

971 RCAF Air MARSHAL SLEMON WING

Air Force Association Newsletter March 2007



Bedford Basin, Halifax, 01 Apr 1942
See page 6.

Social Calendar

- Jan 20 Delayed a week due to snow that still lingered, 30 of us made it up the hill to yet another great party hosted by Yvonne and Gerry Robitaille and co-hosted by Ida and Frank Fraser.
- Mar 04 The annual 971 Wingers Hockey Dinner and Game night As usual we will start at the Academy Field
Sunday House at 5:30pm for the game against Fulcrum and then onto the Overtime Sports Bar & Grill for dinner at 7:30pm. The cost will be \$10 per person for the meal. Beverages will be purchased separately. An email and call out will be held to confirm attendees. Guests are welcome.
- May 28 Memorial Day: 1100 at Memorial Park. For easy parking get there by 1030. Dress: blazers with
Monday medals, Wing stetsons (if you have one). If you do not have a blazer, casual business dress will suffice. Just be there!
Inclement weather: Retired Enlisted Club on Emory Circle, east off Murray, by UPS.

No hosts yet for March or April. Whatever comes up will be advised by e-mail.

SICK REPORT:

Nothing new to report. Either you are a healthy bunch out there - or too sick to communicate. We continue to send get-and-stay-well vibes to Barry Simpson and Cynthia Greenwood.

ADDRESSES ADDITIONS/CHANGES:

Darrell Levitt and Barry Simpson have changed e-mails from adelphia to comcast.net
Art Nielsen: art.nielsen@comcast.net
Regular Force liaison: Captain Rich Lebreux: See page 10.

NEXT DEADLINE: 14 April. Send inputs to gsweanor@pcisys.net - the earlier the better!

Happy Saint Patrick's Day!



The Editor's Corner

Cry Wolf! We flawed humans have always had enemies, some real, some manufactured (as Eisenhower argued) to suit our questionable motives. Diverting us from a series of less-than-successful policies, it seems that we are grooming **Mahmoud Ahmadinejad** as Enemy #2 after #1 from North Korea, not only because we choke on his name, but the indisputable fact that he may, within the next decade, build a nuclear bomb to threaten the 31,000 nuclear warheads that surround him in bunkers in peaceful farmlands, on a score of peace-seeking aircraft carriers, on 26 sleek submarines, and in aircraft fleets, all manned by the flower of our youth who have enlisted not as a bunch of religious fanatics bent on jihad - Heavens NO! - but in the noble quest of university degrees and in appreciation of the generous pay and perks.

Mahmoud claims he loves us. Why not? We do have lots of lovable people (see page 4 for a few). Yes, we also have many not-so-lovable. We have, just in the US alone, over two million in jails. We have 6 million illicit drug users in the USA, 720,000 in China, 1 million in Afghanistan, and even 186,000 in Kazakhstan. Instead of curing their addictions, we persecute growers, dealers, and users of the stuff. During the last election in the USA, private prison companies donated \$3.3 million to politicians who would fill their jails with addicts. We have many thousands more who prey on the elderly and naive. Then there are those of us who delight in fouling up computers with viruses, or steal identities. Can Mahmoud be a real lover for all of us - or is he just another enemy we manufacture to suit our purposes?

Actually, Mahmoud, with a PhD in transportation, is a veteran of the 1980-88 war that fought invading Iraq to a stalemate. Iraq, with 98% of its arms supplied by the USSR, France, China, Brazil, Egypt, and the USA, invaded Iran inflicting 1 million casualties, 100,000 of them by chemical weapons built in Iraq from materials and technology supplied by the US, UK, Germany, France, and China and sprayed by US-made Bell helicopters. Iran also suffered \$350 billion in damages including much to its oil industry that still lingers.

Area problems can be traced back to King Enmebaragesi of Kish who thought military force was a great idea. He conquered Elam in 2650 BC. Elam got even in 2004 BC by sacking Ur. What we call Iraq was part of the Persian Empire until the Ottoman Turks intruded in 1638 and some 18 treaties ensued to delineate Iraq's borders, the current one drawn by the British in 1920. In 1959, Abd al-Karim Qâsim, who had seized control of Iraq, declared that the oil-rich Iranian province of Khuzestan was rightfully part of Iraq. In 1971, when the British withdrew, Iraq took over and expelled 70,000 Iranians from 3 islands in the Persian Gulf. Iran retaliated by supporting Kurdish unrest. In 1975 Kissinger sanctioned Persia's (Iran's) Shah Pahlavi's attack on Iraq over the waterway at the head of the Gulf. With the death of Nasser in Egypt and the rise of the Ba'ath Party in Iraq, Iraq coveted the role of leader of the Arab world.

With Iran weakened by the fall of the Shah and the return of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (whom the Shah had exiled to Iraq and whom Iraq expelled to France), Saddam Hussein believed the Sunni of Iran would welcome his invasion to free them from the Shias. Besides, his 4,500 tanks and 7,330 artillery pieces would overwhelm Iran's 1,000 tanks and 3,000 artillery pieces, not to mention his aircraft superiority. Iran's arms were mainly US, left over from the Shah's reign.

Iraq did not use biological weapons even though the US had made 70 shipments of these weapons over a 3-year period to Iraq.

Both sides attacked neutral oil tankers, damaging 546 and killing 430 sailors. An Iraqi aircraft attacked the USS Stark killing 37 and wounding 21. However the US was backing Iraq at this time, so down-played the incident, and in 1987 the US attacked Iranian oil platforms. When the USS Samuel B. Roberts was damaged by an Iranian mine, the US sank 2 Iranian ships, and in 1988 shot down, from inside Iranian waters, an Iranian commercial aircraft with the loss of 290 passengers and crew. Eventually the US paid compensation. Compounding the scene was the US-approved sale by Israel to Iran of \$1 billion in weaponry. POWs were not exchanged until 10 years after the war.

Mahmoud has many problems. Afghan drug runners have killed 3,000 Iranian police. The oil industry, worth \$50 billion a year, is deteriorating with ageing infrastructure. Nuclear energy is a safeguard for the future. Mahmoud has helped the poor, but moderates pose a threat to his apparent hard line towards the West and Israel. Although India, Pakistan, and Israel have broken their pledge not to join the non-proliferation club, we shudder at the thoughts that Iran may copy them. To impose sanctions and to threaten aerial attacks on nuclear sites will only unite all Iranians against us.

Napoleon advised: "*Never interfere with an enemy while he is in the process of destroying himself.*" But, is Mahmoud an enemy? He wrote us a long letter indicating how we could co-operate, but we lacked the courage and courtesy to reply, so just ignored it. He then continued the nice-guy approach by granting a pleasant interview to Mike Wallace on 60 Minutes. His show of tolerance revealed his Zoroastrian roots. Of all the conquerors in the Middle East the Persians were the most tolerant of other cultures. Persians freed the Jews from Babylonian captivity, But, Mahmoud shows little tolerance towards Israel as he claims Israel shows no tolerance towards Palestinians (also more on page 4).

Big sticks only provoke a multitude of little sticks to unite to combat them as Mussolini believed and misused.

Humans, a flawed species, but with recurring promises of greatness, need sufficient weapons of deterrence, but overdoing it, as we have, simply spurs others to follow suit and to bankrupt ourselves. Someday, soon, we must divert military expenditures to the onerous and widespread task of correcting our misbehaviour. Can we not see we are very close to losing our planet - at the moment our only home? We must accept Mahmoud's offer of dialogue!

RÉGIMENT CARIGNAN-SALIÈRES: My name is Captain Louis Petit and I am in charge of a company of soldiers who are in Hungary fighting the Turks, quite successfully I might add. We have just received orders from the Minister of War, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, to pack up and report to the Governor in Quebec City which has a population of 500 in Nouvelle France whose total population is 3,200. It appears they are having some problems with the Savages, called Iroquois, so once more this gallant regiment is summoned to the rescue, and I admit I am not happy. It will be at least a 3-year tour and we will be out of sight to the promotion board. These military transfers are also challenging. As we march all the way to the harbour of La Rochelle on the Atlantic coast we will have to order sullen civilians to feed and house us en route. No one appreciates us.

Well, with sore and aching feet most of us survived the long march and are now in La Rochelle where we must cram into the holds of tiny transport ships. The one assigned to my company is the *Joyeux Siméon*, a small but sturdy ship rented from the Dutch. Not happy myself I still have to persuade my men that rough seas, the endless forests of Nouvelle France, and the Savages are nothing to fear by a fearless regiment. It is 19 April 1665 when 200 of us sail out into the unknown. It is some consolation that our king, Louis XIV, has paid for a new uniform for each man, a new sword, and a new musket with bayonet.

It was a rough crossing, most of us were sick at times, so it is great to see the spring growth along the quiet St. Lawrence River. It is 61 days since we left land. Our relief at dropping anchor is dwarfed by the joyous welcome from the people of Quebec. We cannot believe how happy they are to see us - we who are usually resented by civilians.

Our happiness is short lived. We have learned that there is no housing for us and that we would have to move out immediately to the mouth of the Richelieu River to rebuild Fort Richilieu that had been burned by the Mohawks.

Soon five more transport ships arrive with the rest of the regiment and they all join us.

By August, eight companies are building forts along the river at Chambly, Sorel, Saint-Jean, Sainte Thérèse, and Sainte-Anne.

Our three years are now up. I admit we never were able to defeat the Mohawk, but we finished good forts, we patrolled the nearby forest, even in winter on snowshoes, and we made the colony more secure.

Now, there is a wrenching decision to make. We have been offered free land to remain here in the wilderness where, after much clearing, the land can be fertile, but the winters remain cold, and women are few. Returning to France can mean more military service on far-flung battlefields. But, over-crowded France is still home with many beautiful women.

In the end 400 of us decide to stay and select our plots of land. We officers get the few available girls. Many of the men find Huron and Algonquin girls who do make good wives with one drawback for us Catholics. We try to

convert them but fail to stop their promiscuity. To make sure all children are those of the husband the men work hard to make the girls pregnant before allowing them to fulfill their wanderlusts.

YARDSTICK FOR RATING COUNTRIES:

A 5-year study of unpaid parking violations by UN diplomats in New York is claimed to depict national trustworthiness. The six worst offenders are Kuwait, Egypt, Chad, Sudan, Bulgaria, and Mozambique. Kuwait averages 246 per diplomat per year while the others range from 140 down to 111. Albania, Angola, Senegal, Pakistan, Ivory Coast, Zambia, Morocco, Ethiopia, and Nigeria all had 60 or more. There are 22 countries with no violations: Australia, Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Canada, Cen. Af. Rep., Colombia, Denmark, Ecuador, Greece, Holland, Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Norway, Oman, Panama, Sweden, Turkey, the UK, and the U.A. Emirates.

A Berlin organization has produced a Corruption Perception Index rating countries. The countries with the least corruption are Iceland, Finland, and New Zealand. Canada ranks 14th, just ahead of the UK and Luxembourg, followed by Hong Kong, Germany, and the US.

SELECTING OTTAWA AS CANADA'S CAPITAL:

has been accredited to Queen Victoria in 1859, but it was George-Étienne Cartier who proposed it to her. He was prime minister of the union of Upper and Lower Canada (the Cartier-Macdonald government) whose goal was the unification of the northern part of British North America. Toronto, Kingston, and Quebec City were in the running, but all were dangerously close to feared invasion from the USA. Ottawa was more secure, was on the border of the two Canadas, and was on the route of the railway from Montreal to the Pacific. There was expected opposition to this obscure logging town, so Cartier worked through the Governor General to have Queen Victoria make the choice and who would not accept "Old Smiley's" choice?

HE WHO LIVETH BY: We all know the fate of those who use the sword, but what about the penis? Yes, we knew Atilla the Hun was poisoned by a maid he was about to rape, but now Discover magazine (Dec 2004) informs us that Genghis Khan's main motivation for his numerous aggressions was to rape captured girls, selecting a few each time to add to his 500-girl harem.

(Your scribe had at Centralia a pilot trainee who could trace his ancestry back to a Hungarian girl raped by Genghis.) At age 60 in 1222, Genghis set out across the Gobi desert to massacre the Tanguts, sparing their Queen Kurbelzhim long enough to be raped. While he was enjoying doing so, she managed to sever his penis thus ending his eventful career.

March 2007

HEROISM SHATTERED BY TREACHERY - AND A HALIFAX RESTORATION: In August 1944 the Soviets were smashing their way through Poland and got word to the 40,000 Poles in the Warsaw ghetto asking them to rise up against their German occupiers in order to speed the Soviet advance. The Poles did, and Bomber Command sent some 40 Halifaxes on 05 and 14 August to drop arms and supplies to the Poles.

The Soviets then stopped their advance for 2 months to give the Germans time to annihilate these Poles who were London-oriented and not desired in a post-war Poland under Soviet occupation. We lost 17 aircraft including six shot down by Soviet fighter aircraft. The dead were 62 British, 40 South Africans, 15 Poles, 7 Canadians, and 1 Australian. There were no POWs.

Two of the Halifaxes shot down were from 148 RAF Squadron and the Poles have now discovered one of them buried under a field near Dabrowa and are trying to put the pieces back together again in a Warsaw museum. This aircraft was crewed by 5 RCAF and 3 RAF, ages 20 to 24.

Of the 6,176 Halifaxes built, only two are now intact: one in the UK and one in the RCAF Museum, Trenton, Ontario. The Poles hope to come up with a third.

HMS FANTOME has apparently been discovered by a Philadelphia shipwreck hunter where it sank in 1814 off Prospect, Nova Scotia. It was returning to Halifax following a raid on Washington in retaliation for the US raid on York (Toronto). It may contain loot from the White House treasury. Thousands of coins have been recovered. HMS Tilbury which went down in the same area in the same storm is also being sought. The UK government has asked Canada to forbid further tampering with the wreck(s) until it has studied legal ramifications.

THE DALAI LAMA, exiled and stateless, was granted honorary Canadian citizenship 9 Sep 06 in Vancouver. As a Tibetan he cannot hold Tibetan citizenship because Tibet has not been a country since its absorption by China. Honorary citizenship precludes the holder from voting or carrying a Canadian passport.

HEAD SCARVES: A court in Turkey dismissed charges against 92-year-old archaeologist Muazzez Iimiye Cig who was accused of insulting Muslim sensibilities when she wrote that head scarves were first introduced 5,000 years ago in Sumer (Iraq) as part of a seduction dance.

SNOWFLAKES: Of the four snow crystals depicted on US Christmas stamps, one is from Michigan, one from Alaska, and two from Cochrane, Ontario. The two Cochrane flakes are the less bulky, or finer, of the four.

EYES OF THE MIDDLE EAST: Ruins abound of the era when Islamic science led the world, but there is a modern shell that may be rehabilitated. In 1973 Iraq

began building a \$160 million observatory of 3 telescopes atop 2,127 metre-high Mt. Korek, near the Iranian border. In 1985, during the war with Iran, its dome was pierced by an Iranian missile, followed by a US missile in 1991 during the Gulf War. Neglected and looted, it remains cherished by the Kurds who, now in relative peace and prosperity, aspire to return it to its leading Middle East role, with newer telescopes.

MILITARY PILOT TRAINING IN CANADA: Italy and Denmark will cease in 2010 sending cadets to Canada to train as pilots under the Bombardier \$3.4 billion, 20 year contract signed in 1998. This will leave the UK, Hungary, the United Arab Emirates, and Canada signed up, although two other countries may join. Training is conducted at Moose Jaw on Raytheon Harvards (T-6A) and at Cold Lake on BAe Hawk 155s.

MARS - KNOW WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR:

It is argued that the Mars Rovers may be killing life on Mars by searching for earth-like primitive forms. Scientists at Washington State U. claim we should be looking for a water-hydrogen peroxide mix that stays liquid at -55 Celsius, does not destroy cells when it freezes, and can suck scarce water vapour out of the air. The Weird-Life Committee at the National Research Council is also working on modifying detectors on the Mars mission, "Phoenix" to be launched this summer.

ANTI-GLOOM AND DOOM DEPARTMENT: Having criticized our species for its failings, I need to offer some congratulations to outstanding good deeds:

1. Nov. 2007 should see the completion of the Large Hadrian Collider in Switzerland where 1,800 physicists from 150 institutions in 35 countries are seeking to understand fundamental particles.
2. Doctors Without Borders. Although forced out of Afghanistan and Iraq, this French-led group has brought medical care to many thousands who lacked it.
3. Philanthropists: we have an amazing number. Some 55 families in 23 countries have formed Global Philanthropists Circle to co-ordinate grants. The top 50 givers range from \$10 billion down to \$116 million. Beneficiaries include: health, environment, nuclear disarmament, education, research, poverty, and animals.

MULTIPLE STANDARDS: Ahmadinejad down-plays the Holocaust; the Israeli deputy prime minister, Avigdor Lieberman, declares that the occupied territories should be cleansed of all Palestinians and that Arab members of the Knesset be executed if they have ties to Hamas or fail to honour Israel's Independence Day; Israelis publish criticisms of their government far more virulent than permitted in the USA which has been called both a benefactor and a Great Satan.

Quotes

Winston Churchill in 1937 on a proposed Jewish state in Palestine: *“The wealthy, crowded, progressive Jewish state will lie in the plains and seacoasts of Palestine. Around it in the hills and uplands far and wide into the unlimited deserts the Arabs of Syria, TransJordan, and Arabia, backed by the armies of Iraq, offer the ceaseless menace of war.*

To maintain itself the Jewish state will have to be armed to the teeth with every able-bodied man needed to strengthen the army. How long will this be allowed by the great Arab populations of Iraq and Palestine? Can it be expected that the Arabs would stand by and watch the buildup impassively with Jewish world capitalist resources providing the deadliest weapons of war until it becomes strong enough not to be afraid of them?

And, when the Jewish state reaches that state, cramped within its narrow limits, who can be sure they will not plunge into more Palestinian land?”

Grey Owl (Archie Belaney Hastings) in Tales of an Empty Cabin, Ajawaan Lake, Prince Albert National Park: *“Every living thing is parasitical to some degree, but Man extracts tribute from everything even including the less fortunate of his own kind. Almost always he extorts far beyond his needs, destroying without thought for the future - the parasite supreme of all the earth.”*

Sheila Watt-Cloutier, Canadian Inuit spokeswoman, urging action against Global Warming that is destroying the Inuit way of life: (Sheila, along with Al Gore, has been nominated for a Nobel prize)

“We are fighting to stay cold!”

Carl Sagan when asked for his gut feeling after he had declined to give an opinion pending scientific investigations:

“I try not to think with my gut.”

Feedback

Much-appreciated feedback has, this time, come from LGen (Retired in Stittsville, Ontario) Bill Carr who, on receipt of the January newsletter, submitted:

In the case of *Je me souviens*, the author was Eugène-Étienne Taché, deputy minister, poet and architect of Quebec's House of Parliament. He intended it to convey, 'remember where you came from, who you are, and all your ancestors who toiled for you; remember that you owe it to their memory to carry their heritage in the future, to be worthy of them.' The whole verse goes "I remember that I was born under the lily and I grew up under the rose." I'm informed that the words are the motto of many people, and for example, to bring it close to home, especially on 11 Nov, the motto means precisely "Lest we forget" British wisdom and munificence (sometimes unintended?) assured it's survival!

Your Churchill Railway story caught my interest also, because in the process of putting together some stuff on Exercise Musk-Ox for the CAHS et al, I was reminded of the Crystal Route story which we had been exposed to in The Pas in 1945. Indeed when we arrived with our Norseman aircraft in June'45 we were the first Canadian military reps the locals had seen. Some US military were still based at the airport. To cut a long story short, The Pas, Churchill, and Coral Harbour airfields were built by the US Army purely to serve as the evacuation route for casualties from the war in Europe. Each had an expansive military medical facility, and at Coral, for example, the pharmacy was still stocked with medicines, -no staff- when we arrived later that summer The idea was that the regular routes, through Goose, Chimo, Frobisher, BW 1 & 8, etc would be crowded with war traffic and the Eastern part of the US would be too busy with war output to accommodate the flow of casualties as well. With roughly 7,000 troops, the US Army built and manned the fields and as well set up guard stations along the HB Railway. Their Maj Gen in Winnipeg, operated aloofly as a power unto himself and not even the wheels in Ottawa realized what was happening until toward the end of the War. The stuff we don't know or aren't interested in amazes me.

I am taking your Great Escape comments to the War Museum. They have still not amended the offending Bomber Command plaque.

Book Reviews

CONVOYS OF WWII, by Dorothy Pedersen, Altitude Publishing, Canmore, AB, 2005, 120 pages.

No words in a book, read in a comfortable, warm chair, can ever convey the piercing cold, wet sting of the North Atlantic, the endless rolling and tossing of a fragile corvette crowded with fuel and ammunition, the endless noise of clanging metal, the alarm of scraping partially-submerged ice floes, the smell of cordite, the massive flames of a doomed tanker, or trying to grab onto oil-soaked survivors. Nevertheless, this is a good, little book to give an inkling of what we owe the men and boys who manned these convoys, crossing after crossing, for the princely pay of \$45 per month. 58 Canadian merchant ships were sunk for a loss of 1,146 lives. Disgracefully, it took Canada almost 50 years to recognize merchant seamen as “veterans”.

This book, loaned to me by Frank Fraser, immediately caught my eye as the cover depicts 45 ships of my convoy crowded into Bedford Basin, Halifax, 01 April 1942. I remember vividly seeing this sight as our troop train rounded the bend and we saw what we knew would be our convoy. It was a very sobering sight to see some of the old rusted hulks that were still considered seaworthy, knowing that the speed of the convoy is the speed of the slowest ship. It was to take us 11 days and nights to cross the pond, 5 of which were under constant U-boat attack. It left me with the deepest respect for the men and boys who manned the cargo ships and the horribly-uncomfortable escort vessels.

This story starts with the heart-rending description of an oil tanker being torpedoed and rescue ships able to dally only long enough to pick up a few survivors, leaving the others to sink beneath the icy waves. The convoy had to keep moving trying to avoid the U-boats. Saving cargo was more important than saving lives. Fast convoys moved at 9 knots, slow convoys at 7 knots which added 3 days to the time it took to cross the ocean. There were many stragglers, unable to keep up even with the slow speed of the convoy, that became easy prey to U-boats.

All too briefly parts of the story is told of Convoy SC7, that left Halifax 5 Oct 1940, to become the most heavily attacked convoy of the war. HMS Bluebell, with room for a crew of 60, was crowded with 300 survivors it bravely rescued. Thousands of Canadians crossed the pond on the fast, unescorted *Louis Pasteur*, a luxury liner that, on her maiden voyage, fled France carrying 193 tonnes of gold bullion for safekeeping in Canada.

There were lighter moments. One day when the frigate HMCS Sea Cliff was docked in the UK, the crew was ordered to take a pleasant holiday on a nearby beach. When they returned they found a crew of British WRENS had cleaned their ship from top to bottom.

One veteran recalls being in convoy at sea when word came of VE Day. What a surprise when 5 U-Boats, they did not know were there, surfaced to surrender and the shock of seeing that the German crews were, like themselves, just kids.

HORSE, by J. Edward Chamberlin, NY, 2006, 260 pages

I bought this book, advertised in the Discovery Channel Book Club, intending it as a Christmas gift to a horse-owning daughter. Of course, I had to glance through it - and became so interested that I could not set it down. A professor at the University of Toronto who was raised in the Peace River country of Alberta and in SW Ontario, conveys an amazing knowledge of the relationship between horse and man throughout the ages and in cultures around the world. He writes so well that even his descriptions of horse anatomy and the accoutrements people place on it proved interesting.

The book was so good I decided I needed two more copies, one for another daughter and one for myself. My order was returned “Sold Out!”. I will have to look elsewhere. Professor Chamberlin has published several books and is a senior Research Associate with the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in Canada.

BARBARIANS, by TERRY JONES and ALAN EREIRA, BBC Books, London, 2006, 288 pages.

This book provides a much-needed new 700-year look in 3 continents at so-called Barbarians - Celts, Goths, Vandals, Visigoths, Huns, and the like. The authors blame Roman historians, and Church scribes who succeeded them, for distorting history and ignoring the technical and cultural achievements of non-Roman peoples while exaggerating their destructiveness. The new villain is Rome that copied so many ideas from the “barbarians” and destroyed so much of their land. The sack of Rome by Goths and Vandals that horrified us in our history classes were not scenes of immense destruction - the Goths destroyed only one building, the Vandals none at all. Celts had been building roads for over 200 years before the Romans built the Appian Way in 312 BC. A Celtic woman could live an equal to, and independent of, men. Not so in Rome. From 470 BC the Persians built an empire of tolerance, respecting the customs and gods of people they “liberated”. They freed the Jews from Babylonian captivity. Their deity, Ahura Mazda, and prophet Zoroaster, decreed religious tolerance akin to a human rights charter.

EXTRAORDINARY THINGS, by Diana DeLuca, iUniverse, NY, 2007, 200 pages, \$14.95

In the March 2006 newsletter, I reviewed this interesting book while it was in the production stage. Diana deserves our congratulations on its successful publication.

EVOLUTION - FINALLY A PURPOSE? Devoid of compassion in an ever-changing universe, Evolution has plunged ahead on a trial-and-error basis with immense cruelty and waste. It is the most guilty of all for war crimes, but it has produced a creature that is beginning to understand it and to fight back. We humans now know that galaxies are fuelled by massive Black Holes but that, ever since the Big Bang, the frightening eat-or-be eaten principle persists to the detriment of both the eaters and the eaten but, without which, we would not exist. We now know that big galaxies eat smaller galaxies, that Andromeda, is racing towards us at 700,000 mph and is only 2 million light years away, to engage our Milky Way in a dance of death - and rebirth as Hinduism predicts? You do the math and tell me how much time to I have for more newsletters ($186,000 \times 60 \times 60 \times 24, \times 365 \times 2,000,000 \div 700,000$). All living things, that we know of, have short, finite lives that are made possible only by the daily killing and eating of other living life forms. But, you may ask, what about the more peaceful plant kingdom? It has learned to convert inorganic material into organic without the need to eat other species. Alas, even here there is warfare. Plants fight for territory. Some secrete poisons to kill off rivals. Succession is a well-known phenomenon where, over time, one species succeeds another in the same plot of land. Change is the only thing that has any permanence. And yet, a warm glimmer of hope has been seeded. Some of us have introduced ethics, and have started a long, slow process of directing a more humane, if still brief, existence for all life forms. Hopefully soon, we will be able to take a glass of water, a lump of coal, and a handful of soil and convert them into nourishing foods to retire our need to prey on other species. Then, we can turn our attention to taming the universe. A hopeless dream? Perhaps - if we fail to accept the challenge!

PALAEONTOLOGIST TAXON VOCABULARY UPDATE:

- Lazarus: Creatures that reappear in the fossil record after a long absence. (Biblical resurrection - coelacanth)
- Elvis: Species that evolve to look like other species. (So many reported Elvis look-alikes)
- Hoffa: Species whose bones have yet to be discovered. (The Jimmy Hoffa 1975 mystery).
- Zombie: When hard fossils are washed out of sediments and deposited in younger formations.

THE AYLES ICE SHELF, ELLESMERE ISLAND: It is distressing that it took the Canadian Ice Service 16 months to discover that this 66-square-kilometre chunk of ice, 30 metres thick, had severed its connection with the island mainland and had drifted off and that 1/4 of it has now melted. This example of Global Warming was not found, as it should have been, by routine aerial reconnaissance but by a belated study of satellite photographs. About 90% of the ice that I saw fringing Ellesmere Island some 50 years ago has slowly disappeared. Lacking the energy and transportation to go back for an updated look at the island, I am relegated to seeking the odd photograph rarely published.

DICK STOVEL, NEWFOUNDLAND, and RICK HILLIER: Reminding us that, whereas Newfoundland and Labrador have only 2% of Canada's population, they provide 20% of the Armed Forces, Dick Stovel has sent us Newfoundland's Rick Mercer's account of accompanying Newfoundland's Rick Hillier (Chief of the Defence Staff) on his Christmas visit to Afghanistan to visit, and shake the hand of, every Canadian in harm's way in Afghanistan at all of the remote and isolated sites that were former Taliban strongholds.

JULIE DILL AND STROKES: Using the example of a woman who died needlessly because her friends did not recognize the symptoms of a stroke, Julie has sent us this advice: Ask the person to (1) smile, (2) speak a simple sentence, (3) raise both arms, and (4) stick out their tongue. If he or she has trouble with any of these tasks, call 911, describing the symptoms. Neurologists claim they can reverse stroke effects if caught within 3 hours.

TOM and KATE KUPECZ: The 19 Jan 07 issue of the 8 Wing, Trenton, *Contact*, devotes page 9 to a flattering outline of the career of Tom who left us last year for the Canadian Forces Aerospace Warfare Centre. Tom and Kate, who have had only 17 moves in 42 years of Service, will retire next year to join the busiest occupation of all.

971 WINGERS HOCKEY, by Gary Thompson: The 971 Wingers are in the midst of their 4th season. The team has had some milestones over that time. We have won the NORAD Canadian Hockey League Championship in 2005 after winning in 2003 as the Hockey Cage. The team has been a perennial contender, losing by 1 goal in 2004 and 2006, to Summit Chiropractic, the eventual Victor. A competitive and entertaining rivalry has been created between the Wingers and Summit, with each team winning 2 Championships over the past 4 seasons. This year's finals may once again come down to these 2 teams battling it out for the Cup.

Besides this event being a social, this gathering will be used to rally support in covering the league fees. To date I have collected \$90 of the \$450 fee. Donations are on a voluntary basis. The team and I personally thank you for your previous contributions and look forward to your continued support. Payments can be sent directly to the Social Director, Gary Thompson. For those making an offering of \$50 or more, a team jersey with your name will be available.

COUGARS AND NORTHERN ONTARIO: Linda Sweanor, a leading North American authority on cougars (aka: pumas, mountain lions, etc), as well as the daughter of Joan and George, has been asked to be a speaker at the conference 25 May at Trent University, Peterborough, sponsored by the Ontario Puma Foundation. It appears that evidence of two recent cougars, one from South America (a released pet?), have been found vacationing in northern Ontario. There are hints of more and there is a desire to re-introduce lions into a habitat denied them for so long. Linda, and her husband Ken Logan, are the authors of *Desert Puma*, a 464-page definitive study based on 11 years of studying mountain lions on the extensive White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico where lions were protected from human predation.

INTERNATIONAL POLAR YEAR 2007-2009: Over 65 countries and 50,000 scientists will participate. Over \$1 billion is earmarked for research. Canada is spending \$150 million plus \$70 million on a study of the Arctic and Atlantic floors. Under the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea, Canada has until 2013 to claim parts of the seabed that are extensions of the continental shelf - estimated to be the size of the 3 Prairie Provinces,

HAMSTER POWER: The UK magazine *New Scientist* poses problems to readers each week and pays £25 for each solution published. Recently, it asked "Could hamsters running on wheels be an answer to the energy crisis?"

Five solutions were published and here are some of the computations:

It would take 6,500 billion hamsters to supply the world's energy needs. Feeding these hamsters would require 36 billion tonnes of wheat, 60 times the current world output. As the average life span of a hamster is 2.5 years we would have billions of tonnes of depleted hamsters requiring funeral services, not to mention the enormous increase needed in animal-rights lawyers.

One reader suggested substituting humans on treadmills which would also solve the obesity problem

AIR FORCE BLUE: In reminding us of its origins, Darrell Levitt has opened a long trail of cause and effect. In 1918, when the RFC became the independent RAF, new ranks and uniforms were sought. It so happened that the Tsar's military had ordered large quantities of blue cloth from the UK to outfit the Russian cavalry. With the 1917 revolution, the Reds refused to honour Tsarist contracts, or to repay any of the huge sums borrowed from the UK, so the UK had this large stockpile that the RAF got for a bargain as it was unsuitable for dying either army khaki or navy blue. The blue colour was also adopted by Commonwealth Air Forces as well as those of the US and other countries.

Only 4 nations emerged from WWI as creditor nations. The UK was owed the most followed by the US, Canada, and Argentina. Remembering how it had prospered by forgiving European debts owed it after the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, the UK proposed cancelling all WWI debts as they would, in any event, be impossible to repay. Canada agreed, but the US demanded payment. This forced the UK and France to put the screws on Germany and Austria, denuding them of coal and rolling stock, trying to pay off the US. This caused immense misery, enormous inflation, and the Great Depression of 1929-35 which started in Austria and spread worldwide. It paved the way for the rise of Hitler, and it took hundreds of thousands of blue uniforms to defeat him.

EXECUTIVE MEETING: Any earth-shaking decisions taken at the meeting of 13 February will be appended.



WITH KILTS NO LESS: At Claresholm, Alberta, in 1970, a member of the Calgary Highlanders, Darrell Levitt, decided to come down to earth to join us earthlings. Darrell, what is keeping your kilt from flying up around your ears?

The Canadian NORAD Museum Final Farewell

by Roy Thompson

It was a sad Friday when I closed the Air services Museum for the last time. I stood at the door and looked at the big empty space. I had mixed feelings of sadness and, on the other hand, relief. I thought of the many volunteers who contributed so much time and effort to build a first class museum: the many young people who came to work, build, learn, and play, and the many visitors who were most impressed with the exhibits. I was surprised at the number of friends and people who gave me encouragement and thanked me for giving it a good effort. It was not meant to be in Colorado Springs.

The main loss to the community was our youth program. We were right on the mark when we determined that our youth needed worthwhile activities after school. After all, 25% of our youth tell us they have nothing to do after school hours. We filled that vacuum and provided many activities: model building, display design, aircraft restoration, housekeeping tasks, computer research, to name a few. It was interesting to see parents bring in the kids, planning to drop them off, only to find them working as a team. We had a Civil Air Patrol wing attend for a month. I was proud to see these young men and women parading on our parking lot. There was talk of making the museum their headquarters. It hurt to see those kids with red eyes looking at me.

The highlight of any visit/tour was the Canadian NORAD Museum (CNM). If you recall we designed and built the exhibit to show and tell the story of Canada's contribution to the defence of the North American Continent. We wanted to tell and show US visitors the vast Canadian contribution to the defence of our Continent. There is no doubt we succeeded, as most visitors spent the better part of an hour looking us over. I spent many hours in the CNM giving tours. Most had no idea of our contribution and in fact most did not know about NORAD. We received many nice comments.

We are now at the last stage. The display has moved to CFB Borden and will continue to serve us showing the many visitors what our forces have done and are doing to protect and defend the Continent. The display will be larger and better, much better than our initial effort of some 7 years ago. I feel we succeeded in our endeavor because of the many of you who contributed funds, effort, artifacts and support. You are all to be congratulated. As we progress in Borden so I will have pictures and information to keep the story living as well as preserving an important piece of our Air Force History. Thank you all for your support.

Per Ardua Ad Astra

ANNUAL WING DUES ... IMPORTANT NOTICE

by Art Neilsen

We have been informed that the dues paid by the Wing annually to Air Force Association Headquarters will increase by \$5 per member this year, and by another \$5 per member the following year. This is the result of fiscal shortfalls at the national level. Your Wing Executive has decided to weather the storm for this year. We will NOT increase the FY 07/08 dues for Wing members in step with the national increase, and we are fortunate our financial position will allow us to take this action. Next year may likely be a different story, but we will deal with that issue a year from now. In the meantime, we will be scrutinizing our expenses closely, and we will also be looking for other means to gather revenue.

The bottom line is that the dues structure will remain unchanged for this year as follows: \$60 US for Colorado members, \$36 US for all others. Donations in addition to these amounts will be accepted gratefully, and they will be applied to keep our annual dues at their current levels for as long as possible.

DUES ARE NOW DUE: Please submit them to our Membership Chair, Bill Schick, 3610 Greenville Court, Colorado Springs, CO, 80920 by 1 April 2007. Make your cheques payable to "RCAFA 971 Wing". As local banks charge hefty fees for cashing Canadian cheques even if made out in US funds, we ask Canadian residents to use bank money orders made out in US funds. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

March 2007

WING EXECUTIVE MEETING, 13 February 2007
by Art Nielsen

- * We welcomed Captain Rich Lebreux to his first executive meeting as our new Regular Force Liaison Officer.
- * We reviewed the "State of the Treasury". The Wing is in a healthy financial position. More comprehensive details will follow in the next newsletter. It was decided to hold the annual dues to the current level in spite of a \$5 increase in the amount we send to Air Force Association Headquarters.
- * Wing members are encouraged to submit articles for the newsletter. Executive members will provide inputs for their areas of responsibility.
- * Darrell outlined a number of SOPs he is working on related to ceremonial activities.
- * The annual Wing Plan (Business Plan) will be updated with the Executive placing increased emphasis on implementation. Much more involvement by Wing members will be necessary for success.
- * Darrell is researching the AFAC Awards Program. A Wing-level award is under consideration.
- * The lack of hosts for socials is of concern, especially in the winter months. There is a need to share this burden more broadly within the Wing. Immediate needs are hosts for March, April, and May.
- * Lew raised the problem of replacements for current executive members and suggested inviting a couple of members (including wives) to executive meetings to build up a pool of possible incumbents.

* * * * *

Normally, our executive meetings are held at the Nielsen residence. This was the second time that Lew Lomas provided his downtown office as the venue. With our widely-scattered executive, finding a minimum-travel location is a problem.

* * * * *

NEW REGULAR FORCE LIAISON OFFICER: At our executive meeting 13 February, we were pleased to welcome aboard **Captain Rich Lebreux** as our new liaison officer.

Rich was born in Montreal 12 July 1962. He enlisted in Rimouski 19 Dec 1979 and trained as an Air Weapons Controller. He has served two tours at North Bay and at McChord AFB, Griffiss AFB, Bagotville, and Colorado Springs.

Rich married Michelle Seltzer of Fair Lawn, NJ

His hobbies are: guitar, reading, music, and school.

Home address: 475 Venison Creek Drive, Monument, 80132. (719) 488-8745 Lebreux,jrr@forces.gc.ca

* * * * *

I have to rush this to Bob for reproduction, but I just cannot waste this remaining space.

MEDIA BETRAYAL: In numerous newsletters your scribe has criticized film makers for distorting History. Now, in its Mar/Apr 2007 issue, *Archaeology Magazine* joins me. The editor berates Hollywood for harmful inaccuracies in *Ben-Hur*, *Cleopatra*, *Spartacus*, *Gladiator*, *Alexander*, *Troy*, *The Passion of Christ*, and *Hannibal*, then includes an article by Anthropology professor, David Freidel, entitled *Betraying the Maya* which criticizes Mel Gibson for his portrayal in his film *Apocalypto* of brutal Mayan leaders butchering captives from the primitive and naive hunters and gatherers of the forest who did not exist as the entire area had been one of farming with a structured society of elites, professionals, and commoners. There were wars between cities but these were more of elites fighting elites. Rulers, like their modern counterparts, were prone to taking societies in catastrophic directions through arrogant ambition. There was some torture of prisoners, but slaughter of ordinary people which did occur in Europe, Asia, and Africa, did not with the Maya. Mel Gibson ignores Mayan astronomy, art, literature, mathematics, poetry, and wisdom comparable to ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. In 2006 the tomb of a Classic Mayan king was found in a pyramid. He was buried, not as a warrior, but as a scribe, artist, scientist, and creator.

PUBLISH OR STOP DIGGING: Cyprus, Egypt, and Israeli are refusing to renew excavation licenses to archaeologists at over a score of projects because they are too slow to publish their findings. Cyprus now gives a 2-year limit, Egypt five, and Israel ten. Israeli authorities complain that 70% of projects have published insufficiently but this is down from 90% a decade ago. One group had accumulated 17 years of notebook notations unconverted to book form while another, with enough material to fill 10 volumes, is struggling on the first two.