



THE BLAST TUNNEL DIEFENBUNKER ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

Edition 5

September 2016

Disclaimer: This Newsletter is produced for members of the Diefenbunker Alumni Association and is not an official publication of the Diefenbunker Cold War Museum nor of the Department of National Defence. It is produced solely to provide relevant items of interest to Alumni members.

Editor's Corner

With a long hot summer coming to an end I thought it was about time to put out another edition of our newsletter. I'm going to kick off with a number of letters received from Alumni; followed by some information on another Cold War Bunker; another biography; and finally, an update on upcoming events at the Museum.

But first, I want to draw your attention to an updated version of the Alumni Biographies and Memories Booklet that you can find on the Museum Web Site at http://diefenbunker.ca/website2014/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Bunker_Alumni_Sep_16.pdf. It includes a number of new bios and a collection of new memories provided by Paul Vaillancourt. All are encouraged to provide their information and/or memories to this collection. Simply send them to me as an attachment to an e-mail.

Letters

I have received the following letters of interest from members:

From **Bruce Davison**: *We had a ball team in the sixties as well we played in the local league Carp and some of the other towns around the area. One weekend we went to Petawawa to play the fellow from the Communication Squadron, we had 12 team members and one fan, one of the fellows girlfriend came along, and guess what we won. Big party afterward and a few before on the drive up.*

Our shortstop was not feeling well, and I was in left field wanted to switch as he thought he would throw up.

We were not the sharpest but we won anyway.

From **J. Roger Hache**: *Gilles Poirier passed away last week (week of 10 Mar) after a long battle with cancer. Gilles was in Carp 81-84 timeframe. He was PMC of the ARM during his time in Carp. I was with NICS at that time and worked with Gilles at Tunney's in the 90s.*

In This Issue

- Editor's Corner
- Letters
- Other Bunkers
- Alumnus Bio
- At The Museum



THE BLAST TUNNEL



Page 2

Letters (continued)

From **Daniel Lynch**: *Went to a Celebration of Life in Kingston and met with some old Military Policeman who served in Carp. Trevor Read and Delbert Blakney (passed last week). Not sure when they were there (in Carp).*

And finally some information from **Mike Charrier** that might be useful and of interest: *I have approached Veterans Affairs (VA) to help the widow of a friend of ours. What I have learned may be useful to all of you.*

I have found the few times I have visited their offices, including this last one, that the personnel at VA are helpful, cooperative, respectful, cheery, etc. It may be because of all the bad press that they have been getting of late. But from my very limited experience they try, and try hard to assist when ever it is within their power. And they do it with a smile and generosity - always important at our age.

Back to the problem; this is what I learned. If a veteran requires physical (or even financial) assistance, VA is there to assist in anyway it can. If a veteran required assistance, asked for it and was granted it ... Once he passed on then his widow MAY (repeat may) be eligible to continued help around the home, etc.

However as a widow, if she subsequently approaches VA for help (without her husband having been granted it previously) around the home or financial assistance there are strict limitations.

In our case the widow was not prepared to move out of her family home (large two story house) and although she was probably too proud to ask, her friends from the regiment decided that she needed assistance to cope with the house work, the gardening and snow clearance.

According to the experienced VA person I dealt with this is an unusual / exceptional request. Nevertheless she encouraged the widow to apply for assistance (8 pages) but was dubious that it would be granted. She was pretty sure these limitations would apply.

- Must be in receipt of the Guaranteed Income Supplement*
- Or the Disability Tax Credit*
- Or have an income of less than \$ 17,500 (by the way the official poverty line is \$ 22,000).*

However she encouraged the widow to apply, stranger outcomes occur in VA.

All this to say that many of you may be in this same situation or your spouse might be at some point.

Dont wait to ask for VA's assistance if you believe it would help you survive.

And you may be helping your spouse in the long run (as well).



Other Bunkers

The following is in our continuing look at other Cold War Bunkers. This edition considers the “second most important” Allied bunker—the Greenbrier Bunker in the United States,

The Greenbrier Bunker

(<http://www.greenbrier.com/Activities/The-Bunker/Bunker-History>)

Construction began in 1958 on the 112,544-square-foot bunker, which was built 720 feet into the hillside under the Greenbrier Resort Hotel's West Virginia Wing. Once complete in 1961, the facility was maintained in a constant state of readiness by a small group of government employees working undercover as Forsythe Associates, a company hired by the resort for audio/visual support services.

During its Eisenhower-era use, the Bunker provided the following:

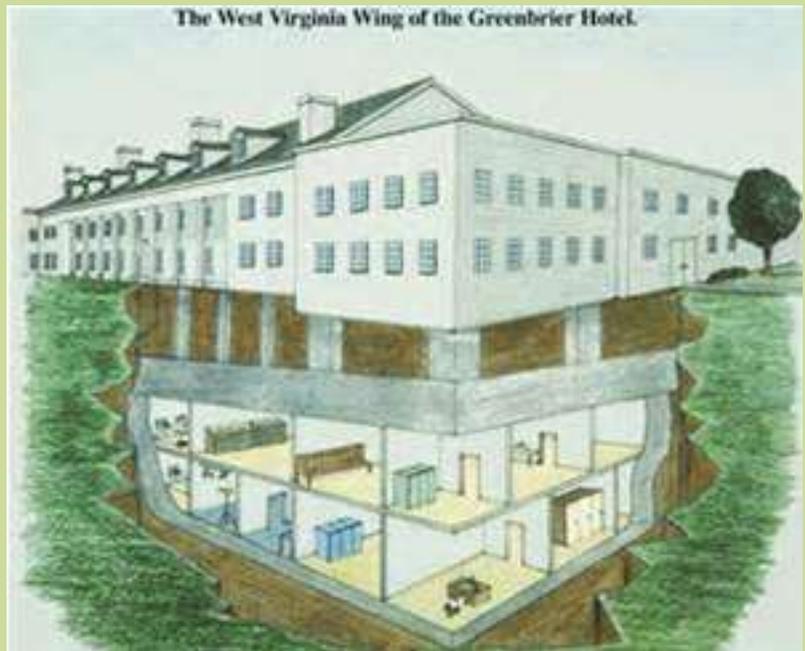
Four entrances; three to the Greenbrier's grounds and one to the main building

- 25-ton blast door that opens with only 50 lbs. of pressure
- Decontamination chambers
- 18 dormitories, designed to accommodate over 1,100 people
- Power plant with purification equipment and three 25,000-gallon water storage tanks
- Three 14,000-gallon diesel fuel storage tanks
- Communications area, including television production area and audio recording booths
- Clinic with 12 hospital beds, medical and dental operating rooms
- Laboratory
- Pharmacy
- Intensive care unit
- Cafeteria
- Meeting rooms for the House and Senate, the Governor's Hall and Mountaineer room

Over the 30 years that it was an active facility, communications and other equipment were updated, keeping the Bunker at full-operation status. The location of the facility, critical to its effectiveness, remained a secret for more than three decades.

On May 31, 1992, *The Washington Post* published an article which exposed the facility. As a direct result, the U.S. government began de-commissioning the Bunker and ended the lease agreement with the Greenbrier in 1995.

Today, daily Bunker Tours are offered to registered hotel guests and the general public.





THE BLAST TUNNEL



Page 4

Other Bunkers (Continued)



Greenbrier Blast Door



Greenbrier Accommodations



Greenbrier Cafeteria



Greenbrier West Virginia Wing



THE BLAST TUNNEL



Alumnus Biography — **CWO (Ret'd Les Closs**

Chief Warrant Officer Les Closs was born in Perth Ontario. He graduated from Perth and District Collegiate Institute in 1972 and later the same year enrolled in the Canadian Forces where he attended the Canadian Forces Recruit School, Cornwallis, NS and Canadian Forces School of Communications and Electronics Engineering, Kingston Ontario. Following trades training, he was posted to CFS Carp as an operator on various communication systems. In 1976 he was posted to 733 Communication Squadron, Winnipeg, Manitoba, where he was employed in the Base and Air Command HQ Communication Centers, as well as acting in the capacity as Detachment Commander for the Sqn's two CRATTZ detachments. During the posting to Winnipeg he also supported 2 PPCLI during flood and fire fighting operations in northern Ontario and southern Manitoba.



In 1982 he was posted to 1st Canadian Signal Regiment Kingston and employed as a Detachment Commander in the Land Tactical Area Communication Squadron (3 Sqn), after receiving his promotion to Sergeant in 1983 he was employed as an Access Node Commander within the same Sqn and unit. In 1985 his new posting was to 73 Communication Group HQ, Detachment Winnipeg where for the next three years he was employed as a Regular Force Training Advisor with 735 Communication Regiment, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Upon promotion to Warrant Officer in 1988 he was posted to 708 Communication Squadron Detachment CFB Kingston, Ontario in the capacity of Detachment Commander. After being selected for French Language training he attended the continuous French language training course at Canadian Forces Language School, Ottawa Ontario in 1991. Upon graduation from language training in 1992, he was posted to 1st Canadian Division Headquarters and Signal Regiment, Kingston Ontario as the Operations Warrant Officer 4 Sqn, Land Tactical Area Communication Sqn. He was promoted to Master Warrant Officer in October 1993 and remained with the Regiment until Sept 1994 when he was posted to 764 Communication Squadron as the Squadron Sergeant Major.

In 1996 he was promoted to his present rank and for the next year completed various staff jobs within 76 Communication Group including a member of the MOS Review team, until his appointment to the Group Chief Warrant Officer position in June of 1997. He was then posted to ADM HR (Mil) in July 2000 as a member of the DGCB, Universal Classification Standard staff. During this year he was nominated for the Order of Military Merit and was invested as a member of the Order of Military Merit in June 2001. Chief Warrant Officer Closs has served on three peace missions, United Nations Emergency Force II in Egypt employed as a Commcen/Radio Det Operator as well as performing Dispatch Rider Duties. United Nations Disengagement Observer Force Golan Heights as the Canadian Contingent Signals Sergeant Major, and with NATO in the Stabilization Force Headquarters Sarajevo Bosnia as the Multinational Signals Group Sergeant Major. On 21 January 2002, he was appointed to the Information Management Group as Group Chief Warrant Officer.

CWO Closs retired from the CF in Jan 2006, and resides in the Perth area with his wife Rose.



Upcoming at the Diefenbunker Museum

The following is a summary of some recent events at the Diefenbunker Museum and a forecast of some upcoming events.

Come hunt for a top secret geocache on the grounds of Canada's Cold War Museum! Our top secret cache coordinates and hints can be found at geocaching.com. Have fun!

Unearthing the Diefenbunker – Exterior Tours

August 4, 11, 18, 25, 10am

As part of Archaeology Month, join us for weekly tours on the grounds of the Diefenbunker, highlighting the industrial archaeological features, both above ground and buried, which were vital to the facility's operations throughout the Cold War. Tour participants are advised to wear closed toe walking shoes.

Please call to reserve your spot: 613 839 0007

Diefenbunker Beer Tasting

August 13, 7pm – 10pm

There aren't many people in Canada (or the world we bet) that can say they've ever been to a beer tasting in an underground bunker. But YOU can, when you come to our unconventional underground beer tasting!

Tickets: \$55/person (includes beer & food samplings)

\$30 Designated Driver Ticket (includes food samplings only)

\$50/Inner Square cardholder or Diefenbunker Member (Please phone the Museum at 613-839-0007 for the discount code) Tickets must be purchased in advance from our website: <http://diefenbunker.ca/2016/02/16/beer-tasting/>

Anna Frlan – The Age of Atomic Anxiety Exhibition Launch

Sunday September 18, 2pm – 4pm

Please join us for the launch of 'The Age of Atomic Anxiety', an exhibition by the Diefenbunker's Museum's Artist-in-Residence, Anna Frlan. Date: Sunday, September 18, 2016 (the exhibition continues to January 31, 2017) RSVP on our website: <http://diefenbunker.ca/2016/02/15/anna-frlan-artist-in-residence-exhibition-launch-september-18/>

Culture Days: Exhibition Tours with Anna Frlan

October 1, 11 am and 1:30 pm

In celebration of Culture Days 2016, Anna Frlan, the Diefenbunker's 2016 Artist-in-Residence is offering free guided tours of her exhibition, The Age of Atomic Anxiety. RSVP on our website: <http://diefenbunker.ca/2016/02/01/culture-days-artist-led-exhibition-tours-by-anna-frian-october-1/>



Closing Notes

That's it for another edition. Keep those letters and articles coming and don't forget your inputs for the Alumni Booklet. Pictures and memories from your times at the Bunker are always welcome. Also welcome would be pictures and experiences from any of the other bunkers that you might have served in.

Your personal memories provide an important addition to the Museum and its efforts to portray life in the Bunker as accurately as possible. I must confess that I also draw upon them to enliven my presentations as a tour guide.

There are still a lot of folks out there who qualify as Alumni but have not signed up. If you know who they are, direct them to our web page and encourage them to contact me for joining instructions. I run across quite a few people as a guide at the Bunker who served in Carp or one of the other bunkers and never miss an opportunity to recruit them.

Remember, if you do not wish to receive this newsletter in the future, drop me a line and I will delete you from the list.

Thanks,

Mike Braham (Secretary-for-life!)