

# The Communicator

## Newsletter Volume X, Edition II Summer 2010

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### *Editors Thoughts* By David Smith

### *Can you name our little Crypto unit used in 1989-91?*

Word for the day – slippage! Again! Ever since I received the “Black card of death” some years ago from our Government advising me that I’m a senior and everyone should be kind to me, I have found things slipping and that applies to this particular newsletter. With winter over and cottage projects in full production, I plead guilty - I have been playing with a new boat! But Bass season opens soon my friends so I know you will understand.

As I prepare this particular edition, I realize, with mixed emotions that the newsletter will shortly be coming to an end. With the first edition printed in the spring of 2001, this 10 year run was far more than I think anyone could envisage. I never doubted that we had plenty of stories to tell – but truth be told, I wasn’t sure we could convince our colleagues to write them down and then agree to have them published in this little publication of ours. Certainly not 10 years worth!

Our experiences were exciting and at times almost surreal. Upon reflection, I can hardly imagine the lives of those who worked a typical 9 to 5 job in the same venue for their entire careers. No exciting adventures while locked up in the Embassy in Kuwait while outside a war was going on, no tales of trying to escape an airplane in Rio while the hijackers were being overpowered and later “dispensed” with, no sitting in a park in Vienna listening to a talented Russian musician entertain the evening crowd, and certainly no dodging elephants while driving down a road in Colombo. Yes my friends, those just had to be memorable days.

It wasn’t that our work as Communicators was so exciting. Reality reminds us that often it wasn’t, but with living and working in the far corners of the world, one quickly realized we should expect the unexpected and it was that anticipation of “I wonder what will happen today” that kept us coming back for more in yet another country where the culture and rules of the day were so different from those of Canada. I won’t even get into serving in war zones which so many did.

A little reminder for all that John Kruithof’s story “Diplomatic Status” is only a mouse click away from being in your inbox. Just ask me. Both the initial story and the follow-up implementation chapters highlight what was undoubtedly one of the most significant changes to take place in the history of DFAIT. The amazing thing is that for many, it almost slipped by unnoticed. It took a CM (and a few assistants) to change the entire face of diplomacy and as we now know, many countries have followed Canada’s (and John’s) lead. Those were heady days and how quickly we forgot those times when we required permission and the assistance of some young FSO to import a suitable baby carriage for our newborns. As Bob Hope reminded us in song, “Thanks for the memories” for they are memories indeed. I hope you continue to enjoy yours as well. Happy reading.

**A “collage” of familiar folks \* (See legend below)**  
*By David Smith and others*



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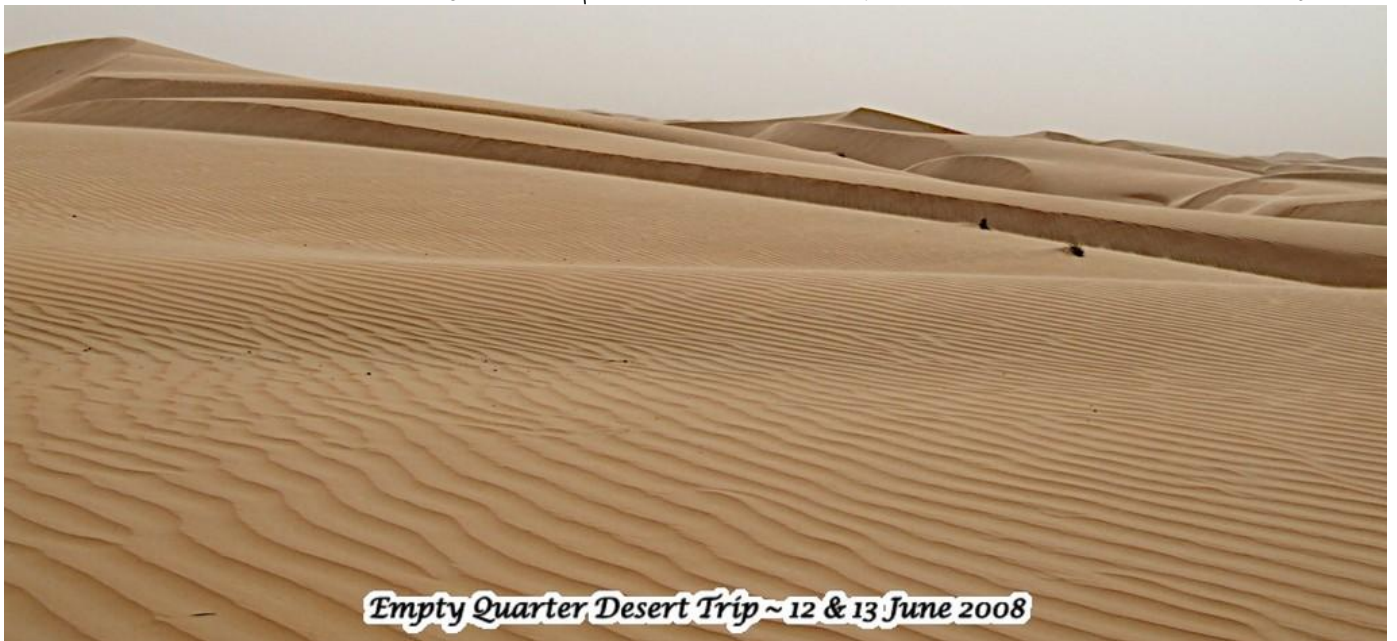
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*Photos L-R Top to bottom:*

1. *Trevor Chappel, September 4, 2008,*
2. *Terry Biggar*
3. *Panmunjom (border between South and North Korea) Note from Terry Hayes.* Ester Gardner managed to gain an invitation to dinner with the General heading the UN Truce Supervisory Commission because she was friends with his daughter; Ray and I were lucky to join a tour allowing us to pass through the Quonset hut straddling the DMZ. Hostile faces stared in through the windows on the North Korean side of the line.
4. *Beirut baseball team with Roger Dandurand and Terry Hayes*
5. *Harry Clarke*
6. *Bob Hutchins*
7. *Terry Hayes (Marine ball in Moscow for 5,6 and 7) Note from Terry:* The ladies made their own gowns for this prestigious event and the guys went out and bought suits from a hard currency store. The suits were the old fashioned types with button flies. Not great quality but the right colour. While our suits were not the standard for black tie we didn't look too much out of place. We had fun.
8. *Bill Neelin (8,9,10)*
11. *Dubai landscape (by Bill Neelin). This photo always makes me think of a cold beer for some reason!*

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## **More short stories**

*by Marty Byzewski*

### ***A Concert in Vienna***

I always loved when I travelled to Vienna. It is such a cosmopolitan and historic city. I managed to be in the city about twice a year when I was travelling as it was one of the famous crossroads when moving about Europe. I always stayed at a hotel on the ring and just a short walk up the hill brought you to a famous walking area in the city. No cars, lots of pedestrians, stores, churches, cafes, and lots of interesting people. I would love to go there after my evening meal and sit in the dying sun and watch the interesting sideshow! The beggars, gypsy's, con-men, musicians, and of course everyday folk. Everyone who wants to have their hands in your pockets you would find there. The first time I met the Russian expatriate was near St Stephens's church. He was a very urban, good looking guy who just happened to play a mean violin. I talked to him as it was his break and he spoke very good English. He then went back to his music and was very talented and attracted a very large crowd. His music was happy, haunting etc and he played all the classic music of Russia and the city. The music made you feel young, free, and just happy to be lucky enough to be there at those magic moments. I saw him many times on later trips but after the fall of the Russian Confederacy in 1990 I never saw him again. I often wonder what happened to this guy and is he back in Russia making his evening pilgrimage to make people happy to be alive.

### ***My Private Hotel in Beijing***

Three days after the Tiananmen Square incident in Beijing in 1989 I arrived in the capital with some emergency communications equipment. I was put up in the *Great Wall Hotel* near the Embassy. It may be hard to believe but I was the only westerner in the hotel at the time. Everyone had left the city and of course the few reporters that were there would not stay in such an expensive hotel. I never had such good service. I got to ride a bike each day to work along with the zillions of other people on the road. In Beijing the bike is king. On July the 1<sup>st</sup> I left the city and flew back to Canada. I will always remember that day. I spent Canada Day in Beijing, Hong Kong, Vancouver and finally Ottawa thanks to the time zones. Hard to believe breakfast in Beijing and fireworks the same day on Parliament Hill in Ottawa.

### ***Nightmare in Nigeria***

I was at the High Commission in Lagos one day working on an equipment installation when the Military guard asked me if I was interested in seeing the inside of a Nigerian jail. He was heading to the local jail to settle an accident that had occurred earlier to a Canadian who worked there. In Nigeria when you settled an accident it was an euphemism for how much money can I slip you to *let the report fall off the desk into the waste basket*. It happened all the time as there was one law for the rich and pray you were not grouped in with the other. We drove to a very big, dirty jail in the middle of town and were escorted into one of the local official's office. It was amazing. No computers, piles of dirty paper and only manual typewriters. I can see how things get lost there. There was no airconditioning, everyone was sweating and it was Hot!!!. After some small chat and envelope passing my friend asked me if I wanted to see the 'Hole'. We proceeded to the back of the building and I could see some cell doors ahead with lots of noise and darkness behind them. The hole was a general holding tank for prisoners who were waiting for trial. It turns out that the relatives have to bring them food everyday or else

they did not eat. I could not see much but the noise, smells and heat coming from that area still leaves me with a bad feeling. The moral of this story is don't be poor in Nigeria.

\* \* \*

### Memories of phone systems

*By Terry Hayes ( Submitted June 3, 2009)*

I remember the PABX in Havana a SG1; I liked working on them. They were so much easier to work on and took up so little space in comparison to their predecessors. If I remember correctly it was in a cage under the stairwell. That was a long time ago, so excuse me if I error on location. They were subject to phantom ring back. I installed one in Bucharest, with Ray Fortin; that was the wrong location for a sophisticated PABX. They would have been better off with a manual board (PBX); it took forever to make connections in places like Hungary.

Space was a problem in many places; the embassy in Tel Aviv moved into an old hotel that was refurbished. The old SE2 PABX moved with them. Like the PABX in Beirut it was covered in dust, only worse because one of the side panels was missing. You might be familiar with this piece of equipment; it is a huge unit with a large, separate power supply. This installation went into the electrical room where there was no room to work and the units had to be turned on the bias to fit in. Working on this unit was a trip to hell. To top it off the electrical fuses in the room kept popping and we had an electrician in and out of the room redistributing power.

The SE-2 differed from the 756 though they looked similar (no separate power supply for the 756). The SE-2 had plug in modules but the special packing cases were gone years before the move. This heavy unit had to be moved with all the components in. Needless to say the move did not go well; the movers clipped a hot water heater valve on the way out of the old building. The damage was not obvious until we fired the unit up on cutover. I won't go into the grief that caused. When the embassy is expecting full service on Monday morning and you encounter problems of this magnitude the stress levels go up by earthquake magnitudes.

Sometimes I missed going out on trips like the above; there was always an element of satisfaction about completing a job. I could go on and on and I sometimes wonder why I babble like this. Maybe because it was an interesting life and not many people can say they had these experiences.

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### On-Line tax software – more:

A link below provides ratings of the most familiar and popular products with thanks to Jim Rogers

[On-line tax software](#)

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### A Severance Package

**By Buck Arbuckle**

Everybody faces retirement as many of our colleagues have already experienced. But I should like to go way back to the very early days of the Canadian Diplomatic Courier Service and recall the retirement of our first courier.

In the beginning, couriers were recruited as couriers and the first courier, Mr. Jack Ashe, was brought into the fold having retired from a career in the army. Not a bad job for someone having had a full and eventful career in the service.

Jack Ashe was assigned to the Ottawa, Washington, New York trip and seemed to have a monopoly on that route. He travelled it twice a week and provided both Washington and New York with excellent service at a time when electronic

communications left much to be desired.

The courier service was so regular and dependable that we had no trouble reserving the same seat, tourist class at the back of the aircraft. Eastern Airlines aircrews were so well briefed that they ensured our courier was brought forward and allowed off the aircraft first. The drill was perfect, same courier, usually same aircrew, same route, same aircraft, same schedule, same seat, first off year after year. Then came retirement. After two careers Jack sought release, not because of the pressure of work but because he felt work worn.

At that time Archie Matthews, then Deputy Director of Telecommunications, thought it would be appropriate to mark the occasion with a gift. He called the local manager of Eastern Airlines, explained his cause and asked that Eastern Airlines remove the “courier’s seat” when the aircraft went in for maintenance. Eastern obliged and the seat was donated to Jack at his severance party, who then had it installed in his recreation room at his house. What a great idea for a gift. Eastern also showed their appreciation with a round trip ticket anywhere in Canada.

## **Images can be deceiving**

**By Buck Arbuckle**

The Department had a mandate to develop the government’s foreign policy and to promote that policy with governments all over the world. For this task External Affairs sought and trained an exceptional resource pool of refined, cultured and talented individuals.

About this time construction of the new headquarters building on Sussex Drive had just been completed and departmental personnel took pride in their new building. It had everything, even built-in precautions against earthquake damage. The art displays were phenomenal; there was even mobile art in one case measuring at least 6’x 8’. A whole wall in the entrance lobby had reproduced on it an enlarged page typed by Lester B. Pearson himself, complete with all his typing errors and messy corrections. And there were large paintings dispersed throughout the building, each with its own name plate and price tag which ranged from \$5000 and up. The building and art were shown off with enthusiasm, sometimes conveying the impression that everyone in the department must be a connoisseur of fine art.

The Telecommunications Division was a frequent recipient of crates of technical material buffered for shipment with large pieces of styrofoam. One of our technicians saw developmental possibilities in a particular piece of styrofoam. It had lots of bumps and hollows and curves. He spray painted it in multiple hues, labelled it with a brass name plate engraved with the word WOMAN and printed a price tag of \$1500. Then he surreptitiously hung it on one of the walls of our new building.

Now a returning ambassador had just arrived home from posting and was admiring all that the building had to offer, including the colourful creation of our technician. The price was within his range and he postulated that if it was displayed in the department’s new building, it must indeed be fine work. He enquired of the deputy minister how he might go about buying it and only then did he learn that this was a spoof. He wasn’t pleased. The department ordered that the styrofoam art be removed lest some reporter learn of it and write an article casting aspersions on the artistic integrity of some of its elite.

## Intercourse with the Media

By Buck Arbuckle

Back in the days when Colonel Lockhart was directing the operations of the Telecommunications Division and Archie Matthews was running the Diplomatic Courier Service, the order of the day was expansion. The whole department seemed determined to shed our reliance on the British for many needed services and pull our own weight. They were exciting times. Even the news media sensed that Canada was trying to stand on its own diplomatic feet and began making enquiries about some of our operations, in particular, our courier service.

One reporter showed interest and excitement in the possibility of accompanying one of our couriers; he felt it would make a great story for his readers if he documented an actual trip. Taking off from Ottawa he envisaged a flight to London, there to be entertained to dinner and lavish parties by the High Commissioner and perhaps even a bit of sightseeing. After a few days rest maybe they would go on to Paris for more official entertainment before returning home. Of course such fairy tales couldn't be further from the truth and Lockhart and Matthews would see to that. Together they concocted a surprise for their media friend.

Perhaps no one could pull off this trip better than Matthews. After years of wartime slugging up through Italy he was well accustomed to great discomfort and possessed an inherent ability to carry on when others failed. The trip was planned. The courier service would make all travel arrangements for both the courier and his consort who, on some sort of security pretense, would not be informed of the schedule. All this "secrecy" heightened the reporter's interest. The media would of course reimburse the government for all the reporter's airfare and additional expenses.

Being head of the courier service, Matthews determined that no one was going to write a phony article about how soft he imagined the courier service to be. On this occasion he would be the courier. The trip took them from Ottawa to Montreal to London. The official High Commission car and escort met the courier at the airport and mail was exchanged. There was no stop over for cocktails with the High Commissioner. They continued to Paris. Still no stop over. No party. No hotel. No nothing. The reporter, having flown all night and well into the next day, was beginning to flag. Nevertheless, Rome and Cairo followed. In each case the embassy met the courier, exchanged mail at the airport and the courier and his friend carried on. Matthews, used to cat napping, was feeling reasonably fresh but the reporter was completely expended. Come on, Matthews urged, we've got a plane to catch. Dubai and New Delhi were next. By now even Matthews had had it. The reporter was completely conquered. Two nights and two days on the go were enough. The High Commission in New Delhi booked them into a hotel for a two-day lay by. Somewhat rested, the pair then commenced their long and tedious return trip, still on duty. The "high living" diplomatic courier had taught the media a lot about their work, even though this trip was especially prepared for the benefit of the media.

Since that event our couriers have been interviewed on many occasions by both the print and the electronic media, but we have had no subsequent enquiries about another educational trip for the press.

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**Editors note:** Death notices in DFAIT's Panorama are published through the office of HFD, but those wishing to use this vehicle should contact Horace Hurlburt (or his replacement) in staffing (HFP/992-0762/[horace.hurlburt@international.gc.ca](mailto:horace.hurlburt@international.gc.ca)). They should be able to assist. The notices are published by the DG of HFD, Susan Gregson (992-3516/[susan.gregson@international.gc.ca](mailto:susan.gregson@international.gc.ca)) and her administrative assistant is Liliana Hernandez (944-1119/[liliana.hernandez@international.gc.ca](mailto:liliana.hernandez@international.gc.ca))

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

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



DOLAN, John Gerard April 7, 2010 at the age of 84



Fairnie, Jim 26 February 2010 (Former EL)

No Photo available: Gero, Fred March 25, 2010



Kinsman, William Charles (1936 – April 15, 2010)



Jon Livingston April 21, 2010