. She was back in five minutes as there were other medical personal attending whoever was having problems. Five minutes later the P.A. system announced “ Ladies and Gentlemen, please remain in your seats while the doctor examines the patient in the rear”. There was a short pause and then everyone started to laugh at the announcement. It really helped to ease the tension onboard the aircraft. Two minutes later a sheepish voice once again announced. “That is the doctor is examining the patient in the rear of the aircraft”. I got back to Ottawa after 34 hours continuous flying.

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### ***An email from Barrie Thomas***

Hi David,

First of all, I think a big thanks should go out to you for doing the newsletter. I can only imagine the effort it takes to put it together.

The only thing I have to add is about the Reunion. As you no doubt know, I am thinking of doing the next Reunion in three years instead of the usual five. We are not getting any younger, and I think a three year time period would be acceptable to our colleagues. However, I was thinking of getting some input from our colleagues on this. I will be sending something out in due course about the next Reunion in 2013, but could you mention that the Reunion is about to take the planning stage in the next few months? Just a heads up for everyone. If they want to contact me regarding the Reunion, feel free to include my email address. ***Editors note: barriet @ rogers.com***

*"On a wing and a prayer"*

*By Gary Langille*



PPC

I have wanted to fly since I first saw a Sabre jet when I was five years old. Finally got to it upon retiring and here is how it worked out for me.

The first machine was a powered parachute. It is a two seater machine which looks rather scary but is actually quite safe as you are in a parachute before you even leave the ground. That machine flies at 30 mph and has a range of about 100 miles, uses about 5 gallons per hour in the air. We built skis for it and it is great fun all year round. You need an Ultralight license to fly this machine, and while it isn't the law, it's a good idea to have an air band radio in case you go near an airport.



Chinook (Equipped for water and land takeoff & landing)

The second machine we purchased is called a Chinook Plus2. It came partially as a kit, the rest we built ourselves. It is amphibious and we use it all year round. An Ultralight license is all that is necessary to fly this machine although a higher level license is recommended. The license I obtained is called a Recreational Pilot Permit. I obtained it through the Smiths Falls Flying Club, which is one of the least

expensive training facilities around. Such a license can be obtained in a couple of months, cost around 3k or so. Something I am very pleased about is that there is no age restriction on flying. I have met a number of pilots in their 80s, and in fact the oldest active pilot in Canada was in Cobden On. He passed away last year and was still flying at the age of 93.

Our Chinook is in a category called Amateur Built. Its maximum possible altitude is claimed to be 15,000 ft although the highest we have gone is 11,000. Its maximum speed is just over 100mph but seems to cruise most comfortably at 75 - 85mph. On days with real smooth air though, the real fun is at 60-65mph at around 700 ft. It has a range of just over 500 miles with full tanks, and gets around 40mpg. It has radios of course for flying into airports, and has an ELT, emergency location transmitter, which sends off a signal to search and rescue in case of an accident. I know it works well because we have inadvertently activated it twice. The first time, a Hercules from Trenton came looking for us, the second time, a military helicopter landed in the farm field across the road from us, following our ELT signal. Fortunately I didn't have to pay for their fuel. If anyone is interested in taking up this hobby themselves, you are welcome to contact me. It is hard to think of a more fun way to spend retirement.

The whole project couldn't have been done without the support of my wife Maureen who did all the fabric work, and cousin Chris, an airline pilot and aircraft mechanic whose abilities in the electrical work, and fabricating parts was invaluable.



### **Cessna 172**

My Recreational Pilot license allows me to fly anything with one engine including a Cessna 150 or 172. I have a friend with a 150 and a 172 who is thinking of selling the 150 which I am considering as it uses much less fuel than the 172. It's in excellent condition although it has no radio equipment. At a cost of 14-15K I may have to take out a mortgage to pay for it. The only restriction on flying is that I

am allowed only one passenger, and only VFR(Visual Flight Rule) flying, no night or instrument flying allowed. The Chinook can handle the same wind as a Cessna 172 for takeoff and landing, but as it is so light, you really get bounced around if the air is rough, so it is most fun in the morning and late afternoon.



We built a hanger for the Chinook complete with a winch system to get it in and out of the hangar. We also have a Herman-Nelson furnace, originally used to start jet engines in the arctic. It can heat the hangar to 85f in about 1/2 hour. We did that to paint the plane in Feb back in '08

**Ed's note:** Gary can be reached at: [garfieldmau@hotmail.com](mailto:garfieldmau@hotmail.com)

### **"Snippets"**

**By David Smith**

- Most readers will be aware that when HOM's retired, they did so with a handshake and a green (Special) passport for life. However, things have now changed and as of January 31, 2011, Green passports are no longer issued for retired HOM's. You can read all about it by clicking this link below ( look for Green passports) to Passport Canada's site:

[No more Green Passports for retired HOM's](#)

Not unexpectedly, our former HOM colleagues did not go quietly into the night however having made strong representations to Passport Canada for the right to continue this perk. They were not successful. The irony is not lost on the fact that for years, we fought to get rid of Green Passports and senior management fought to keep them. Things change.

- The "Diplo Status" story now has a Part III thanks once again to John Kruithof. This is entitled "Diplomatic Status in the USA, Five years after the fact". As usual, it's fascinating and for those who wish a copy (either the entire story or just part III), just send an email to me at: [\*\*drdee@sympatico.ca\*\*](mailto:drdee@sympatico.ca) Unlike the quarter speed circuit from Rome to Cairo we suffered in the



60's, this will be in your mailbox using lightening speed because, according to Jim Rogers, I am one of those "naughty boys" using two channels to burn up the bandwidth on my phone lines.

***We have mail:***

***From Henry Newton November, 10, 2010***

Hi guys,

I am really impressed with the AFFSC Newsletter. As always, it is informative, amusing and very entertaining. You guys should be very very proud of your efforts. Once again my heartiest congratulations, thank you.

Henry

***From Eleanor Ryan, February 9, 2012***

David

Many thanks David for your perseverance and hard work over the ten years of doing the newsletter. Reading the antidotes and seeing the pictures of former co-workers and the equipment always brought back many memories. I know I will treasure the copies of all the newsletters that I have stored away to re-read when I really do retire!

Enjoy your retirement with more free time and again huge thanks.

Eleanor Ryan

## **Olympic torch runner**

**By David Smith/Roger Sinasac**

In the run-up to the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver our friend and colleague Roger Sinasac was approached by the local Amherstburg Legion. It turns out the Olympic committee was looking for a Veteran to carry the Olympic torch in the Fort Malden National Park area (Amherstburg). With most of Canada's Vets no longer able to participate in a run, the Legion asked Roger and as a former military member, Roger was happy to accept. Thus, on December 23, 2009 when the temperatures were just above freezing, the run in his region took place. He explains:



"Usually a runner has to walk/run about 300 meters but I ended up carrying the torch about 2 kilometers. At the Cannons in Fort Malden park, there was a photo shoot. This is where my first torch ran out of gas so my "body guards" had a second torch which was lit by my torch before my flame extinguished (a planned event). This was a great feeling for me as a torch runner. With a full reservoir of gas, the torch weighed about six pounds. Runners were given a white uniform, a white wool hat and red gloves. As a souvenir, I purchased the torch along with a stand for around \$ 400.00. A friend of mine accompanied me on the run and captured the event on

his cell phone. As a surprise for me, he uploaded it to youtube."

Roger's complete youtube video of the event can be found here: [Roger's Olympic torch run](#). Congratulations Roger.

***Locking the Cat inside***  
***by Roger Sinasac***

During an assignment to Warsaw where I was the crypto custodian, I had a big problem with our trade officer, (GL) (you readers can figure it out). It was my feeling he thought he was a CM, and every, (that's EVERY) morning he would sneak into the Comcentre to read the incoming telegrams while they were still being decrypted on my Rockex. Finally, I took action and advised him he was not allowed in the Comcentre but this prompted a snappy response that he was the acting HOM and that gave him the right of access. Further explanations pointed out that the correct procedure was to obtain an invitation and that since he didn't have one, my office was out of bounds.

One morning as I was away from my workplace getting a coffee, out of the corner of my eye, I saw him sprint by and as quick as a rat, there he was in the Crypto room once again. Since I had my key to the grill door (which we all know is akin to a barred door one might find on a jail cell,) I simply locked the door. My tech followed suit with his key following which we went out the front door of the Embassy while the tech asked what was going on. "It's simple, I have a large spy in my Comcentre".

Twenty minutes later after my tech and I checked out an issue with my Volvo, I returned to my Comcentre and Lord, what is that noise coming from the Crypto room! As you readers may well suspect, our acting HOM was very upset, demanding that I open the grill while at the same time I questioned as to how he got into the crypto room without my being there. In my confusion, I asked him if there was another door or secret entrance which I didn't know about.

Amidst the noise, I tried to explain that my key alone does not open the door on its own and now I have to call the technician to come with his key. That little statement was the straw that broke the proverbial camel's back and to suggest someone was a bit put out would be putting it mildly. Our favourite Trade Officer then warned me he was immediately going to call Headquarters back in Ottawa.

With this threat ringing in my ears I had to stress that he must be sure to explain how he gained access with no key and no invitation. Needless to say, these uninvited "visits" ended.

The moral of this story **"Never try and put one over on a CM"!**

### ***Memories***

***By Terry Hayes (an email June 2nd, 2010)***

I just finished reading your latest newsletter and enjoyed it tremendously. The story of Stan Dabrowski reminded me of the two times I replaced him on posting. He opened Tel Aviv for techs and I was his replacement. He spent a lot of time amongst the Polish community, searching I believe for his father or news of his father. Stan was a young resistance fighter in Poland before fleeing to Canada and operated a TV repair shop in Port Arthur before joining the department. It was an interesting time for the two of us preparing a new chancery; I believe we had 6 weeks to wire the embassy for communications and telephones; not near enough time and at that time we didn't get paid for overtime. I worked every weekend with help from my wife.

Our Communications Centre had special surface wiring; it was a round copper pipe with two conductors on the inside separated by a hard chalk like substance. Special fittings connected the cable to outlet and switch boxes. I never saw anything like it before or after. I guess we didn't trust the Israeli's and this later proved to be a good thing. They established a research facility directly below our Communications. We had old style Rockex, the early model without the cover on the distributor.

Stan was in Beirut when I next took over from him. Again, he was very close to his Polish friends and, as in the article, his Swiss friend. Another embassy move! Another instance of our embassy moving before the building is ready for occupancy. This time I was accompanied on TD by Ted Elliot, a senior tech who knew much more about electrical mechanical switchboards than I did. The original switchboard was moved from the old embassy and we had to pre-wire the new chancery and move the PABX on the weekend of the move. When the panels were taken off to lighten the load we discovered the inside was heavily coated with dust. The old technology was hard wired in so this dust was redistributed before it reached its new destination.

The PBX sent to Beirut was a North American model and modified to accept European type telephone circuits (there is a difference ... North America uses ground start trunks and Europe uses loop start).

I returned to Beirut in January to relieve Stan and unknowingly continued the game of musical offices (we had to move and rewire one of the offices immediately after the move). One of the senior officers, the guy who was in charge of the move, kept changing offices; in the end he settled for an enlarged office. It was a busy enough time without having to move and reinstall his key telephone system. The final count for this fellow was two moves and three installations. He was also the security officer and planned for the tech to have a small office in a cubby hole outside registry and the Comm Centre, behind the vault door. I told him plainly that the department better plan on finding a different tech to replace Stan because there was no way I was spending 2.5 years as a traffic cop for registry and the Comm Centre. My office turned out to be a small corner office with a view. The workshop was minuscule but most of the work was done in the Comm Centre so shop space wasn't all that important.

That old PABX was the source of many problems; the dust on the contacts arced and made poor contact; eventually the Beirut office got too large for this switchboard and it was taken out of service and replaced with a more modern one. I thought that was the end of the 756 PABX's life but little did I know that it was going to be sent to Tehran, where I would install it in a new embassy and be responsible for its maintenance. Maybe it is still in operation; who knows.

\* \* \*

***Growing up in Holland***  
***by John Kruithof***

***Originally an Address to the Revelstoke Drive Garden Club***  
***Wednesday, May 12, 2010 – 10:30 a.m.***

Marianne Scott telephoned me yesterday, asking "John, would you like to see Nancy and Clair's new apartment?" I jumped at the opportunity. Then she attached a condition: "Could you speak for a few minutes about your growing up in Holland?". I considered that a small price to pay for the opportunity of addressing this well-established and esteemed Club, so here I am. Thank you for having me. (Explain scope of talk: five memories, followed by why they remained in my mind, questions, if any). I was born just south of Rotterdam two weeks before the Germans invaded Holland, and five years old

when the war ended. Therefore, it is the period just before liberation of which I have vivid war-time recollections. Five events I experienced as a child come easily to mind.

- 1) Hiding in our home basement during bombing raids;
- 2) Strafing of a train by an Allied fighter plane;
- 3) Allied air force bombing of a local German V-1 rocket launching site;
- 4) Skeletal Rotterdam citizens coming to our village begging for food;
- 5) Retreating German soldiers passing through our village.

Item one: Hiding in the basement during Allied air raids. Our house was modest, so while I may say it had a basement, it was little more than a small concrete bunker for storing coal and the odd potato or two. Whenever aircraft were overhead, the drill was to hurry to the shelter and stay put until Mom or Dad said it was OK to come out. Quite often I found myself alone in that shelter. My older sister may have been at school, and Mom and Dad ventured outside, waving white towels to cheer on the Allied airmen. As a child, I had at first thought it must be the bad Germans causing my discomfort. It wasn't until after the war that it dawned on me it had been the good guys. Obviously Mom and Dad knew, and they showed their appreciation even before liberation.

Item two: Strafing of a train. Holland is flat, so we could easily see the railway track just over a kilometer from our home. Nothing obstructed the view. Quite unexpectedly a plane dove from the sky, barely skimming over the grass and daisies, heading straight for a passing train. I don't remember the sound of firing guns, but immediately the train stopped, smoke pouring from it. Uniformed figures could be seen scurrying about. Our family never mentioned it. It was just one of those things.

Item three: Allied bombing of a rocket launching site. Dad took me up the dike for this show. Several Allied bombers were attacking a German rocket launching site located in a sugar beet factory just across the river from us. I could look straight up, into the open bomb bays of the planes, just as the bombs were being released, gradually descending towards the target. Speaking of V-1 buzz-bombs, I distinctly remember seeing, and hearing, one droning on towards England.

Item four: Beggars from Rotterdam. This one haunts me the most. Mostly on week-ends, they would come to our village. Walking skeletons, scrounging for any scrap of food from any source. Waste dumps sometimes provided apple or potato peels, or if one was lucky, a rotting carrot. Mom and Dad were very resourceful. Although the Germans forced Dad to work at a nearby steel mill, he somehow provided the wherewithal to keep our family fed. I don't know how Mom did it, but most week-ends

she would cook a large pot of porridge, and ladle it out to beggars as they came to the door. Dad, ever the business man, would trade a potato or so for a tin of tobacco that beggars brought from the city. He knew only too well that the tin was filled 99 percent with sand, with only the slightest covering of tobacco on top.

Item five: Retreating German soldiers. As the end of the war neared, Germans were in full retreat. Small groups of soldiers came through our village. The Germans had a food depot in a barn just two doors away from us. One day, three or four of us village boys happened to wander into the barn while Germans were eating. We did not have much food, nor did they. Their food supply consisted of a heap of moldy chunks of dark bread, nothing else. Seeing us, the soldiers offered us a small chunk. We declined, and hurriedly left the barn. I don't remember ever telling my father about this. (The subject of war was hardly ever talked about in my family, to this day). Shortly after the war I heard that the Germans were actually quite mean during their retreat. If you crossed them in any way, they'd shoot you dead.

Those were some of my childhood memories. I wish I could add to these remembering glorious Canadian liberators entering our village. I don't think it happened that way in our village. We were free when the last German soldier had passed through.

Sixty-five years have passed since those events. A much clearer picture can be drawn from accounts of Canadian veterans detailed in numerous books. In 2008, a book appeared entitled "The Occupied Garden", 'recovering the story of a family in the war-torn Netherlands'. It mirrors what happened to my family to a tee.

When you read about how grateful the Dutch are to Canadians, I can tell you without hesitation it is all true. Now thankfully living in peace, Canadians are, and forever will be, welcome in the Netherlands. Food I remember most: slices of bread, spread with lard, and covered with sugar beet syrup. On Saturdays, just before going to soccer games, we'd have a sandwich with cold cuts. Quite a treat. Kawsar doesn't like this story about shift cheese. The idea was to shift the narrow slice of cheese back on the bread as you were eating, in order to have it last the entire sandwich.

Just because the war ended did not mean we were prosperous overnight. It took years to get over the devastation of the war. With a growing family, Dad decided on emigrating, which we did in 1951.

Tens of thousands other families followed suit.

## From Sovereign to Tiananmen Square

*by Doug Woods*

"In the summer of 2011, my wife Carol and I travelled to Saskatoon to attend a school reunion composed of grades 2, 3 and 4 who attended Sovereign public school in 1950. The first Sovereign school (the "big" school) was a two storey, two room brick schoolhouse typical of that era (see picture below). The school opened on September 14th, 1914. At the time, it was large enough to house all grades from 1 to 12 in two rooms. However as the population of Sovereign and area grew, reaching an approximate maximum of around 700, more space was required. So, in 1932 an additional one-room (little) school house was opened where grades 1, 2, 3 and 4 were relocated. Grades 5 to 8 then used the lower room and grades 9 to 12 used the upper level of the original school with each group/room of students having their own teacher. In 1950 I was in grade four and our teacher that year was Helen McDonald who is now 83. Understandably, we were delighted to see her at the reunion and to learn that she still golf's three times a week in Saskatoon. The reunion was held in Saskatoon because sadly, little remains of Sovereign. There are no school buildings there now, stores and recreation facilities are long gone leaving Sovereign a community with just a few houses and far fewer people. The following was an address to my former teacher and classmates"



Sovereign School in 1951  
I was the photographer



Class of '49 in August 2011

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### **Small Beginnings: A farm, a two room school and a sense of values.**

Life for me started on the farm south west of Sovereign. All I remember of those days was having a sense of freedom, wide open spaces and wild snow storms. I could play all day in the surrounding fields or on enormous snow banks. I could climb around on the combine, the tractor, the

cultivator or the windmill, pretend in an old model A Ford or hunt gophers with Chuckles my dog. Then came my first big move; into Sovereign. I would become one of the town kids; a new frontier, so to speak. It was here that I would acquire my educational foundation and develop a sense of values and strong life skills that would stand me in good stead for the rest of my working life and to this day. Things like honesty and respect were taught and came naturally to people in close knit communities like Sovereign.

Memories of those early days are easy to come by. I remember the glass beads in the sand box in Primary School, grinding glass in the teeter-totter, scary Halloween initiations in the basement of the “big” school, playing Kick-the-Can or 500 or Hide and Seek until all hours, the squeaky door pulleys at the old and the new rinks, riding the pigs at the stockyard, the spring run-off, swimming in Decker’s dugout, meeting the nightly train and Saturday movies in Rosetown. Everyone knew everyone and we were all friends. There are far too many more memories to recount here but suffice to say they remain a cherished part of my early years in Sovereign.

Then came my second and even bigger move; to Saskatoon. It was a really big place, even bigger than Rosetown! I quickly learned that City folk didn’t grow up like we did. They had a completely different perspective on life. You had to be wary on the street, in school and with those you didn’t know. Honesty had a depreciated value, trust had to be earned and everyone wasn’t your best friend. However I survived, much the better for it.

### **The Start of a Journey: From an Electrician’s Helper to Director General**

The true start of my journey came after graduating from high school when I got my first job, as an electrician’s helper. Wow! It wasn’t long before I realized that this wasn’t for me (at a dollar an hour) so I joined Saskatchewan Power in the Rural Electrification Department. It wasn’t too long before I realized that I wasn’t ready for an office job so, with a leave of absence, I went to Calgary Tech and graduated as an Electronics Technologist, returning to Sask. Power as a Field Maintenance Tech. But I became restless again so I started looking for my next challenge. Ironically, it was Carol’s Dad who suggested my next move. You guessed it, “out of town”. He happened to see a tiny add in the Star Phoenix advertising for Foreign Service Technicians with the then Department of External Affairs. So, I applied for a job I was not allowed to know anything about (“it’s a secret”, I was told at the interview). A question I remember being asked at the job interview was, “do you add water to acid or acid to water when filling a battery”? Coming from Sovereign and the farm, the answer was a snap. Anybody know the answer? Think A&W or Add Acid! A year later in the summer of 1965 came another even bigger move to the Nation’s Capital, which by the way is also bigger than Rosetown and even Bigger. It was and still is a lovely place that was destined to become our permanent home.



After a brief period of training on such things as telephone exchanges, cipher machines, tape punches and teletypewriters I went to work in the headquarters communications centre as part of a telecoms maintenance group. Of interest here is that one of the cipher machines we were responsible for, was called a Typex which I later learned was similar in design to the German Enigma machine which was made so famous during the Second World War. The British managed to capture a German submarine, obtain a copy of the Enigma machine and break their codes which some historians claim contributed to the shortening of the war. Little did I know that I too would soon become much more familiar with the more esoteric side of diplomacy? Within the year I had the good fortune of being selected for an extremely interesting assignment and subsequent career in the Technical Security Service of External. I was promoted and transferred “across the road” to the Technical Plans Section or TPS; another move.

### **It’s a Secret: What am I getting into?**

I knew little of this place “across the road” from the East Block, on the corner of Elgin and Sparks Street called Postal Station “B”, or the guys that worked there. As a new recruit I had attended classes with them, sat and coffee’d with them, even rode the bus home with them, but they seldom spoke of what they were doing. And now I was one of them! As it turns out, Technical Security was another name for activities relating to Counter Espionage.

Now, before I go on, I must warn you that due to the highly sensitive nature of the material I am about to present, I am obliged to shoot all of you at the end of this presentation! In those days, even our wives didn’t know what we were up to until much later in our careers. Probably just as well, they might have shot us also! One Canadian colleague served his whole four years in England and his wife never knew what he did or where he worked.

### **The Days of Wonder: Many countries, many cities!**

My job involved considerable laboratory and research work in Ottawa and travelling to Canadian, British, Australian, New Zealand and occasionally other Commonwealth country’s Embassies and High Commissions around the world to inspect them for signs of technical intrusion such as microphone implants, telephone taps, radio transmitters, probes and signs of physical entry or other forms of technical compromise, to assess the mission’s security defenses designed to protect against such attacks and to install protective systems and devices when required. In the end, my career in this service spanned about 14 years during which I travelled to about 40 countries working in various offices, residences and military bases.

To be successful Technical Security officers we had to understand our adversaries who by and large in those days were the East Block, so we spent considerable time experimenting with and studying intrusion and information gathering methods, techniques and devices as well as the equipment used in support of these activities. We became proficient in the use of radio receivers and transmitters, x-ray machines, magnetometers, laser and infrared technologies, photography and optics, acoustics and audio analysis, building construction methods and materials and finally locks, security hardware and intrusion alarm systems.

My first assignment was in the winter of 1965/66 when I travelled to Trinidad and Guyana. Imagine, a kid from a farm in Saskatchewan stepping off a plane in Port-of-Spain and finding everyone was black! In those days you seldom saw a black person even in Ottawa and certainly not in Saskatoon. I can still remember the tropical heat and the not unpleasant smell of the tropics which I'm sure many of you have experienced. What an eye opener for this guy from Sovereign. My memories of Trinidad include Carnival which was on at the time of our trip and having a woman charge her drinks and meals to my hotel bill. As you can imagine, this situation is somewhat disconcerting when you are checking out of the hotel to catch a plane. I was a rookie then, I had my integrity to protect, so I had to spend considerable time persuading the cashier that I had no idea who this woman was nor that I authorized these expenditures. Of course, common sense prevailed and I was absolved of any extra expense. Can you imagine how I would explain this to Carol and to my superiors after having taken on a new job in security? And...I didn't even find out who this woman was or what she looked like. We were after all, staying at the Trinidad Hilton! Or maybe Ted Elliott put her up to it!

Guyana in 1966 was another experience. On the ride in from the airport, we saw natives dressed only in loin cloths, along the side of the road, sharpening their knives and machetes. We were told that they come out of the jungle simply to sharpen their knives on the pavement, only to once again disappear back into the jungle. Georgetown, the capital of Guyana reminded me of a frontier town; low wooden buildings, narrow streets and few modern structures. We were warned about walking down the streets at night because we were in danger of being attacked with machetes. We were also warned of another technique whereby a wood-be thief would affix razor blades into a long bamboo pole with a hook on the end. With this pole, they would reach through the hurricane windows of hotels and houses to steal wallets and other valuables on nearby dressers or bed tables. If you grabbed the pole they would yank it back causing you to suffer nasty cuts on your hands. One night I

had just gone to sleep when I woke to what I thought was just such an intruder. At the appropriate moment I jumped out of bed with the adrenalin pumping looking for the pole, only to find that it was my next door neighbor checking in. The walls of the hotel were paper thin and it sounded like someone was in my room. Needless to say, it took a long time for me to settle down. I was also introduced to cockroaches in a big way when working in a dark corner of our Embassy. I opened a cabinet and it was literally crawling with the largest bug I had ever seen. Only grasshoppers would compare. Since then I have seen many bizarre bugs mostly in tropical countries including a flying beetle in Kenya that you could run over with a car and not harm it. It looked like a half a hazel nut when sitting on the ground.

New York, in the spring of 1966, was a big city by any standard. Unfortunately it left an impression that kept me from going back until just a few years ago. It was simply an unsafe place to be day or night. Anarchy reigned supreme in Times Square. There were sex shops, porno shows, street pimps and prostitutes and drugs everywhere not to mention open petty theft day and night. Even the beat cops needed police escorts for safety and sirens ruled the night. It was here that I had my first experience with transvestites. My colleague Dale Lamonth and I were exploring Greenwich Village one Saturday afternoon when two lovely girls asked us for a light. Welcoming the opportunity to demonstrate our gallantry, we were delighted to oblige. However as we held out our lighters we both spotted the fact that the “girls” needed a shave. Needless to say, we moved on. All in all, New York at that time was a disgusting example of civilization in decay until Mayor Rudy Giuliani cleaned it up. It is now a safe city to visit and a great place to walk around.

In the summer of 1966, our next big move was in the form of a secondment to the British Foreign Office, Security Department in a place called Hanslope Park, Northamptonshire. Interestingly “The Park” as we called it was only a few miles up the road from Bletchley Park, the home of the famous Code Breakers during and after the Second World War. On secondment, we Canadians were fully integrated into the British service to the extent that we carried British Diplomatic Passports and fully participated in all assignments with our British colleagues. It was during this posting that I travelled to some of the most interesting places in the world and Carol and I developed lifelong friendships.

## **A Detailed Look from Cyprus to Paris and back: Many trips, many adventures!**

With your forbearance, I will recount only some of the many trips because of their outstanding experiences. And by the way, I actually did work hard at most of these places, doing what I explained earlier in general terms. Unfortunately I cannot be more specific, even today.

A little foot note. When we travelled we were accorded diplomatic status and the rank of a Second Secretary, Foreign Service officer to protect us from any interference from local authorities, to keep us safe from arrest or detention and to give us some authority at work. I know, this sounds kind of James Bondish, but someone had to do it! Also, when we worked on military bases, we were accorded the equivalent rank of majors; therefore we were billeted in officer's accommodations and enjoyed all of the associated benefits. It was neat to have a batmen assigned to polish my shoes, serve me tea in the mornings and to iron and lay out my clothes.

Cyprus, Nov. 1966. Nicosia and the island was divided down the middle with one side being in the hands of the Greek Cypriots and the other in the hands of the Turkish Cypriots. Every six months or so the two sides would start shooting at one another (well-sort of) across the well defined "green line" on which the British High Commission was located. The reason being that every six months the UN Peace keeping mandate came up for renewal and neither side wanted the Peace Keepers to go due to the economic injection their presence gave and the fact that neither side would give in so it was convenient to both sides for the UN to maintain the peace thus saving face.

In this instance, besides working at the British High Commission, we had an assignment at the Royal Air Force base in Famagusta and at a military radar station on Mount Olympus. While on the base we were entertained on occasion by the Base Commander. One memorable night we had had a particularly entertaining evening which ended in the Commander deciding not to wake his driver to take us back to our billets. Rather, we, including the commander "borrowed" some bikes parked at the officer's mess and rode them back to our rooms. You guessed it, in the morning on the Commander's desk was a stolen bicycles report. Of course it was soon discovered that someone had mysteriously left them near the Base Commander's house so they were returned and the file was closed. On this assignment I also had my first helicopter ride. We were taken up to the top of Mt Olympus by military helicopter and once we were done, were driven back down by jeep. We went from a hot dry environment to knee deep snow in a matter of 15 minutes, then suffered a hair raising descent in an

open jeep driven by a suicidal soldier. Upon arrival home on Dec 23<sup>rd</sup> I made the mistake of explaining to Carol how unique it was to swim in the warm Mediterranean on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December then get on the plane and return to chilly England. She was not amused. Maybe it was the fact that she was at home with a very active three year old Sue-Ellen and pregnant with Lionel who was born on December 29<sup>th</sup>!

East Africa, Feb 1967. The “Mau Mau fight for independence – 1950 to 1964” was just over, Kenya had its independence and Kenyatta was its first President, but the vestiges of the Colonial days were still there. Lovely homes of white settlers, sophisticated old hotels where we drank gin and tonic “Sundowners” and good restaurants, a large population of British colonials who considered themselves as Kenyan and many large plantations of coffee, tea and sugar cane still owned and operated by white settlers. As modern as Nairobi was even then, it was neat to see the Maasai people walk into town as though they owned the place, clothed in traditional dress of bright red cloth and lion skins, brandishing their long spears. They averaged over six feet in height so people naturally gave way to them as they strolled through town.

Going to a native bar was an experience not to be missed. Although we were warned against such excesses, we went anyway but in a group so that we had some protection in numbers. Hallions was truly a black bar/club. We had to pay 10 shillings to become members for the night. Once in we were split up and escorted to various round tables occupied by lady hostesses for whom we were expected to buy drinks, usually whisky. We quickly learned that what we thought was whisky was actually tea, but we were paying whisky prices; a routine that is practiced throughout the world. Every once in a while one of us would hold up our hand just to reassure each other that we were still ok. One of the young ladies assigned to me explained that she was actually a secretary in an office in downtown Nairobi during the day but to earn extra money she “hosted” at Hallions some nights. It then turned out that she shared an apartment with three other girls and they only had one “going out” dress. They had to take turns wearing the dress so they could go out and earn extra money. Suffice to say we satisfied our curiosity and stayed out of trouble.

Cuba, April 1967. The people’s revolution was then 8 years old. Havana and the country was defended like a fortress. Outside the National, our hotel, were manned anti-aircraft guns. San Salvador Castle at the harbor entrance was similarly armed. As foreigners, we were watched all of the time.

However, we found that the Cuban people were pleasant if not well fed. Varadero now a popular holiday destination for tourists was completely undeveloped so when we went to the British beach house located there, other than the anti-aircraft guns on the cliff, we had the entire bay to ourselves. The British Embassy is also conveniently located at the harbor entrance so it was an excellent place to watch the comings and goings of various Russian supply ships. A previous team from England who had worked in Havana and stayed at the same hotel as us, had found a wired microphone in one of their rooms and removed it. On checking out, the room occupant was charged for “unspecified damages”. It went without saying that we always checked our rooms for microphones and/or bugged phones. Occasionally we were lucky.

Jordan, 1968. It is an interesting country that figured large in the making of Lawrence of Arabia. We, like Lawrence, travelled through the Wadi Rum area of south Jordan to visit Petra. The famous Nabataean city is carved out of solid rock and was at its height from 500 BC to 500 AD. When we were there, there was nothing but a few shepherds, the occasional guide and Bedouin. We rode in from the car park by horseback and spent some hours just wandering around picking up 2000 year old shards and oil lamps. It is amazing that there are so many ancient sites in the middle-east that have not to this day been excavated including the vast majority of Petra and much of Jerash. It was in Amman that I was introduced to my first real spy. He was a British intelligence officer who would spend months wandering the desert with the Bedouin, come into the city, report to the Embassy, go and have a few pints at a local British pub then disappear back into the desert. What a character, and we thought we had an interesting job!

Finland, 1968. Helsinki is somewhat of a non-descript Scandinavian city that is notable for its large number of apartment buildings. In fact, we were assigned to an empty British apartment when there and at first we thought that this was a bit much being that we were used to staying in comfortable hotels. But, we quickly changed our minds, when we learned that the Fins do not seem to worry about their modesty, at least in so far as window coverings are concerned. We discovered that we were witness to a choice of evening and morning rituals by many young female Fins by virtue of our overlooking their uncovered windows. All would have qualified as Miss World contestants. Of course we ignored the scenery and went about our own rituals. However, we always seemed to be late for work and we were, for some reason, getting more and more tired every day.

Another example of Finish hospitality was the opportunity we had of taking a Finnish sauna. The American Marines had a large apartment in one of the buildings and we were invited to partake. The routine was to cast off your clothes, spend some time in the sauna, go for a roll in the snow, spend some more time in the sauna, take another roll in the snow then sit and have a beer. We were well into this routine, as I was sitting having a beer and staring at the floor. In this fatigued pose, I suddenly saw a pair of delicate feet and slim legs that did not belong to one of my hairy Marine hosts. On looking further into this mystery, I discovered that they belonged to a young lady who was similarly un-clad, was clearly not a Marine but was strangely nonplussed in the nude. The feeling was not mutual I assure you. I can attest that a beer bottle hides very little. It was then explained to us that the sauna was for the use of all tenants and was co-ed. Although it ended my introduction to a Finish sauna, I was delighted to be able to take this tale home to my colleagues at the Park.

Russia, 1969. Red Square, Moscow, who would ever have thought that I would stand in this place? This assignment was to me the greatest compliment given me by my British colleagues. I led a team into the heart of the “enemy” to conduct inspections at the Canadian embassy and to install a large protective device at the Australian Embassy. While I can’t go into much detail regarding our activities, even today, I can say that we were considered a deterrent to Russian intrusion and therefore fulfilled our brief for this assignment. Every day that we worked at the Australian Embassy, a coincidental Russian work crew found some reason to be working in the Australian compound. We were never able to determine if they were able to learn anything of value. While we were able to go about our business in Moscow without interference, we were followed everywhere and we knew that the hotel rooms were bugged. A similar trip I took to Warsaw was not quite so uneventful. One evening while I was lounging in my hotel room, a knock came to the door. I opened it to a very good looking woman who suggested that she might come in while at the same time opening her expensive fur coat. She was completely naked underneath. By this time, I was an old hand at such techniques and gave her a rather unkind compliment. She met the same fate when she visited my colleague’s rooms – I think! I was not troubled again by any such attempts at compromise.

By the end of my assignment to England, I enjoyed a well rounded knowledge of intrusion detection, alarm and protective systems, and of the science of Technical Security. I was even briefing and debriefing other teams headed out to conduct inspections or installations and liaising with MI5 and MI6 officials.

In England and later on back home we also gave security seminars and briefings for Diplomats who were assigned abroad. We were also responsible for the continued development of new protective devices, techniques and defenses. Some of my training still lingers today when someone needs a lock picked, or I see an X-ray negative and I cringe when I hear of a leak of sensitive information, like Wikiileaks. That would never have happened during the Cold War when everyone in their respective Foreign Services was particularly sensitive of the need to remain vigilant and security conscious. I have brought a couple of exhibits from those days that you only read about now in old novels. (Minox, lock picking tools and a fibre-optic link)

My return to Ottawa was followed by a posting to Moscow as an Attaché responsible for security at the mission. During my time there, I discovered a grill hinge pin had been cut allowing the grill to be lifted from its mountings without having to unlock the grill, thus providing entry into the secure room. However, we were not able to find any other evidence that entry had been gained and therefore assumed that the modification had been made at the time of installation in preparation for future use should the opportunity present itself. This was routine practice for intelligence agencies worldwide whereby modifications and intrusion devices of all sorts were installed at opportune times that were then put into use later when warranted. For example, the new American Embassy in Moscow was under construction at the time we were there, using Russian labour. The American Technical Security Service discovered, much to their chagrin, that it was riddled with wired and battery powered microphones and other types of probes. This was done despite close American supervision. The result was that the Americans deconstructed their embassy and rebuilt it again using only American contractors.

A highlight of our stay in Moscow was the opportunity to attend all of the games of the first Russia – Canada hockey series. We were also privileged to meet the players and coaches and to attend the practices. It was a treat to watch the transition of the Russian hockey fans from a closely controlled group into a cheering involved group of fans by the last game.

While we were there we were closely monitored. Our movements were noted, our flats were bugged and we were mildly harassed. For instance, we would mark all of our liquor bottles to determine if the Russians had entered our flats and drank some of the alcohol. We would put small hairs across various doors for the same purpose. In our case, Carol had obviously been overheard



saying, “they can do anything they want to me as long as they don’t bother the kids”. The next thing we knew the Russians entered our apartment and stole Sue-Ellen’s special hair curlers; she had long blond hair and Lionel’s special suit of clothes. Another time Carol was obviously overheard saying that she was tired of seeing Lenin everywhere she looked. One morning she opened up the door to find the “The Ten Speeches of Lenin” in English on the door mat. Another time the Russians must have lost track of Carol and I because she was in the flat one day when she heard someone at the door fiddling with the door lock. She went to the door to find two shocked Russians about to enter. With no explanation they withdrew in a hurry.

Again we were on the move, as I was requested to return to Ottawa in March of 1973 on promotion to become the head of Technical Security. I did so gladly despite the fact that I was enjoying the challenge of working in an environment that I had been preparing for, for some years. I had the opportunity to continue to travel, this time to Washington and New York again, South America and the Far East to such as places as Mexico, Guatemala, Peru, Chile and Ecuador as well as Beijing, Rawalpindi, New Delhi, Kuala Lumpur, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, Islamabad and Karachi amongst others. Unfortunately my wondering days came to an end because a short time later in 1976 I was appointed to the Deputy Director Technical position where I found myself responsible for all technical services for the Department which included Technical Security, Technical Maintenance, Telephone and Special Systems Installations, Technical Training, Recruitment, Assignment and Procurement.

I remained in this position until I assumed the position of Director of Telecommunications in 1982, responsible for all aspects of Departmental telecommunications including, operations, a staff of about 460 personnel including communicators, technicians, diplomatic couriers and admin support staff at home and abroad. During this time, I had the opportunity to participate on the task force hastily assembled to oversee the incident in Tehran called the “Canadian Caper” that resulted in the Canadian Embassy staff hiding several Americans until they managed to escape using Canadian Passports. Carol couldn’t understand why it was taking so long for me to get home every night until the news broke about their successful escape. She never asked why again.

In 1986 I was appointed to the position of Director General in charge of all Administrative and Technical Support Services for the Department such as Library Services, Informatics, Records and

Mail Management, Telecommunications, Accommodation Services, Telephone Services and Parking and Accommodation Management. I must say that every day was interesting and busy but most enjoyable and fulfilling especially because of the people I had the good fortune of having on my staff. In those days, they were all dedicated professionals who knew their jobs and simply went out and did them.

In 1991 I was offered a posting to London as the Minister Counselor responsible for Administrative and Consular Services, which Carol and I accepted in a heartbeat. We lived in a lovely flat in Grosvenor Square in down town London and we enjoyed every moment of the assignment. Carol would leave the flat after breakfast and I would not see her again until dinner time. She reveled in the inner city of Westminster as she does in every city. At night we would stroll along the many streets that became so familiar to us around Lester Square, Trafalgar Square, Piccadilly and Soho and window shop in Kensington and Chelsea and along Bond and Oxford Streets.

We reluctantly returned to Ottawa in late 1993 to settle for the last time into a headquarters appointment as the Head of Headquarters Administrative Services. A position I occupied until retirement in 2001.

But, in all this time, I never forgot my roots in Saskatchewan and I still marvel at the fact that we had the opportunity to travel to all of these countries. To actually visit the Taj Mahal, Tiananmen and Red Squares, Kowloon market and the spice markets in Pakistan and India. To see elephants and sacred cows walking down streets in New Delhi like they were pedestrians. To be able to visit Teotihuacan in Mexico, the mountains of Ecuador and Peru and the lovely cities of Brussels, London, Paris, Sydney, Berlin, Hong Kong and Strasbourg is priceless and to think it would never have happened had Carol's Dad not seen the little ad in the Saskatoon Star Phoenix. To have had the opportunity to go on safari in Uganda, or fishing on the Nile or drive from Lagos to Accra and Mombasa, Kenya to Murchison Falls, Uganda were wonderful experiences, many of which were provided with the kind assistance of the staff at the many missions I visited and my fellow workers who made it all worthwhile. I shall never take these memories for granted. Throughout my career I had the privilege of at least touching down in about 70 countries. Some were just overnights or plane changes but the majority of visits were over extended periods of time from a week to a month or more. I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge to you the role that Carol played in my

life. It took considerable patience, understanding and endurance only found in a very special person to support me and to stay with this kind of life. Carol and I figure that over a span of about 12 years I was only home about half the time. Thank you Carol.

***Where are they now?***

***An update to the list of former CM's still working with DFAIT as of February 2012***

***By David Smith***

***In the CS group:*** George McKeever, Steve Galloway, Tom Tierney, Anna Maria Braia-Salvi, Juudy Scrimger, Bob Hutchins, Holley-Anne Tough.

***In other groups:*** Ken Ljungar (GS-MES), Bonnie Ward (AS),

Our former CM complement of almost 300 now consists of just 9 souls. Will the last one to leave please turn out the lights.

***Final Comps "In memoriam"***

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



Loretta Trowsdale 2007 (Delta BC)



Father Denis Daniels October 31st, 2010



Wayne Simms, November 10, 2010



Bob Beaton, January 17th, 2011

No Photo

Tammylin Stevens, January 24, 2011  
(Daughter of Rick Stevens)



Gary Mundy Feb 22, 2011



Thurlow E. S. (Buck) Arbuckle, September 1, 2011



Ted Martin, October 24, 2011

No Photo

Paul Klis, December 9, 2011 (Kingston, ON)