

Dr. L. E. Ranta
August 8, 1973

Interview ____, Tape 3, Track 1.

Dr. Ranta: Col. McLean was the one who was a real spearhead, not only as far as our own C.O.T.C. was concerned but in his relationships with many of the Commanding Officers across the country. At that time most of the Commanding Officers were ex-World War II officers and a lot of them he knew personally. He really helped to spearhead the efforts made by the officers in trying to convince the headquarters people that they should not be so tough on the quotas. I think that for quite some years, this did help out. There was a pretty adamant attitude on the part of headquarters to reduce the number of officers that were being trained. At least I sensed this. There was the complaint from headquarters that they were putting all this money into the training of people and they weren't getting as much out of it as they ought to get by having individuals continue on in the militia or join up in the regular Army. As far as our unit was concerned, we had always had a high degree of success in people going into the militia units or people going into the armed forces. There were a great number that continued on. We had quite a good relationship with the militia units. Many of them started to pick the militia unit that they wanted to go into....an it's for this reason that we had a fair number of officers who were actually C.O.T.C. that had joined the militia units.

Mr. Specht: This is because you had a close.....

Dr. Ranta: We had a close working relationship, that's right.

I'm sure that a great deal had to do with the fact that we had wartime association with some of the units. Doug Ellsdon who was a C.O.T.C. person was an officer cadet with us before he joined up with the forces during the war. When he came back, or very shortly afterwards, he was the Commanding Officer of the 15th Field Regiment here and there was an already established relationship. The same holds true with the Seaforth persons. Bob Bonner was an ex-Seaforth officer. Johnny McLean was an ex-Seaforth officer. They had all kinds of friends who were in the Seaforth Unit here. This sort of personal contact that existed between the regiments worked out extremely well. We had a large contingent of medical people who were associated with the 24th Medical Company which was located here in Vancouver and some of them came through the C.O.T.C. programme. Because they had relatively limited numbers of places that they went to in the summertime, namely Camp Bordon, they got acquainted with the people from the medical side of the armed forces and this was helpful to them in their careers. It was a great arrangement.

Mr. Specht: Was this continued when Lt. Col. Morrison became Commanding Officer?

Dr. Ranta: Yes, it continued and it continued down until the time that I was C.O. I know that Morrison went to Ottawa on a couple of occasions having to do with this at the C.O.'s meetings. When the threat got really serious during the time that I was C.O. we tried to enlist all the possible resources that we could. That's when Gordon Shrum wrote to the Prime

Minister. We used everybody that we could possibly think of to try to influence the government because of our attitudes... that C.O.T.C. was a good thing in its own right. We weren't just battling for C.O.T.C. The other Commanding officers were going through their channels as well.

Mr. Specht: I'd like to ask you about two things. The first one is that in 1950...you introduced annual meeting with all the commanding officers of all the C.O.T.C. contingents across Canada.

Dr. Ranta: Yes, those were introduced after the war and were attended by the Commanding Officers. I'm not sure whether Bob Bonner went to them but I know that Johnny McLean and Morrison and myself were at C. O. 's meetings. Originally they were held in places like Kingston...at the military college. This was a meeting of all of the C.O.T.C. commanders from across the country. Later on, by the time that I was commanding officer, they were regional meetings like Western Canada. We got quite well acquainted with the commanders of the other units. I think this became recognized by the headquarters... that if they brought them all together they developed quite a political wallop under those circumstances. Consequently the regional meetings were sponsored and maybe it was a little cheaper to bring the smaller groups together...travelling smaller distances and this sort of thing.

Mr. Specht: So/^{YOU} could discuss problems that were related to all the units?

Dr. Ranta: Problems, methods of recruitment, how to cope with maintaining a viable unit when your numbers get so small.

We were always pretty lucky. We filled our quotas. By having what amounted to an integrated unit on the campus, where the three armed forces elements were together, we had a viable set-up right until the end. Some of the others hadn't had integration take place and they were down to 8 or 10 people...something like this. If you have two years with 8 or 10 people it's pretty hard to maintain a unit under those circumstances.

Mr. Specht: At these commanding officer's meetings did you form resolutions?

Dr. Ranta: Yes, and sent them forward to headquarters. Sometimes they would be listened to. There was usually a fairly senior representative of headquarters there who would explain to us what the policies were for the next year or so....what the change in policies were. It would give you an opportunity to put your own point of view forward.

Mr. Specht: In 1958 the Conservative Government became well established in Ottawa for their term. I wonder if this was any different for you people...compared with the Liberals.

Dr. Ranta: Well, I think there was a closer relationship and this was largely through the Minister of Defence. He was a staunch army general who was well disposed...when he understood. At first he didn't understand but when he understood what the objectives of the C.O.T.C. were, he became a very strong supporter.

Mr. Specht: This would be George Pearkes?

Dr. Ranta: This was Major General Pearkes, yes. At first there was a real threat. This was that they were going to be closed down, they were going to be disbanded, everyone was going to

be trained through the military colleges and this sort of thing. I know that at that time, our people were very much in the forefront, trying to convince the Minister of Defence that this was the wrong direction to go. This wasn't being thought of in terms of any major change in the other armed forces. It wasn't a matter of integration or anything like this. It was I think, purely an economic argument. It was very strongly opposed. I recall that there was quite a sudden change in policy as soon as General Pearkes understood what it was all about. He reversed the decision that were being brought forward by his deputies. There was even an increase in the quota for a period of time which certainly gave a breath of revival to the armed forces on the campus.

Mr. Specht: You became Commanding Officer in 1964.

Dr. Ranta: That's right.

Mr. Specht: These same issues were before you, the quota problems, I suppose money for various functions. You received money for recruitment drives too, didn't you?

Dr. Ranta: Well, yes....small advertising funds really. They were mainly spent on buying space in the Ubysey and that's about all. It wasn't a very large sum of money that was involved there. We used to put on a couple of events that were recruitment events and we rarely had any trouble in getting a sufficient number of recruits. We normally would select maybe one out of three who offered himself to join the unit. They went through a regular officer training selection process. We had the selection committee composed of senior officers of the C.O.T.C. as well

as one or two officers from outside. One was from a militia unit and one from headquarters. That would be our final selection committee responsible for the selection of people that present themselves.

Mr. Specht: The year that you took over, the Naval Training Division joined the C.O.T.C. How did that come about?

Dr. Ranta: Well, they didn't join C.O.T.C. They came back to the campus, really. I think this was a move on the part of Discovery to decrease their expenditures, perhaps. What they did was to move back to the campus. We provided space in the Armoury in the North East corner of the main floor and they established the Naval Offices there. They had a regimental staff officer or what corresponded to a regimental staff officer the same as the Air Force did. That very, very markedly increased the size of the tri service unit that we had. We integrated well together. We had a good relationship among the officers of the unit and among those who were regular staff officers assisting the commanding officers of the unit. They worked very well together. Ray Herbert who was in charge of the Air Force is an arbitration lawyer. He's a professor in law on the campus. Morris Young was a physician and I was a physician. Ray Herbert said that this is why he became such a good arbitration lawyer because he had to arbitrate between two doctors running the units. (laughing) He still talks about how this was a very valuable experience...having to arbitrate. He says, "When there are two doctors, there are always two opinion."

Mr. Specht: The year you became commanding officer and the Liberal government was back in power, I think Hellyer was Minister of Defence?

Dr. Ranta: That's right.

Mr. Specht: Right around this time, I'm not sure of the year, 1964, '65, integration became the main issue of the Armed Services.

Dr. Ranta: That's right.

Mr. Specht: I'd like to hear how this affected the unit and how you implemented it.

Dr. Ranta: Well, as I have indicated, we had already become a tri services set up. Now our tri service activities were largely tri service activity of the Mess. Our regular parades were tri service parades but our programmes were distinctive and separate. What integration brought about was an integration of the programmes part of which had already begun. We invented integration, as a matter of fact. At least this is what we've always said. When integration became announced, part of the programme was a common-to-all-elements programme. Everybody got involved in International studies and things of this sort. However there were also separate sections of the programme that had to do with matters that were associated solely with the Navy and the Air Force and the Army. Those would be carried on conjointly with the common-to-all-elements program. What we used to do was to start off the evening with an overall kind of program, an hour spent with some particular lecturer or something of this sort....some kind of exercise that had elements for each one of the armed forces divisions. Then after the break in the evening they would go and take their special-to-an-element

kind of programme. So there was really two periods in the course of the evening, one of which was common and one of which was special. That continued and there was no real change. There was just further development along these lines. The real change came when they decided that they were going to cease to have armed forces units on the campus. That was the main fate of the integration programme. It was because they had committed themselves to training officers entirely within the armed forces complex.

Mr. Specht: You retained separate uniforms though.

Dr. Ranta: Yes, we retained separate uniforms until about 1962 when some of our people were issued with the new uniform. Mostly they were people in the Army who were coming from R.O.T.P.

Mr. Specht: The courses that the cadets took, were these dictated from headquarters?

Dr. Ranta: Some of them were and they were mainly given by the regimental staff officers who were kept up in their summer training with the new summer programmes. Others of our officers also attended the summer school for instructors. Then they would come back and teach those courses in the following year. There are things that haven't changed all that much in understanding the armed forces organization and certain elements of military law or history....these things people ought to be aware of. We were very fortunate on our campus that we had a large number of people who were eager to give us help. We had people like Barry Leach who was just an outstanding fellow in terms of military history and geopolitics which was his special field. He would come and spend maybe 8 or 10 hours in the course

of a winter training programme, giving lectures and holding symposia and this sort of thing.

Mr. Specht: Were they unpaid?

Dr. Ranta: They certainly weren't paid for all the effort that they put into it. They would get a small amount for an evenings lecture but they gave alot more time than anybody would have been paying them for. There are some people who came just by tradition, like Freddy Soward who came regulary and gave us a lecture on International affairs....on where the world is going today. He would give us this as a prelude to his annual lecture to the Vancouver Institute.

Mr. Specht: So lots of the subject matter was determined by who was on campus and able to speak.

Dr. Ranta: Well, the curricula was laid out as to what they should cover. In the first year, they got military law which was one of the areas that had to be covered plus military organization. Military law would be taken by one of the officers, each of us would contribute to that particular side of it. Military organization would be taken by the regimental staff officer who had the responsibility of keeping up in this area. That curriculum was laid down. Then there was an area in which geopolitics became part of the curriculum. Then you had to go and get people from outside. We were just wonderfully fortunate that we had real authorities in this area that were willing to give us time...and mu^ch more time than we could pay for.

Mr. Specht: During the annual Commanding Officer's meetings would you discuss integration? It must have been a major topic.

I wonder if you formed a resistance to it.

Dr. Ranta: No, you see integration came pretty suddenly. It's a personal view of mine that Ottawa wasn't interested in listening to us. The regional Officer's meetings stopped and there was no mechanism for a conjoint view of what should be done.

I know that we had to pull together from our own end here, whatever efforts we could make to put an influence on Ottawa. That's why we went to people like Gordon Shrum and Larry McKenzie and Ohman s

I know him. He's a classmate of mine who was Chancellor of the University of Toronto and was an adviser to the government in military affairs. I got him exercised about it. He was a member of the C.O.T.C. in Toronto years ago.

I got in contact with all of the Western Commanding Officers of the C.O.T.C. encouraged them to start putting pressure on the government. But the government at that point was not really listening. It had been decided by Hellyer that there was going to be integration and that's all there was going to be....and it was decided by somebody in Ottawa that they were going to disband the C.O.T.C.s.

Mr. Specht: When did you first get signs that the C.O.T.C. was going to be disbanded?

Dr. Ranta: About a year before it occurred.

Mr. Specht: 1967.

Dr. Ranta: Yes, 1967. There had been threats all the way along for a long period of time. Maybe we were fighting a losing battle all along. But in 1967 it became a recognized fact that it was going to end. It ended very quickly. We weren't given a wind down period or anything like that. We were given a

decision and that was it!

Mr. Specht: Could you describe the efforts of some of the individuals who tried to prevent this from coming about? You mentioned Gordon Shrum as being involved.

Dr. Ranta: Well, we had an entree to the Prime Minister through Gordon Shrum. It was mainly a matter of writing letters. He kept me informed as to the kinds of responses he was getting to these letters. Larry McKenzie at that time was a Senator and we knew that we had his sympathetic understanding and he not only wrote letters but he also went to see people in Ottawa. He was a very good person in terms of getting direct liason with people.

Mr. Specht: How about people in the army itself who would have been in C.O.T.C.

Dr. Ranta: Yes, we had some people here locally who were very, very strong supporters of the C.O.T.C.

End of Track I

Dr. L.E. Ranta
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Dr. Ranta: ..But I think the people right-everywhere- right within the Armed Forces at that time, had a very great deal of difficulty in opposing what was a policy decision, now, on the part of the headquarters. The difficulty that I think headquarters in..giving the devils their due, you know...the difficulty that they had was that they were running into an extremely tough position, from the point of view of their finances. And, obviously, if they had the view- and I know that this was true, in some cases- if they had the view that they were not getting their money's worth, well, there's no question about it. I would have been in there, doing exactly the same thing, as an administrator of the Armed Forces finances, if I felt that I wasn't getting returns for the money that I had to account for. So they were... no matter how they felt, personally, about the situation, they couldn't really be supportive of the ideas.

Mr. Specht: How about... aside from that strictly financial, material side, there still was the ideological side, which you....

Dr. Ranta: Oh, sure! And this is what we advanced. Well, their ideas, of course, and here, again, their argument was a logical argument- that, well, if that is the case- if we're really training citizens more than anything else, maybe the citizenship branch, or somebody else ought to be paying for it, and not coming out of the hard-pressed defense budget. Now, when you start shifting from one minister's pocket, to another one, well then you know that you're on a course that isn't going to be very highly successful. And it just didn't work out that way. I think it was a serious mistake, and I think that we may be unhappy about it, in time. And this is why we made the arrangement with the university that these possessions that were our possessions, should go in to their custody for ten years. If a unit isn't

established or re-established in ten years, well, then, it's really never going to be established. If it is established, well at least I can start off with something that is a useable commodity, as it were. You know, they'd have whatever it would be- a hundred thousand dollars worth of possessions that they'd be able to demand at this point.

Mr. Specht: I wonder if the atmosphere on campus had anything to do with the disbandment of the C.O.T.C.?

Dr. Ranta: I didn't sense that. There was really not.... and, a sort of an unfortunate kind of attitude that had developed on the campus. We were left alone- we weren't really attacked by anybody..not as had occurred after the first world war.

Mr. Specht: Was there any incidence comparable to what was going on on American campuses, for example?

Dr. Ranta: No.

Mr. Specht: ..You know.. Didn't demonstrations to have the R.O.T. C....

Dr. Ranta: No, there were no demonstrations of this sort, at all. U.B.C. people are pretty sensible people, I think, and there was not a difficult university atmosphere at all, with regard to any kind of issue, and I think that this was largely because the university administrations kept the doors open, rather than close them to people who wanted to express their views, and there had not been any harassment on the part of our people, who were on the campus in uniform, and this sort of thing. Not as, I understand, occurred following the first world war.

Mr. Specht: Yes. There seems to be about three major cycles- after the first world war, and then at the height of the Depression, too, there was quite a strong anti-military movement, and during the later sixties, although, as you point out, you didn't..you wouldn't have felt it directly.

Dr. Ranta: No. And I think that the Canadian peace-keeping role that had already been established, had a strong influence on the people on the campus generally- not only the students, but the professorial staff, as well. How could one be arguing for the United Nations, for example, and be arguing against a military role for Canada, if Canada was going to be one of the important peace-keeping elements?

Mr. Specht: Is this how you saw the purpose of the C.O.T.C., well, in your time, but also in the fifties, or you could/^{even}possibly go back to after the second world war, I guess....with the establishment of the United Nations. Canada's Armed Forces being part of sort of an international order, rather than a.....national...

Dr. Ranta:Yes... This is one of the reasons why we brought in people from outside, to talk to us about the world. Brought in geo-political attitudes, and political attitudes, and international attitudes, and this was part of our program all the way along. That we felt that Canada has an important role- and it isn't just sort of like a secondary role, but one of the leading roles in the world, in the police-keeping forces, because I don't think any of us believe that everybody is going to suddenly become angels....but they're going to have to have a policeman at the corner somewhere- even at the international corners. And where are these people going to come from, except from the university population, and where are they going to be useful, unless they are going to be useful in knowing more than just what an Armed Forces school will give them, but will, in fact, have a broad education, and they should be broadly educated. They should be broadly sympathetic toward international affairs and international people, in order to carry out this role. That important role that Canada has.

Mr. Specht: Do you think that the advent of nuclear warfare

affected the Corp? There must have been some soul-searching about what, exactly, do conventional arms accomplish, having the nuclear weaponry as really the major..

Dr. Ranta: Yeah... well...

Mr. Specht:ultimate sort of power...

Dr. Ranta: I guess... sure, everybody reacted to the development of the supreme weapon, really, and... early on, though, among our people and among our lecturers- and these were the people who understood the international scene- it became quite obvious to us, that these were not, in fact the ultimate weapons- these were the weapons that were probably not going to be used. They were going to be like biological warfare, because there's so much kick-back that comes with these sort of weapons, that the weaponry is going to be conventional weaponry, and the struggles that are going to take place, are going to be struggles that are going to be local, and not holocaustic kind of situations, and if they are going to be local, well then, you're going to have... they could be any place in the world, and you're going to have to have understanding people, to have that kind of involvement, and you're going to have to train them in the use of... each one of the basic weapons of the foot-soldier, really. The atomic bomb and the hydrogen bomb establish^{ed} the power of the infantryman. That's really what it did.

Mr. Specht: On a very local level...

Dr. Ranta: On a very local level... And this is why you..

Mr. Specht: Even though you had a major power still behind the scenes weapons...

Dr. Ranta: That's right... that's right... that's right...they're all..

Mr. Specht:...when it comes to the...

Dr. Ranta:...The real battle really takes place between the foot-slogger, really, no matter if you have tanks, or you have what not..

it really ends up by being the fellow who is on the ground, who has... who makes the decision, in many instances, not to use a weapon at all.

Mr. Specht: Let's go to some of the peace-keeping activities of the Canadian forces, and I wonder if the C.O.T.C. was involved.. you know, go to the Suez crisis. There were U.N. forces occupying areas in the Near East..

Dr. Ranta: Yeah... There.....

Mr. Specht:

Dr. Ranta: Yeah, there were some of our people that were there. There are some of our people that were part of the Vietnam first peace-keeping observer units. We had regimental staff officers that had been in Vietnam.... Brigadier Damby, who was here as area commander, who came out on a number of occasions to talk to us about Vietnam, when people didn't even know how to spell the name.. because he had been on the observer force over there. And this kind of vicarious information was coming through to our people, and we had some people.. some of our people who were trained as officers, with us, who were in the Cyprus group, because they had become officers of the Queen's Own Rifles, stationed in Victoria, and in fact, one of our regimental staff officers was an officer of the Queen's Own Rifles, and had spent a period of time on the peace-keeping force in Cyprus.

Mr. Specht: Was any of your training directed towards peace-keeping type of activity?

Dr. Ranta: Oh, sure it was. Yeah. And this was the whole area of Geopolitics. 'Cause this is the Canadian role.

Mr. Specht: So.. well, what kind of training would you have, other than, say, international affairs? Discussions...

Dr. Ranta: Oh, well this is basically what it was. A_s understanding

the role that they would get in summer camp, in terms of support to civilian government..you know, riot control and this sort of thing, which would be part of the...which is part of the training of any officer, because he may become involved in support to civilian authority.

Mr. Specht: Would you say there was a definite change in the role from the cold war period into the sort of peace-keeping period, which... say the mid-fifties might divide the two eras...

Dr. Ranta: Yes. There was certainly an attitudinal change, because during the cold-war period, the sort of basic military training was given a great deal of emphasis. The training of the use of arms, was the important emphasis, and I think after that, when the peace-time role came in,....

Mr. Specht: After Korea.

Dr. Ranta: Yeah... after Korea...there was very definitely a changed role, because the Armed Forces actually changed their role, too, because you'll recall that during the cold-war period, the Armed Forces became responsible for a period of time, for support of Civil Defense. And this was a role that the Armed Forces were not really- the regular Armed Forces were really not very happy with. That here they were, being sort of like made into first-aid workers or something like this, and they felt unhappy about this. And this was when Canada was looking at, you know, how do we evacuate Vancouver to save as much of the population as you can. A next to impossible task. Especially when there was only bridge over the Fraser in those days. And-there was, however, a change in attitude that came in sort of the late fifties, in which- the role then became sort of subtly changed to a peace-keeping role, in which the emphasis was being placed on understanding of other people and other countries and places that people might go, and we had some of our own people in the

C.O.T.C., who regularly go to Europe, for example, during the summer. They have their assignment in Europe. And... they were attached to a regiment that had, really, what it amounts to, a peace-keeping role, in the European theatre.

Mr. Specht: That was... Europe was still more cold-war./^{isn't it..} This was under the N.A.T.O. Organisation..

Dr. Ranta: Yeah, it was.. to that extent, but the Canadians viewed their position as being a peace-keeping role in the sense of, you know, occupying ground and waving a flag, and this sort of thing.

Mr. Specht: C.O.T.C. was in existence from 1928 to 68. That's 40 years?

Dr. Ranta: 40 years, yeah. And then of course, prior to that it was in existence. It started off in 19 whatever it was.. 16, or something like that....

Mr. Specht: 1914 to 1918 or 19....

Dr. Ranta: Yeah.. 14. Yes.

Mr. Specht: That was U.B.C.'s contingent. Other universities had it continuously throughout the twenties.

Dr. Ranta: Yeah.

Mr. Specht: In this time.. well, in your time anyway, I guess since the second world war, I suppose you had a lot of quite distinguished visitors?

Dr. Ranta: Yes. We had a number of visitors over the years, and all of the Lieutenant Governors, we had as guests on more than one occasion. I'd always felt that some of them took the view that when they came to our functions that they wouldn't have to go to all of the regimental functions of all of the regiments in the province, and this way they could attend a tri-service affair, and perhaps not attend the affairs of all of the other regiments, which would keep them awfully busy. They were.. it was also atten-

ding at the university which made it.. usually the Lieutenant Governor is the official visitor , so that they might be able to combine two events, in that way. We would... when we had our graduation parade... we would have a luncheon for the distinguished visitors in the faculty club, including their ladies, and this was always a very nice affair, and/^{then}we'd have the parade and the inspection, with tea for the graduates... all of the members of the unit...plus the... and their parents, and then that evening we would have the annual ball, and that was a pretty full day that we put in on that particular day- both social and military, and so on. But... we had a visit in 1960, from Field Marshall Montgomery. Interestingly enough, his aide during that period of... during his trip across Canada... was Gordon Speedy, who was the fellow that was in the Missassuaga Horse Guards with me, years and years ago, and he was...he had continued on in his military career right up until that time, and I know that Gordon Speedy said that he had never had quite the trip across Canada as he did with Field Marshall Montgomery. He was a very great stickler for the right thing that needed to be done at the right time, and ...the only thing that I can recall for sure about that whole trip, was that Gordon Speedy went into hospital with an ulcer not long after he had been out on the trip.(laughing)

Mr. Specht: Did Field Marshall Montgomery give an adress to the C.O.T.C.?

Dr. Banta: Ah....he spoke to the C.O.T.C. at a parade. He also attended in the mess, on the fifth of May, and spoke personally to a lot of the members of the unit at that time. And.. we tried to make an oppportunity for as many of the members of the unit- which wasn't all that big at that time- to have an oppportunity of talking with him, because he was a pretty distinguished fellow, you know, with an interesting kind of reputation as a

soldier.

Mr. Specht: He had a high regard for the Canadian army.

Dr. Ranta: Yes he did, and he had a high regard for young people, which was quite obvious. He seemed to be more relaxed. At least, this was my observation of him- that he seemed to be more relaxed, and less a Field Marshall, with the.... talking on a one to one basis with the officer cadets. And, he was tighter up, really, with talking with the president of the university here, or with the people that he had to put on the "Montgomery appearance", you see. He was....I think a number of our fellows had quite a different view of him as a person after having spent three or four minutes talking with him. He was interested, he listened, and he seemed to remember what he was listening to, you know, that he would ask a question about something that they had maybe spoken about five minutes earlier, you see. That he wasn't just standing there and being talked to, but he was actually taking it in.

Mr. Specht: Do you remember some other visitors? You must have had Lieutenant Governor George Pearkes...

Dr. Ranta: Yes, oh yes....we had him as a visitor on a number of occasions. And he really- there is no question about it-^{that} he enjoyed coming to our mess and coming to the parades, and..he was just so obviously enjoying himself that.. I don't know of a single occasion, as a matter of fact, that he turned down an invitation that we had sent to him. Not just to the annual parade or anything like that, but to our mess dinners and this sort of thing, if he possibly could make it, he would be there, and as I recall, he didn't turn us down on any occasion. But.. Mr. Wallace, I know, was there as a visitor and he was largely responsible for ship-building industry in British Columbia here, and obviously the Navy people- they were his special pride. He had a great view of the Navy people. Eric Hamber, when he was the Lieutenant Governor, and subsequently

when

when he was Chancellor of the University, he was a visitor with us, and I knew Mr. Hamber very well, because we had done a lot of work together about the medical school, and he again, ~~was a real believer~~ in the young people of British Columbia, and displayed this in his talks to the regiment at the time of our annual parades and this sort of business.

Mr. Specht: You had annual dinners with officers of the contingent, ex-officers, and officers in the regular army.. in the local district, and from Ottawa.

Dr. Ranta: Well, we used to put on an annual dinner, and this was a small dinner that we gave in the social suite of the faculty club. And prior to their annual inspection- not the parade.... the annual parade at the end of the year, which was different from the ann... this is the annual inspection of the units. And we would have a dinner for the inspecting officer, who could be an individual from Ottawa, or the inspecting officer from the district, or both. And we'd have the senior officers of the unit, and then we'd have the ex-commanding officers of the unit... anybody that we.. any ex-commanding officer that was available. And, as you see in one of the pictures, there are often.. there are quite... there are a fair number of them, as a matter of fact, and.. the 1963 group that they had together, I think has all of the commanding officers, with one exception, ever since the C.O.T.C. started. ^{And C.O.T.C. started} /in 1916; or 1914, I guess. And the one that is missing is President Westbrooke, who was the first commanding officer. And that's pretty unusual, you know- over fifty years, and everyone of the commanding officers were not only there, but present. And the most unusual one was Major General Letson, who had come from Ottawa specifically to attend that meeting of the ex-commanding officers of C.O.T.C., which is really a great thing.

Mr. Specht: What was the purpose of these dinners?

Dr. Ranta: The purpose- well, I guess it was just to honour the visiting dignitaries....

Mr. Specht: Mostly social...

Dr. Ranta: It was a social thing. It also sort of provided us with an opportunity- that is, the senior officers- with an opportunity of talking sort of semi-business, socially, with the senior officer that we were responsible to. I don't think that the purpose of the dinner, when it started, was to sort of soften up the commanding.. the inspecting..officer, although, I must say that we got some very good reports from them. However, each of the units did extremely well in their own particular element. I know... and perhaps the Navy did the best of all, because out of the last eight years, they had won the award for the best naval unit in Canada for five of those eight years. Now that's pretty good. We often had citations for our parade and so did the.... and for our unit, the same way as the Air-Force did. We had a lot of awards that our individual officer cadets got from their training schools that they went to in the summertime. We expected them to bring this sort of honour back from Kingston or something like that. If they didn't, we would feel sort of put-out about it.

(End of Track 2)