

John F. McLean

Interview \_\_\_\_, Tape 1, Track 1.

Mr. Specht: Mr. McLean, could you tell me when and where you were born?

Mr. McLean: I was born in Hornby Street in Vancouver, 1911.

Mr. Specht: When did your family come to Vancouver?

Mr. McLean: Two or three years before that.

Mr. Specht: Where were they from?

Mr. McLean: Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Specht: Are they an old family from Prince Edward Island?

Mr. McLean: Yes.

Mr. Specht: What was your father's occupation?

Mr. McLean: He was the mail service inspector.

Mr. Specht: Is that what he did when he came to Vancouver?

Mr. McLean: He was a railway mail clerk, when he came to Vancouver.

Mr. Specht: Was your father in World War I?

Mr. McLean: No.

Mr. Specht: Which high school did you attend in Vancouver?

Mr. McLean: Prince of Wales.

Mr. Specht: You enrolled at U.B.C. in 1927. I believe that's correct.

Mr. McLean: Yes, '27. You're right there.

Mr. Specht: Did you know what you wanted to be when you entered U.B.C.?

Mr. McLean: I had plans.

Mr. Specht: The same year that you entered U.B.C. was the year that the C.O.T.C. formed on campus.

Mr. McLean: Right.

Mr. Specht: Do you have any memory of that event?

Mr. McLean: I have....(chuckles).

Mr. Specht: Could you tell me about it?

Mr. McLean: There were a considerable number of people who were promoting C.O.T.C. on the campus. The majority of the students were antagonistic because they thought it was war mongering. I was among those who considered it was war mongering. Although not actively opposed to it, I didn't consider it was necessary.

Mr. Specht: Did you attend some of the meetings?

Mr. McLean: Yes, I remember attending some of the meetings. But as it went on, I gradually got to the opinion that maybe there was some reason for it and I certainly didn't oppose it in any way. On the other hand I was not an active supporter.

Mr. Specht: Who were some of the people who were strongly promoting it?

Mr. McLean: One of them was a man by the name of Gordon Shrum. He wasn't a student. He was an assistant professor of physics at that time. Another was a chap called Humphry Mellish.

Mr. Specht: Was he a student?

Mr. McLean: He was a student but I think he did more to hurt the campaign than almost anything else. He kept insisting that the reason for the formation of the C.O.T.C. was to have a force that could work against a strike. I remember this very well. I think he hurt the whole effort by insisting this because people didn't feel that way particularly.

Mr. Specht: Do you think that the rest of the cadets who were interested had this in view?

Mr. Mclean: No, I don't think so at all. They were mostly people who had some army background and felt that it was essential to have a National Defence Force of some kind and this was a very useful way of doing it. I knew a number of them reasonably well but I didn't attempt to join them. I had no thought of doing so.

Mr. Specht: Perhaps you could tell me about some of the other faculty that you might have observed were strongly in favour of this. Do you remember Dean Brock?

Mr. McLean: Yes.

Mr. Specht: Do you remember if he had a role in this?

Mr. McLean: I don't remember any active role that he had in it but I know that he was behind it.

Mr. Specht: Do you have any other impressions of the C.O.T.C. in these early years while you were still on campus?

Mr. McLean: My impressions are very vague. I didn't see very much of them. I think that they were pretty small. They had a little place in the Arts basement where they used to have their equipment and so on. They had nothing in the way of quarters. I don't remember them ever having a parade or ever appearing in any kind of a ceremonial or anything like that.

Mr. Specht: You graduated from U.B.C. in 1932?

Mr. McLean: '31.

Mr. Specht: '31. Did you go back for one year and take a teaching...

Mr. McLean: A course in education, yes. I took four years and then the fifth in education. I graduated in '31.

Mr. Specht: What did you do after you graduated?

Mr. McLean: After I finished my education I went up to the

Okanagan and became principal of a high school up there in Oliver, B. C.

Mr. Specht: How could you become a principal with no teaching experience?

Mr. McLean: It was a one room high school. But that was my official title, principal, teacher of all subjects and classes.

Mr. Specht: Was it also a one teacher school?

Mr. McLean: It was a one room high school but there was an elementary school in addition. In a year or two the high school became two high schools.

Mr. Specht: In the late 1930's did you have any sense of international affairs?

Mr. McLean: Oliver had originally been a soldier settlement. It was formed for soldiers after the First World War. While I was there the people that I got to know and associate with were nearly all ex-soldiers or ex-naval people. As such, the community in which we lived, naturally talked a lot about the world affairs.

Mr. Specht: Did you think that there was going to be trouble ahead? Did you listen to Chamberlain or Churchill in the '30's?

Mr. McLean: I think I probably always believed that there would no be another conflict, not another very large conflict.

Mr. Specht: When war did break out, how did you become involved in the military? You took one summer training course with the C.O.T.C. while you were at U.B.C.

Mr. McLean: Right.

Mr. Specht: What was that training course?

Mr. McLean: Oh, it involved very elementary drill, a certain amount of military law, and it was given in part by Professor Topping who was mostly dwelling in military law. I learned some military organization of which I knew practically nothing before. In fact I think I probably didn't know the difference in rank between a lieutenant-colonel and a corporal when I went into it.

Mr. Specht: Why did you take this course?

Mr. McLean: Because I was beginning to feel that this was going to be a much larger conflagration and that my services might be required. Secondly I had an obligation in connection to the schools. I was then a vice-principal in the high school at Vernon and I felt that there was need for some cadet training within the school and I thought this course might be helpful.

Mr. Specht: How did it come about that you actually did enlist in the active services? It was the militia at first, I believe.

Mr. McLean: The militia at first, yes.

Mr. Specht: Which unit did you join.

Mr. McLean: Rocky Mountain Rangers.

Mr. Specht: When was that?

Mr. McLean: Well it would be that same year I came back from C.O.T.C., I guess. They were formulating a company, the Rocky Mountain Rangers, in Vernon. I in company with a number of other thought that this was one way we could be of service I suppose. It's pretty hard to figure out what your reasoning was for doing it at that time because everybody was beginning to think that it was time they did something themselves.

Mr. Specht: Was the Rocky Mountain Rangers a regular infantry unit?

Mr. McLean: No, it was a militia unit only at that time.

Mr. Specht: It was an infantry outfit?

Mr. McLean: Yes, foot sloggers.

Mr. Specht: You later enlisted in the Seaforth Highlanders?

Mr. McLean: I didn't enlist. I tried to join the Air Force and I was too old at that time. So when they wouldn't take me in the Air Force, I joined the Army.

Mr. Specht: How did it come about that you went with the Seaforths? They were Vancouver based, weren't they?

Mr. McLean: Yes, but this isn't the way it worked. You see, I got my commission with the Rocky Mountain Rangers as a 2nd Lieutenant. I secured that after I was there for 6 months or so. I was one of the few people in the group that had any Army training at all and my Army training was only the 6 week course I'd taken at C.O.T.C. (chuckles) But I was recommended and got my commission as a 2nd Lieutenant. This was confirmed later on because I did go down and take a course the following summer.....a full course at Gordon Head. This was given for militia 2nd Lieutenant. Following that when I came back, I joined up in the active service as a 2nd Lieutenant and was posted to Vernon Training Centre for training of troops who came in. Then ultimately when I was posted overseas the Rocky Mountain Rangers were not an overseas unit. They were not active so I had to go to some outside unit and I ended up with the Seaforths. I think probably I had at some time indicated some choice in the matter. That is, if and when I was posted,

which unit would I prefer to go to? I think I certainly would have indicated Seaforths. Whether I was given a choice or not, I don't know.

Mr. Specht: Why did you prefer the Seaforths?

Mr. McLean: Well, they were a Vancouver unit and I would know some of the people that were in it as I was born in Vancouver.

Mr. Specht: Were you stationed in England at first?

Mr. McLean: Yes.

Mr. Specht: and then to a Mediterranean theatre?

Mr. McLean: Yes.

Mr. Specht: Where did you go.....

Mr. McLean: We spent considerable time in combined operations training in . Then following that we went to the Mediterranean. We always made so much fun of the army because we were all given tropical kits we assumed that they'd got things mixed up and we were going to end in Mermansk or someplace like that. But we eventually did land on the toe of Sicily.

Mr. Specht: Was the training in Scotland preparatory to the landing in Sicily?

Mr. McLean: Yes it was. We didn't know we were going or where we were going....

Mr. Specht: Was that for security reasons?

Mr. McLean: ....but we assumed we were going someplace. We thought probably that we would likely be landing in France. But it was combined operations. We were supposed to have become half sailors and half soldiers. We spent an awful lot

of time climbing cliffs and ropes and things of that kind as part of the training there as well as a lot of time learning the terminology of the sea.

Mr. Specht: How did you get to the Mediterranean? ..from England?

Mr. McLean: We were on a troop ship called the Circassia. Our battalion, the Seaforths was on board as well as a number of staff people but we were the main group on board the Circassia.

Mr. Specht: Did you anchor off Sicily?

Mr. McLean: That morning of July 10th is pretty vivid in my mind.

Mr. Specht: Would you describe it?

Mr. McLean: There was a terrible storm the night before which can come up in the Mediterranean. It was one of the worst summer storm that they'd ever had. Everything was in very precarious shape. A lot of people were seasick. We had practised for a considerable time going off into these small boats. They held 30. They were called L.C.A.s, Landing Craft Assault. They held a platoon which was 30 men.

Mr. SPEcht: You were in charge of a platoon in one of the landing crafts?

Mr. McLean: Yes, one of the landing craft. And they were hung by davits just the same as life boats are hung on board the ship. So, I don't know how many miles out it would be, maybe 10 or 12 miles about I think. It was 11 o'clock at night and pitch black. We were taken off this boat into the raging sea. The sea came up and down that was one thing. The Navy



chaps ran the boat. In any event, we headed for shore. Pretty near everybody was sea sick.

Mr. Specht: How was the landing? Was there any opposition?

Mr. McLean: The storm, I think was extremely helpful because in talking to some Italians afterwards they said that nobody in their right mind would think of landing in such a storm. I think they didn't have their sentries out as well as they might have at another time. We had to break through the wires on the beach, which we did. It was pitch black, of course. Quite a number of the units got lost and landed in the wrong places. My particular platoon was alright and I think most of the Seaforths landed reasonably close to the maps that we had showing us where to land.

Mr. Specht: What would be your immediate objective on landing?

Mr. McLean: The immediate objective was to break through the defences and break through the battalion lines which were established we knew, not very far from the beach....probably 50 or 100 yards in on the main line. You could see it from the air photos. So, we got through but to all intents and purposes we were lost because travelling in the dark over unknown country is always very difficult. It was pitch black. When the first trace of dawn came through we went right straight through on shore. We blew a hole through the wire. We got fired upon but our particular platoon got through....for about 2 or 300 yards we went straight across from shore. The rest of our company also got through. Then we went along parallel to the shore behind the fence. The cannons were mightily surprised I'm sure to find when the dawn came, a great flotilla

outside on the beach. We were very quiet but more important we were 30 wild Canadians coming in from behind! From behind their defences. They gave up in droves. The surprise was extremely effective because they couldn't tell where we came from. They thought we'd come from inland.

Mr. Specht: After you secured the beaches then you advanced inland.

Mr. McLean: We went straight up the middle of Sicily up the high mountain peaks. This was our mountain climbing training.

Mr. Specht: When did you first encounter resistance, then?

Mr. McLean: Well, we encountered a little every day, all the time but it was pockets of resistance. We didn't really run into really very much resistance until the third or fourth day when we ran into the German Army that was in there. Whether they had come in or whether they had been in, I don't know. But the German Army was in there. We ran into considerable resistance....I think about the 3rd or 4th day.

Mr. Specht: They kind of blocked the progress of your advance.

Mr. McLean: Their procedure was to try to hold a particular hill. All the towns in Italy and all the towns in Sicily are built on the top of hills. Our work was largely to march at night and fight at dawn to try and accomplish our objective. Then in the day we'd dig in and try and get some sleep. It was hotter than hell. We were very tired people. We had to be in very good shape.

Mr. Specht: The British were held up at Catania and you had to switch to head East I think to kind of our flank....

Mr. McLean: I think the plan that we followed was the original

one as far as I ever knew. We went up to the ridge of mountains which eventually finishes on the slopes of Mount Etna.

Mr. Specht: Well, that was heading in a easterly direction at that stage.

Mr. McLean: We went directly north and then moved over to the eastern flank later.

Mr. Specht: Of your platoon of thirty men, how did they make out after Sicily was taken? Were you still an intact platoon?

Mr. McLean: Well I can't say this because I was wounded myself on about the sixth day.

Mr. Specht: After Sicily you went to Italy.

Mr. McLean: I was wounded on the third day and I was out for a day. Then I was wounded again at the tail end of the Sicily show. The very last day, I think it was and I went to hospital for a month. I had been shot through my shoulder. It was either the day of or the day before the final withdrawal of the German and Italian forces from Sicily. So I was out for about a month and then rejoined the battalion when they were proceeding up Italy. In the meantime the battalion had been withdrawn from the main fighting and were in reserve position. I didn't miss anything in terms of actual action...(chuckles).

Mr. Specht: Did you rejoin the same platoon that you were the head of before?

Mr. McLean: No, I did not. It was another company and another platoon.

Mr. Specht: Were you in the battles for the town of Ortono?

Mr. McLean: Yes.

Mr. Specht: Could you just briefly describe the fighting?

Mr. McLean: Well, I was in temporary command of the company at the time we went. We had to do two things. We had to get into the town first and it was rather heavily defended by mines and traps of various kinds as well as being defended by German paratroopers who were in there by fire. In this kind of thing we were coupled up with a troop of tanks. This troops was from Trois Rivieres as a matter of fact and distinguished themselves very much too. Our objectives were to procede ahead of the tanks. We tried to remove all obstacles and to get through. They would cover us with fire as well as they could.....while we were doing it. So although I said our main objective was to get into the town and then we had to go through it but we quickly found that if we were on the streets we'd get mowed down. So the idea was to go around the streets to remove the tank traps and things of that kind and procede off the streets by mouse holing which we learned to do.

Mr. Specht: What was mouse holing?

Mr. McLean: Mouse holing was blowing out holes. You see the places were all stone or brick walls and they're fairly thick. We'd blow a hole in them with some kind of charge and then crawl through. Sometimes it was crawling from one room into the next room....as long as you're going in the right direction.  
(chuckles)

Mr. Specht: So you advanced through the town, through the buildings?

Mr. McLean: Yes.

Mr. Specht: Was the German unit that was opposing you a good unit?

Mr. McLean: They were supposed to be the elite of the German paratroop division at that time. I remember very well....

Mr. Specht: What factors do you think contributed to the Canadian success in taking that position?

Mr. McLean: Well, I would give an awful lot of credit to the infantry-tank co-operation. Actually we had had a fair amount of training in infantry-tank co-operation previously. The tanks served as our fire power and under the fire power we went ahead where we could. If we had to go in the streets, the fire power would keep their heads down so they couldn't fire while the tanks were firing over our heads. Then when we had cleared an objective....it was going ahead 10 or perhaps 25 yards at a time. The success was largely because of the infantry and tank co-operation. This is what made it possible. It couldn't have been done. The tanks would have all been blown up if they'd tried to go in there themselves and the infantry would have been massacred. As it was, we lost a tremendous number of men.

Mr. Specht: Where were you wounded?

Mr. McLean: I wasn't wounded at Ortona. I was wounded earlier in Sicily. Then I was knocked out in Italy.

Mr. Specht: This was a serious wound....

Mr. McLean: That was a long time later. Oh, I was in hospital for 9 months and under treatment for 2 years.....still am.

Mr. Specht: Was your convalescence in England?

Mr. McLean: Yes.

End of Track 1

Mr. John McLean

Interview \_\_\_\_, Tape 1, Track 2.

Mr. Specht: When did you return to Canada?

Mr. McLean: Well I was in hospital in England for about 3 months and then I returned to Ottawa. I guess it would be August or September of 1944.

Mr. Specht: Did you associate with the Seaforth Highlanders after this time?

Mr. McLean: Well I was in hospital in Toronto for a while and while I was there they gave me the job as chief instructor of Long Branch Training Centre. You see, the war was still on. It was a training centre of infantry. It was the Canadian Infantry instruction training centre so I became chief instructor as well as being in hospital. After that when the war ended and I came back I served with the Seaforths in the militia units as a company commander for a matter of possibly a year.

Mr. Specht: Then you resigned from the militia?

Mr. McLean: Then I resigned and went to C.O.T.C.

Mr. Specht: Yes, that was 1953 but you got a job on the U.B.C. campus?

Mr. McLean: Yes, I became what we called at that time, the counsellor for veteran students. I went on the staff as counsellor and I was also teaching at the same time in the Faculty of Education partly. This unit which I began at that time was the original. It joined onto placement activities and then it became what it is today, the student services unit. I began it. It began with the veterans and was expanded. At one time I had also the personnel, staff personnel, faculty

personnel, veteran student's counselling. I had the whole works at one time. But this was split up gradually.

Mr. Specht: You've been with the university ever since, though?

Mr. McLean: Ever since that time, yes.

Mr. Specht: Can you describe how you became involved with the C.O.T.C. in 1953 when you became Commanding Officer.

Mr. McLean: Well, after I'd come back, even when I was with the Seaforths I kept a fairly close association with them. I had been asked to take over command of the Seaforths, the militia unit. But I turned it down at that time because I was too busy in my job on the campus.....largely because of that. There were other factors involved as well. I turned that down but later on when the vacancy came for the C.O.T.C. I was asked if I would take over command. I think that I was asked before that.

Mr. Specht: Who asked you?

Mr. McLean: Well there's a committee but the honorary at that time/<sup>W</sup>as Gordon Shrum and I think he would have approached me. It could have been the president who was Dr. McKenzie.

Mr. Specht: How did you feel about taking over there?

Mr. McLean: Well, I was very pleased to do it because I thought that I could do it and I thought that I had something to contribute to get the corps progressing.

Mr. Specht: How did you view your responsibilities as Commanding Officer when you took over?

Mr. McLean: Well I worked very hard on it if that's what you mean....(chuckles). I took them quite seriously. I was there for four years. I spent every hour of any extra



time that I had, working with the unit. It grew very substantially. It grew and became first rate group of people.

Mr. Specht: You never had any recruitment problems at U.B.C., did you?

Mr. McLean: Not at that time. We had a selection committee and we always had more people applying than were accepted.

Mr. Specht: About the time that you took over, the R.O.T.P. was introduced...

Mr. McLean: Yes.

Mr. Specht: Do you know why R.O.T.P. was started? What is your opinion on why they began it?

Mr. McLean: I actually helped to promote this activity, I think. I know I supported it very vigorously because I felt that if there was ever a war or a National emergency again....

My background was that I had some preparation beforehand and I think it was useful to me and would have been very much better for everyone concerned. I was pretty green and thrown into a pretty responsible position in the Army. I felt that this was not a very good thing. So really I felt that everybody should get this kind of opportunity. What better place to get good trained officers than at the university? This was a natural as far as I could see.

Mr. Specht: But why the R.O.T.P. instead of continuing the C.O.T.C. as being the only officer training course.

Mr. McLean: Well, there were a number of people who wanted to continue at the university and take courses in medicine and courses that they couldn't get at a straight military college. If they could get a combination of the two of them

it would be the most benefit. I'm thinking of medical particularly because there's no medical college at Royal Roads or anywhere else.

Mr. Specht: Were there any problems in integrating the R.O.T.P. with the C.O.T.C.?

Mr. McLean: No. They worked like a charm together. They were all students.

Mr. Specht: The R.O.T.P. had a 3 months training program in the summer...

Mr. McLean: That's right.

Mr. Specht: C.O.T.C. was only 3 weeks?

Mr. McLean: Yes.

Mr. Specht: I believe it changed. C.O.T.C. was also extended to 3 months in 1956. Do you know how that came about?

Mr. McLean: Well it had always been considered too short a program because naturally the winter program was only 1 day a week. So no matter how much work was spent on it, it wasn't the kind of full program that it should be. So I don't know how it came about but I know we always supported it.

Mr. Specht: You did support it??

Mr. McLean: Oh yes.

Mr. Specht: In the mid 1950's, this would also be during your term, the annual commanding officers meetings started across the country.

Mr. McLean: Yes.

Mr. Specht: What were the reasons for those? Do you remember?

Mr. McLean: Oh, I remember some of them very well.

I certainly thought it was a good idea. It gave us a chance to see what was going on in other parts of the country. It also gave us a liason with French Canada. I remember some parts of it rather vividly because once or twice we had meetings in Quebec.

Mr. Specht: Did you ever act together on any issues? Did these meetings of the Commanding Officers afford you an opportunity to get together and form a policy at all?

Mr. McLean: No, but at those meetings normally there was a senior staff officer from the Canadian Army present or maybe more than one. He certainly got our views on various matters.

Mr. Specht: Now, about one of the biggest problems during your time as commanding officer. The quotas started to become restricted. What do you remember of this?

Mr. McLean: Well, I remember that we objected because we considered that this was a backward step. I think that we were rather afraid that this might be the beginning of the break down of the whole group. It was growing to something which was really very worthwhile. I don't remember the numbers. But it seems to me we had about 160 or 170 at one time in the unit. These are all selected people, you see. We could have had 500! These were all selected.

Mr. Specht: The military command felt that the C.O.T.C. was not having enough graduates become officers of the militia. This was one of the main reasons why.

Mr. McLean: This was part of the reason. Now this was not true all across the country. When I went to a Seaforth dinner, half the Junior Officers were ex-C.O.T.C. people.

When I went to a B. C. Regiment dinner, half of them were ex-C.O.T.C. people. But it still did not fulfill the kind of thing that they wanted. So many of the young people who graduated if they were going into a career of any kind, they had to spend a lot of time on that career. The result was that on initial graduation, they didn't get quite a number of those people unless they went after them very strongly.

Mr. Specht: If I was in charge of the financing of the military during this period, I would have thought....I'll put my emphasis on the R.O.T.P. and the military colleges because then we're going to get our money's worth by getting all our officers. Military training's getting more expensive, you have to have more educated officers, technically trained. Can we really afford C.O.T.C. which is only a random supply of officers?

Mr. McLean: I think that this very likely did enter into it. The C.O.T.C. was not of course a very expensive business. I know they did think this way because I even argued with the chief of the general staff in connection with it.

Mr. Specht: Who was the Chief of General Staff?

Mr. McLean: At that time? I was just trying to think of it. He was a Frenchman because I have some French and when he was here we got talking French back and forth when some other people were present. I think that impressed him..(chuckles). Was it La Clare? I've forgotten. Anyway the situation was that the army were getting cut and they were looking for places where they could see if they could get some extra money from. This was one of the areas which they looked to.

Mr. Specht: What was the gist of your argument with the Minister of Defence that you talked to?

Mr. McLean: Well, in the first place the facts that he had weren't entirely true because although quite a few of those people would graduate with their C.O.T.C. would not immediately go into service, they did later on when they'd become more established in their vocation. Secondly, it was always useful to have a backlog of these people in case there was a National emergency....even though they didn't go into anything. Thirdly it was a very useful and desirable thing to have a group of this kind of people on the university campus because they had some influence on the student body. They had some knowledge of the necessity of this. Even if it cost them extra money. You know I'm thinking back quite a number of years now but I think that's the answer that I would give.

Mr. Specht: One thing that Dr. Ranta mentioned was that it was important to have people who have some knowledge of military affairs who are in civilian life. This creates a citizen body who are fairly well informed on military affairs.

Mr. McLean: Yes, I thought this was especially true among the students in student life....both military life and the objectives.

Mr. Specht: What kind of resistance did you mount to this squeeze on the quotas? Did you get other people involved in it?

Mr. McLean: Yes, particularly at the university presidential level. Those people who were interested. Dean Ravel who I think was in command of the C.O.T.C. at the university of Alberta at that time. Dean Ravel of Pharmacy here was in

command of the C.O.T.C. in Alberta. People like him and the president of the university. People who were generally rather antagonistic to those things became with a few exception, quite the opposite. They had learned to consider that it was a very useful part of the whole university life.

Mr. Specht: You had friends in the Seaforth Highlanders. Did you try to enlist their support?

Mr. McLean: Yes....and got considerable support from them.

Mr. Specht: Who supported you?

Mr. McLean: The Colonel at the time, I think was Allen Gray. He supported us. The honorary Colonel was General Clark. He didn't support us very much because he also felt that they weren't getting enough. He wasn't satisfied to have 50%. He wanted all kinds of them. They were always short of officers. Units always are. They always have difficulty getting them because people have other things to do that they think are more important at the time. Allen Mercer was also a Colonel in Command. He supported us. I'm trying to think of some of the old timers who were associated. I think the present Lieutenant Governor, Walter Owen who was an associate member of the Seaforths...I think he supported us. People like that.

Mr. Specht: When were the first signs of integration of the armed forces? When did you first feel any movement towards integration?

Mr. McLean: Well, when they brought out Jack Reynolds who took over the three R.S.O.'s job. There used to be three R.S.O.'s and he was one and he was for the three units, Army, Navy,

and Air Force.

Mr. Specht: He was Resident Staff Officer presiding over all three arms of the services.

Mr. McLean: That's right, yes. Yes, he had to work for all three of them. He was a pretty busy guy.

Mr. Specht: And how did you implement integration?

Mr. McLean: I of course was only in charge of the Army and there were two other people. Fraser Herbert was in charge of the Air Force and a medical man was in charge of the Navy and we simply worked together and Reynolds who was the R.S.O. had a co-ordinating function. There really was never any.. except that it was too much work for one person to do.

Outside of that there was never any real trouble.

Mr. Specht: Of course integration didn't really get underway....

Mr. Mclean: Yes, quite a bit later.

Mr. Specht: 1964.....with Paul Hellyer. You attended meetings in Ottawa regarding policy and the role of the Canadian Armed Forces, what do you think was the role of the Canadian Armed Forces during this period when you were commanding officer?

Mr. McLean: Well, the meetings that I attended discussed the part of the C.O.T.C. in the Armed Forces not the whole armed forces. Our part was to supply officers for the militia.

Also a number of our people after graduating, went into the permanent forces. Also to supply the reserves in case there was a National emergency. Those were the three main things.

Mr. Specht: I wonder did your activities reflect the changing role of the Armed Forces in Canada more toward the alliance system with NATO and then later on more in a peace keeping capacity in Cyprus and the Suez.

Mr. McLean: I don't think we were influenced by this although we certainly saw it happening and we regarded the peace keeping role, for instance in Korea, Suez..as good and important functions. I think our general thinking at that time would be that there were bound to be a lot of little wars happening.... maybe forever. Generally speaking nations all have some defence capacity. The possibility of a large thing happening was somewhat less.

Mr. Specht: How was your command terminated? Was it a standard 4 year period?

Mr. McLean: Yes there's a standard but as a matter of fact I think I said I'd stay on for an extra year which I did. Or was it a three year term and I was asked to stay on for a fourth? I don't remember which. But I stayed on for an extra year.

Mr. McLean: Do you know how C. V. Morrison succeed you?

Mr. McLean: We had a meeting of all the ex-commanding officers. They all came and we had a meeting in what then was the Officer's Mess down there...and a lunch and meeting afterwards. We discussed the matter and I acted as chairman and the decision was made to ask him particularly.

Mr. Specht: After you were officially separated from the C.O.T.C. Did you have any other connections with it?

Mr. McLean: I was asked to be honorary Lieutenant Colonel for a number of years. All I did in that time was to do what I could in the way of attending functions and helping out.

Mr. Specht: Is there any particular function that you'd like to describe? Perhaps a dinner or an interesting visitor or



Mr. McLean: The break up of the C.O.T.C. I remember. It was when the C.O.T.C. was disbanded completely off the <sup>campus</sup> and there were two or three hundred people there. It was held on the floor of the Armoury and included all kinds of people who were interested in it. It was a disheartening affair because a lot of people had put a lot of work into it over the years and we felt that if and when the national government wanted to get the C.O.T.C. back onto the campuses that they would find it very difficult to do so.

Mr. Specht: Did you mount a last defence against the disbandment?

Mr. McLean: We tried quite hard to postpone this kind of event. Mr. Specht: Do you think that the people who were involved in the C.O.T.C. before really lent help to try to preserve the C.O.T.C.?

Mr. McLean: Oh yes, I think so. Fellows like Tom Brown who eventually became Lieutenant Colonel Brown, he was in the C.O.T.C. at the time I was on the campus. He was a chap that I knew quite well. It's pretty hard to single out any people. We did the best we could to try and get Ottawa to change their mind in this connection but they had definitely been influenced by the fact of the money situation, I think.

Mr. Specht: Do you have any misgivings or disappointments with the C.O.T.C.?

Mr. McLean: No, I don't think so. I've seen all kinds of them ever since in all walks of life and I think that from my own

something eventful?

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stand a very rewarding experience and I think all the ones in it that I know of, feel the same way. I think we were very fortunate in having people available who wer<sup>e</sup> interested in the corps and interested in the objectives of the corps who were prepared to give time and effort in order to do it. People like Harry Logan, who had been the commanding officer of the corps but there was nothing that you would ask Harry to do in connection with the corps that he wouldn't do....and drop everything else in order to do it. Harry Logan wrote the history of U.B.C.

Mr. Specht: Did you ever meet General Letson?

Mr. McLean: Yes, he was one of those people who came out specifically from Ottawa to select the new commanding officer when I retired. Bob Bonner was just previous to me there. He always was very helpful and useful at any time. There was Gordon Shrum and the Honourary colonel, Dr. McKenzie who succeeded Gordon Shrum. He was always very helpful and useful

End of track II