

Armed Forces at UBC Oral History Project Collection

Compiled by Christopher Hives (2000, revised 2004)



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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



The Library

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Collection Description

Armed Forces at UBC Oral History Project collection. – 1973.

13 cm of textual records.

27 audio reels.

Administrative History

It appears that the Armed Forces at UBC oral history project was developed at the University of British Columbia in conjunction with the Aural History Institute in Victoria to document the history of military training on campus. Interviews were conducted by Allen Specht during the summer of 1973 and spring of 1974 with fourteen prominent individuals who participants in campus military organizations such as the Canadian Officers' Training Corps.

Scope and Content

The collection consists of audio recordings and transcripts created from interviews conducted as part of an oral history project to document the evolution of military training on campus. Interviewees discuss campus military organizations and student participation in war as well as peace movements at UBC. In addition the interviews provide information about campus life at the University as well as the interviewees' general experiences in the Canadian Armed Services.

Item List

Each interview was originally recorded on a reel-to-reel tape. Cassette reference copies have been made and typescript interview transcripts are available for all but one of the interviews. Each transcript also includes a handwritten form with a brief interview summary. The interviews have been arranged by tape number.

Digitized copies of the audio recordings and the transcripts are also available by clicking the links under each tape number.

Note: Audio tapes have been removed and are stored with the UBC Audio Tape Collection.

List of Abbreviations:

C.O. - Commanding Officer

C.O.T.C. - Canadian Officers' Training Corps

O.T.C. - Officers' Training Corps

R.U.S. - Reserve University Squadron, R.C.A.F.

U.N.T.D. - University Naval Training Division

ARTHUR LORD (1900-1982)

AT_177

1. Family background : high school cadets : Canadian Officers' Training Corps : Western University's Battalion : Camp Hughes : England : Vimy Ridge.
2. Vimy campaign : wounded : Attitude to World War II : President Wesbrook : campus life : C.O.T.C. disbanded 1919 : graduation : UBC Senate, 1924-27 : re-establishment of C.O.T.C. 1928.

[Interview Transcript](#) / Listen to recording ([Side 1](#), [Side 2](#))

AT_178

1. International affairs 1930s : training C.O.T.C. : training and duties : importance of discipline : officers' mess: qualities of a good officer.
2. World War I and II students compared : value of military training on campus.

[Interview Transcript](#) / Listen to recording ([Side 1](#), [Side 2](#))

GORDON SHRUM (1896-1985)

AT_179

1. Family background : education : University of Toronto - professors : C.O.T.C. 1945 training : enlistment : Vimy Ridge.
2. Reflections on World War I : completes education : move to UBC : joins C.O.T.C. : influence of Harry Logan : President Klinck : decision to waive pay : Emily Carr paintings : comparison C.O.T.C. and service colleges.

[Interview Transcript](#) / [Listen to recording](#)

AT_180

1. C.O.T.C. facilities : relations with local militia ; Instructor Sgt. Smith : decision to waive pay World War II : duties as officer : C.O.T.C. not effected much by depression : anti-war movement 1934 : high morale : type of training : Col. Logan : Col. Letson : becomes C.O. : importance of discipline.
2. Effect of international events : government policies re: students : wartime expansion : materials to build Armoury : co-operation on campus : feedback from students : summer camps.

[Interview Transcript](#) / [Listen to recording](#)

AT_181

1. Syllabus : where students go after C.O.T.C. : Committee of Military Affairs : officers in unit : President MacKenzie a strong supporter : Chancellors Hamber and McKechnie : contribution of C.O.T.C. to Armed Forces.
2. UBC best unit : value of training : "stepping down" as C.O. 1947 : standards of Selection Board : C.O.'s annual reports : military administration.

[Interview Transcript](#) / [Listen to recording](#)

ROBERT BONNER (b. 1920)

AT_182

1. Family background : schooling : Depression issues : campus politics : Canadian Student Assembly issue 1940/41 : enrolment C.O.T.C. : training : theory of training.
2. Impression of Col. Shrum : C.O.T.C. activities : Seaforth Highlanders : Sicily and Italy : training instructor in England : becomes chief training officer C.O.T.C. (1945/46).

[Interview Transcript](#) / [Listen to recording](#)

AT_183

1. Summer camps : enters law faculty : views on C.O.T.C. : post-war international developments : post-war C.O.T.C. : University administration co-operativeness.
2. Becomes C.O. : post-war international affairs : unification issue : contributions of C.O.T.C. : liberal education a value to officers : value of military training.

[Interview Transcript](#) / [Listen to recording](#) ([Side 1](#), [Side 2](#))

GEOFFREY RIDDEHOUGH (1900-1978)

AT_184

1. Education at UBC early 1920s : Fairview campus : Sir Henry Newbolt affair : interest in military training : joined C.O.T.C. 1928/29 : discussion of article in "Defence Quarterly" (1931).
2. International affairs : French military (1932) : poor morale in France : military intelligence (1939) : importance of security : C.O.T.C. - UBC : World War II : instructor in arms : training camps : British army tradition.

[Interview Transcript](#) / [Listen to recording](#)

H.F.G. LETSON (b. 1896)

AT_186

1. Family background : high school cadets : formation of C.O.T.C. World War I :
President Westbrook : 196th Battalion : France, Vimy Ridge : returns UBC 1918
: disbandment : views on anti-military feeling on campus.
2. B.C. regiment 1920s : co-operation of militia with C.O.T.C. : becomes C.O. of C.O.T.C.
: Gallipoli lectures : "My Foreign Legion" : philosophy of C.O.T.C. : personal
feelings : interest in history.

[Interview Transcript](#) / [Listen to recording](#)

AT_187

1. Incidents in 1919 of student opposition : 1941 military attacks in Washington : 1942
Adjutant General in charge of recruitment : problems of recruitment World
War II : story by Sam Hughes : explanation of World War II policy of dividing
Canadian army.
2. General McNaughton and autonomy issue : post - World War II Committee for
Military Policy : views on disbandment of C.O.T.C. : views on integration :
support of C.O.T.C.

[Interview Transcript](#) / [Listen to recording](#)

JOHN MCLEAN (b. 1911)

AT_188

1. UBC student 1927 : attitude to C.O.T.C. when student : student opposition :
international developments to 1930s : C.O.T.C. cadet 1939 : Seaforth
Highlanders : Sicily landing : Italian campaign : post - World War II life.
2. Joining the C.O.T.C. as C.O. 1953 : R.O.T.P. : annual meeting of C.O.T.C. C.O.s from
across Canada : quotas issue : disbandment : individuals who fought to save
units.

[Interview Transcript](#) / [Listen to recording](#)

LAWRENCE E. RANTA (b. 1910)

AT_189

1. Family background : medical career : Mississauga Horse Guards : Finnish background : international developments 1930s : wartime research at UBC
2. Wartime research UBC : field craft instruction : views on benefits of C.O.T.C.

[Interview Transcript](#) / [Listen to recording](#)

AT_190

1. Style of G. Shrum's administration : administrative theory : liaison with local units : smokers : P.M.C. - duties : routine mess events : mess dinner for grads : 1945 mess art pictures display : abstract hoax : Emily Carr.
2. Emily Carr (cont'd) : mess furniture : mess dinners - Miss Davis : cadets become officers : military library : R.O.T.P. and C.O.T.C. : summer camp : R.O.T.P. and quotas : philosophy of C.O.T.C. : importance of not isolating military : Lt. Col. McLean resists quotas.

[Interview Transcript](#) / [Listen to recording](#)

AT_191

1. C.O.T.C. relations with local units : annual C.O.'s meetings : integration : comparison of Liberal and Conservative policies : General George Pearkes : becomes C.O. : U.N.T.D. : implementing integration.
2. Financial reasons for disbandment : campus mood 1960s : Canadian forces and defense policy : nuclear age : peace keeping : C.O.T.C. Training 1960s : distinguished visitors : annual dinners : praise for naval units.

[Interview Transcript](#) / [Listen to recording](#)

ALAN H. FINLAY

AT_192

(tape only - no transcript)

[Listen to recording](#)

FINLAY MORRISON (b. 1917)

AT_369

1. Family background. C.O.T.C. University of Saskatchewan. Canadian Army. Aide to General Crerar. With tactical H.Q. from Normandy to Holland, 1944-1945. General Crerar's views on officer training.
2. Pharmacy Department, UBC. Duties of contingency officers, 1951-1956. Impressions of C.O.T.C UBC. Changes in O.T.C. since war. Becoming C.O. in 1957. Issue of quotas. Issue of discontinuation. Value of C.O.T.C. Citizenship.

[Interview Transcript](#) / [Listen to recording](#)

RAY HERBERT (b. 1924)

AT_370-1

1. Schooling. Alberta militia unit. Joins R.C.A.F. bomber squadron. Enters law faculty UBC. Joins auxiliary wing Sea Island. Interaction between Sea Island and UBC squadron. Views of disbandment of UBC R.U.S. , 1945 and re-establishment 1949. Becomes C.O. 1952. Impressions of Armoury and personnel.
2. Officers mess. Parade night activities. Summer training program. Effect upon Canadian unity. Attainments of air training program. Recruitment.

[Interview Transcript](#) / [Listen to recording \(Side 1, Side 2\)](#)

AT_370-2

1. Recruitment. Women cadets. Supplying officers. Establishment of Victoria unit. Quota issue. R.O.T.P. Annual meetings of C.O.s from across Canada. Organization. Tri-Service staff officer.
2. Canada's changing foreign policy. Views on Canada's position vis-a-vis the United States. Effects of removal of air crew training. Interaction with army and navy units. Annual tri-services parade.

[Interview Transcript](#) / [Listen to recording](#)

AT_370-3

1. Integration - pros and cons. Disbandment. UBC administration cooperative. Advantages of training to students. Personal satisfaction.

[Interview Transcript](#) / [Listen to recording](#)

ALBERT LAITHWAITE

AT_371

1. Family background. R.A.F. and British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. Physical fitness for air force personnel. Joins squadron 1949. Squadron leader Roy Haines. Beginnings of UBC squadron. Duties as adjunct.
2. Importance of tradition. Lectures. Resident staff officer. University and Service College training compared. Leadership training. Value of training units to community. Social aspects of units. Loss due to disbandment. Contribution of university units. Human element of services.

[Interview Transcript](#) / [Listen to recording \(Side 1, Side 2\)](#)

MAURICE YOUNG (b. 1912)

AT_372-1

1. Family background. Education. Civil Defence London 1939/40. R.N.V.R. in England then on HMS Gerusalemme. Post-war education. UBC Paediatrics 1953. R.C.N.R. HMCS Donacona. Discovery. Becomes C.O. U.N.T.D.
2. Efficiency award system. Composition of U.N.T.D. Familiarization cruises. Public relations. Effects of integration. Move to UBC. Problems with integration. Support from UBC presidents.

[Interview Transcript](#) / [Listen to recording](#)

AT_372-2

1. Comparison of UBC presidents' attitudes toward military units. Effects of quotas. Economic motivations. Decline of moral due to government. Motives for involvement in UNTD. Traditions. Effect of training on students.

[Interview Transcript](#) / [Listen to recording](#)

FRANK TURNER (b. 1916)

AT_373-1

1. Family background. Education. UBC life in the 1930s. Views international affairs. Attitude to C.O.T.C. in peace time. Enlists navy 1941. Sea experience. Reasons for preferring navy over other services. Alumni secretary 1946-1954. Became C.O. U.N.T.D.
2. Post war uncertainty. Composition of U.N.T.D. Story of the gun room. Annual balls. Changes in training. Ex-naval officers in U.N.T.D. Success of U.N.T.D.

[Interview Transcript](#) / [Listen to recording](#)

AT_373-2

1. Value of training program to individual. Group activity, cooperation and competition. Personal philosophy. Dean Gage's contributions to society.

[Interview Transcript](#) / [Listen to recording](#)

NORMAN A.M. MACKENZIE (1894-1986)

AT_374-1

1. Family background. Education. Pictou County, N.S. Schools - Nova Scotia. Joins O.T.C. Dalhousie 1914. Enlists. Training period. Overseas in France - "Plug Street", Ypres.
2. Somme Arras. Catches flu and convalescence England. Paschendale. 1918 - Arras front. Amieus. Actions as a scout. Military medals. Cambrai-Bourlon.

[Interview Transcript](#) / [Listen to recording](#)

AT_374-2

1. Discharge. Education plans. Post-war attitude to war. International affairs 1920s. Versailles Treaty. Visit to Russian O.T.C. University of Toronto. Anti-military training on campus.
2. University of Toronto and UBC compared re: military. Military in Canada inter-war years. Opinion of value of O.T.C. Sections of society supporting military.

Effect of Depression on international stability. Becomes president U.N.B.
C.S.A. incident, 1940.

[Interview Transcript](#) / [Listen to recording](#)

AT_374-3

1. Description of C.O.T.C., UBC. Dr. Shrum. Armoury. President's house. Opinion on value of O.T.C. Discussion of C.O.s at UBC. Pipe Band.
2. UBC C.O.s of C.O.T.C., R.U.S., U.N.T.D. Reasons C.O.s served in units. Opinion of quotas and phasing out of units. Political parties and their attitudes. Integration. Efforts to resist disbandment.

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