

**May, 2006**

### **Too Toronto Revisited**

I just got back from five days in Toronto which was okay. The best part of it was coming home, and in the process of doing so, seeing an old friend of mine, Ted Hoffer, in the airport on my way out. Ted's retired from the Army. He was in my basic Korean class at DLI in Monterey, CA, in 1985. We had a great class with a mix of military newbies such as myself, and some old timers from Army sergeants like Ted to Army majors. A few of the old timers, including Ted, had already done tours in Korea and were able to give us newbies some insight on what we were in for should we get stationed in Korea.

Ted was already married, to a Korean woman, Ki Nam, who is a great woman. They both took me under their wing in Monterey and in Korea when we all got over there. I remember getting together with Ted and Ki Nam shortly after their first child, Suzy, was born. The lived out in Salinas in the valley and it was dead hot but they were all happy and healthy. Suzy is now an junior in college and their second daughter, whose name escapes me, is a freshman.

### **Commuting Crop Shoot**

Well, the commuting woes have certainly fallen off since I moved to Centreville from Frederick. They completed two new overpasses that eliminated two stoplights on Rt. 28. Concerns about the lack of stoplights contributing to backups elsewhere have generally been unrealized, thankfully.

Nonetheless, overpasses notwithstanding, my commute since moving to Centreville has not been reduced significantly. I still can't complain because my one way average is still 20 to 25 minutes vice the hour I had when living in Frederick. There is, however, the odd disruption, like a shooting at the Sully Police Station less than a mile from my apartment, that can put a serious damper on the commuting time.

I heard about the incident shortly before I left the office. Police had cordoned off the area and restricted traffic into and out of it. I decided I would rather be stuck in traffic than sitting in the office. I am leary of reading too far into that decision.... At one of the stoplights, I realized traffic was already at a standstill so I cut off to an alternate route that really got me nowhere so I ended coming back on to 28 South where at least there were three lanes going nowhere rather than one.

The radio stations were saying that the stretch of 28 I needed to hit to get to my house was closed to other than residents so I figured I would just hang in there. Getting off on an alternate route was not an alternative at that point. Suddenly traffic opened up about two miles from my exit. I was feeling better about the whole thing. When I got to my exit however, they were blocking it off with traffic cones. I explained to one of the policeman that I lived right off that exit. He was sympathetic to that but they were still looking for a possible accomplice and I would have to go around.

Fortunately, I was able to get off at the next exit to my neighborhood and get to my apartment. Still, I just barely made it to the road to my apartment before the road I was on was again barricaded. I got in my apartment, locked the doors and closed all the blinds. Helicopters were circling overhead looking for the "accomplice" and, meanwhile, kids were just running around unaccompanied, they and their parents seemingly oblivious to the potential threat.

It was not that long ago that we had the "sniper" terror and, coincidentally or not, John Mohammed, the sniper, went on trial in Montgomery County, MD, right across the Potomac from Fairfax County, VA, where I reside and yesterday's shooting took place.

I won't put any links out to articles for this incident. Just do a search in your favorite search engine for a fatal shooting at a Fairfax County, VA, police station and you are sure to get some links to more information about it.

### **River Front Property**

This past weekend Saturday I went out with my sister, brother-in-law, and nephew to a friend's place on the Shenandoah. We go out there often on Memorial and Labor Day weekends to camp with a bunch of old, and sometimes, new friends. It's always a crazy, great time.

We went out this past weekend to help out with some of the spring clean up. There is a huge yard, some treed and some not, that required mowing and cleaning up. Most of the clean up was under the trees where a mess of sticks had accumulated since early last fall.

We expected that a few more people would come out but it ended up only being about ten of us. The beauty was that it was more peaceful than normal and we could set up camp just about anywhere we wanted. Never having been able to set up right by the river, we decided to do so this time, hence the riverfront property. Nothing quite like the sound of running water when you are falling asleep....as long as it is not coming out of you.

Though rain was predicted from about 1300 on, we had only minor sprinkles a few times over the course of the day and night. These required hardly anything other than wiping a few drops off the eyeglasses.

Perhaps the fact that Sunday was Mother's Day lead to low attendance. Nonetheless, we had a nice relaxing time. Val cooked up breakfast burritos in the house for us all which was splendid. I got to see Val and Lo's Mom who I don't think I have seen for about 28 years. What a concept.

### **Loss of Identity**

According to the Washington Post online article Personal Data of 26.5 Million Veterans Stolen, dated 22 May, 2006, "Every living veteran is at risk of identity theft after thieves stole an electronic data file this month containing the names, birthdates and Social Security numbers from the home of a Department of Veterans Affairs employee..." According to the police, "this was a random burglary and not targeted at this data...there have been a series of burglaries in that community."

What was this DVA staffer doing with this data at his home? He was not authorized to take it home. Why would he take it home? The whole affair reeks of crime to me. What are the odds that something, presumably a laptop, with so much valuable information would be stolen in a "random burglary?" I guess it could be written off to chance but I just don't accept that. So "there have been a number of burglaries in that community." Isn't it possible that the "series of burglaries..." is a cover up for the real crime. They could easily have been staged to throw the scent off from the potentially complicit DVA staffer?

This "burglary" warrants serious, detailed investigation. The staffer should be put under the microscope to check for substance abuse and/or financial problems. His bank accounts should be audited. A comprehensive follow up is imperative. Finally, the Department of Veteran Affairs needs to do a detailed risk assessment of their database systems. How can their staffers run around with 25 GB (if each record is about 1 KB) of veterans' data on a mobile device? This data should be in a secure room, on a secure server, and protected by access and audit rules!

### **DI in WB**

So I am sitting in a Days Inn in Wilkes-Barre, PA, 220 miles into my 1100 mile round trip to Vermont for Memorial Day. Only took me 75 minutes to go the first 35 miles. By the time I had been on the road for three hours, I was only averaging 50 MPH. Oh well.

Free wireless Internet access in the hotel thankfully. Non-smoking room that smells like stale smoke. Kind of like my apartment after I moved into it last fall. "Anger Management" on the TV again. Pisses me off!!!!!! A couple of beers and I am in the fart sac. Need to get up early tomorrow and get on the road for God's country. Cheers!