

**CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM  
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**INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT**

**INTERVIEW CONTROL NUMBER 31D 1 KINGSTONE**

**INTERVIEWEE: ROBERT KINGSTONE**

**INTERVIEWER: D.W. EDGECOMBE**

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**Transcription of Interview Number 31D 1 Kingstone**

**Robert Kingstone**

**Interviewed 6 October 2000**

**By D.W. Edgecombe**

INTERVIEWER: Canadian War Museum Oral History Program. Interview with Colonel Robert Kingstone. Recorded on October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2000 at Ottawa, Ontario. Interviewed by David Edgecombe. Tape one, side one.

KINGSTONE: My name is Robert Kingstone, KINGSTONE.

INTERVIEWER: Well, if you could tell us a little bit about yourself, your background, your place of birth and so on.

KINGSTONE: Yes, right. I was born in Montreal and educated in the province of Quebec and city of Quebec. My parents were both Canadian born. My mother, a Montrealer, and my father originally came from the south part of Montreal. I was educated at schools in the city and went to boarding school, Bishops College school and Lower Canada College and attended university at McGill.

INTERVIEWER: What degree did you obtain at McGill?

KINGSTONE: I did not complete my degree, because I had two years of engineering and I quit because this was 1935 and I was interested in joining the regular army. So, I enlisted. First in the non-permanent active militia and was assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Medium Battery in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Montreal Regiment. Immediately, thereafter, I put in an application for a transfer to the Royal Artillery in the British army. The reason for this was that, in my opinion at the time, the Canadian army soldiered only from Halifax to Vancouver and this was not a very inspiring way to spend one's life. So, I thought if I got into the Royal Artillery I would have the opportunity to serve elsewhere in the Empire at the time. Strangely enough, the transfer came through in about July or August 1939 and Ottawa, at that time, decided that I should stay here. As things have turned out, I think that was a very wise decision on their part because those of my friends that did go to the Royal Artillery, did not fare quite as well as I did.

INTERVIEWER: When you joined the artillery, you came in as a second lieutenant?

KINGSTONE: I came in as a supernumerary unqualified second lieutenant and spent considerable time at Fort Frontenac in Kingston, taking various gunnery courses and officer courses with the RCHA. That's the sort of entry... Can I shift to the beginning of the war?

INTERVIEWER: Sure.

KINGSTONE: At the outbreak of war, where mobilization occurred in September of 1939, I was sent to Montreal to the 1<sup>st</sup> Medium Battery RCA, which was a 60 pounder battery and was one the batteries called up for mobilization. Served there for September, October, November and then was posted to the 35<sup>th</sup> Battery in Sherbrooke, Quebec, which was about to proceed overseas. Went overseas with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Field Regiment as it became, which consisted of the 7<sup>th</sup> Battery from Montreal,--7<sup>th</sup> Field Battery-- the 35<sup>th</sup> Field Battery from Sherbrooke, the 8<sup>th</sup> Battery from Moncton and the 10<sup>th</sup> Battery from St Catherines. By that time, I had obtained the lofty rank of Lieutenant.

Arrived in England in December of 1939 and were introduced to the glories of Aldershot and put into a barracks which had just been vacated by the 51<sup>st</sup> Armoured Division, which had been posted to the BEF. This barracks is worth a couple of words at least, because it was a summer barracks, all glass, everything. And this winter of 1939 apparently was the coldest that they had for many a year. Everything froze. All the toilets, all the washbasins, all the people and there we were. We eventually got some Canadian comforts in the way of big stoves to put in barrack rooms. We also got some instruction for our cooks in how to manage the mysteries of the British cooking equipment. Very nearly had a riot. We shared this barracks with 1<sup>st</sup> Field Regiment, which had come over on the same ship, I should say, which was the EMPRESS OF BRITAIN. She had been equipped for around the world cruise just before she had been commandeered by the Canadian government for our use and consequently, we dined and drank rather royally on our way across. I think this may have given us the impression that war was going to be all like this. And we quickly discovered that it wasn't. Things got much grimmer. England at that time didn't really know that there was a war on. You could get absolutely anything in London. And there were no restrictions. Petrol was the only real restriction. Shift from there until the summer of 1940 when air raids on Britain started in earnest.

And, I should go back a bit. The elements of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division went to France in the spring of 1940. 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade including 1<sup>st</sup> Field Regiment, actually was landed at Brest and went inland and immediately were chased out. Elements of 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade in which 2<sup>nd</sup> Field Regiment was, were all set to go and started off for the port, only to be turned around and Dunkirk had occurred and things were quite different. So we were then, 1<sup>st</sup> Division was the only real equipped force in the British Isles. And lord knows, we were pretty green. However, for morale reasons, they moved us all over England and Wales. I think partly to bolster the morale of the civilian population because we were always on the go. And eventually we ended up on the south coast where we manned beach defences and the beginnings of the beach defences, which were being put up. And had our gun positions reconnoitered and that's about it. We were there some long period thereafter. In fact, again with movements, we were around south part of England for the rest of our time in England.

INTERVIEWER: What about basing? Were you actually centered on any particular community?

KINGSTONE: Oxstead in Surrey was where we were. But we were along the coast from Arundel in the west right to the Kent border. And from the beaches back as far as Croydon, which was at the outskirts of London.

INTERVIEWER: What guns did the regiment have at that time?

KINGSTONE: Well, the regiment when it first went overseas had no guns. We eventually got 18 25 pounders, which was a modification of the 18 pounder and later we got our own 25 pounders and started getting some of our own equipment. Some of our moves were rather comical in that they assigned moving vans, almost grocery trucks and almost anything you could think of, to tow us to practice camps. This always caused some hilarity, but there just wasn't anything else to be had in Britain.

INTERVIEWER: If I could just go back for a second, Bob, because I think it's really quite interesting from an historian's point of view. I get the impression that 1<sup>st</sup> Division went over with soldiers and small arms and precious little else. Is that true?

KINGSTONE: 1<sup>st</sup> Division went over with not even small arms. We had some small arms. But, for instance, the officers didn't have a revolver or anything of this sort at all. There were some rifles, Enfields and bayonets, but virtually, 1<sup>st</sup> Division consisted of soldiers only. No services, no signals, no nothing. All of this was added in after we got to Britain and settled into the Aldershot environs and people started to go on courses and equipment started to arrive. But even when we were slated to go to France, our equipment was far from complete. I think that covers it pretty well.

INTERVIEWER: Could we talk a little bit about the training that the regiment underwent during its almost three years in England?

KINGSTONE: Yes, indeed. We practiced in Larkhill to begin with and then we got other ranges, like Alferston and Lewis on the south coast and Sunnybridge in Wales. And our exercises became more ambitious. Such as, when we starting firing, the whole of the divisional artillery in Lewis and then moved tactically across country and went to Larkhill. Fired in Larkhill and then went on to Sunnybridge in Wales. And the anti-aircraft units went, I believe, somewhere else – Readsdale or somewhere. And the medium regiments went to Readsdale. The reasons for this was the ranges at these other places were somewhat limited. We used to occasionally drop the odd shell in the middle of Lewis, which I don't think they appreciated. But we were learning, and it was all part of the process.

We had, without firing; we had many exercises, some of which became quite famous. Such as Tiger, which was run by Field Marshall Montgomery and others. We had 1<sup>st</sup> Division against 2<sup>nd</sup> Division. We had all kinds of combinations of exercises from the brigade level all the way up to the corps level. Some of them, quite realistic. But in retrospect, the gunners are fortunate in that they can practice exactly what they can do, and we have things to shoot at. Therefore, the gunners get pretty realistic training. Much

more realistic than some other arms. I remember in one of our exercises, I was happened to be G2 at 1<sup>st</sup> Division when a phone rang on my desk. And the phone rang and a voice said, this is Lieutenant so and so of the 1<sup>st</sup> Field Company, RCE. The bridge at code reference 123456 is blown and it really is. Because the sappers used to practice. They would put their explosives on these bridges, but in this case, somebody had pushed the button. Our divisional commander lost his sense of humour and made the field company commander and this particular lieutenant rebuild the bridge after the exercise.

INTERVIEWER: Let's talk a little bit about what off duty life was like for a young Canadian officer in England at that period.

KINGSTONE: Well, off duty life was pretty well confined to your own barracks if you were in most places. Vehicles were not really available to you. You could get a group together and get the loan of or get the driver to drive you to the movies in Brighton or somewhere. But in general, you had to get around by yourself. So people engaged in quite a lot of sports. They went to London quite frequently when they could. But we were starting to make friendships in Britain. And this permitted us to have places to go to for weekends and so forth. You were not bored. Later on, of course, when the attacks on London got worse, you avoided London and you avoided Plymouth and places that were being currently bombed. So you used the local pubs and local area and you met the local people and some of them married. I guess there are quite a few in Canada from that day who met their husbands while we were doing this. We were getting awfully bored, despite the fact that a group had gone into Spitzsbergen with General Walsh. There was a project to send a group to Norway, but commanded by General Karten Dewiat(?), but it appeared that the Germans knew all about that. So, that one was called off. There were the odd raid on which we had a couple people. Not gunners necessarily. But this culminated in Dieppe, as far as we were concerned. There was lots to do. But we had been there so long, we felt we should have been able to do more.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, let's come to the spring/summer of 1943 and talk a little bit about the preparations for Husky and the move over to Sicily.

KINGSTONE: At the time of spring of '43, by that time I was a Brigade Major of 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Brigade, commanded by General Graham, Howard Graham. We again were over on the south coast and we got the warning orders to send units up to Scotland for training of waterproofing of vehicles and various landings of one sort or another, of vehicles out of landing craft. And the staff, brigade staff and divisional staff, went to London and into Norfolk House where we started the planning for Operation Husky. The quarters we used, were the ones just been vacated by the British-American force that landed in North Africa and later became 1<sup>st</sup> Army. Most of the brigade staff, not the complete staff, but brigade major, brigadier brigade major, staff captain, a couple of LOs, went into Norfolk House and each brigade had a British landing officer who was experienced in combined operations to assist us. And we started to prepare the landing tables and whatnot for what was a very, very detailed operations. The landing tables alone were several hundred pages because you had both the assault convoys and the follow-up convoys to deal with and you had the sizes of vehicles and the capacity of ship

holds to take various heights. And you had to cut some down. And what this did to the loads, etc. It was a fascinating time actually. But all this time, our troops and the remainder of our staff were up in Scotland doing their training. We sent off a party of senior officers. The divisional commander was General Salmon and this group left to go out to Tripoli to meet with Montgomery and his staff for indoctrination. Unfortunately, that aircraft crashed and Colonel Findley was killed, Salmon was killed, various others. And this was when General Simmonds took over command of the division. With that bumpy start, things got organized and we had a final exercise in Scotland, where we landed over the beaches of the Troon golf course and then immediately set sail, well almost immediately, set sail for the Mediterranean.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade was in a ship, HMS GLENGYLE. The naval commander of the operation was Admiral Sir Philip Lyon and some of the units were split. For instance, two batteries of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Field Regiment were in a follow up convoy. The trip out was very interesting. Fortunately, smooth weather in the Bay of Biscay and the troops, all they could do really was have PT and that sort of thing. A crisis arose when we well into the Mediterranean, because the three lead ships of the follow up convoy were torpedoed. Which consisted of my brigadier's caravan, which had a lot of our personnel gear and a bit of drink in it. That all went by the board, but a couple batteries of 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment lost everything. Not too many lives thank goodness. But they landed in North Africa and had to sit there while the rest of us went on.

INTERVIEWER: If I could just ask a question? It may come up later, but according to what I read, the ships lost involved some 500 vehicles, 38 guns and most of the comms equipment.

KINGSTONE: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Was that comms equipment brigade, division or for the battery?

KINGSTONE: Well they lost pretty near everything. But no, it would have been for the division.

INTERVIEWER: So, the plan was then for the artillery, because this didn't impact immediately on the landing. So was the plan based on gunfire support from the navy in the initial stages.

KINGSTONE: Yes, yes. The gunfire support initially was provided by two monitors and destroyers and so on. We had indications that our landing would not be seriously opposed in our sector. Around the other side of Sicily, it was a different story. And over where the Americans landed, which was west of us, they weren't opposed at all. We, in fact, were almost not opposed, a small bit.

INTERVIEWER: But as I understand it, you had some problems with your landing craft.

KINGSTONE: Yes. Well, the big excitement occurred shortly before landing when they discovered that there was a sandbar off shore and they had navy underwater demolitions teams and whatnot who went in and landed on the beach to see what the problem was. Well, the problem was that our landing craft could not get through and put us on the beach. They were liable to let us off in fairly deep water. So, we switched from landing craft of various sorts, a fair substantial number of people, into DUKWs, which could roll over the sandbar and roll up on the beach. Now, in the light of the fact that there was not to be serious opposition, this worked. If there had been, it would have been murder.

We-- like all landing operations, most things go wrong. And we did not land on schedule. I was supposed to, with 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Headquarters, get ashore, set up a temporary headquarters with communications and then the brigade commander would arrive. In actual fact, as it happened, my landing craft was swung in the davits and smashed itself into the side of GLENGYLE. So, my brigadier and I went in together. We had no vehicles because they had been sunk in the convoy that the submarines had destroyed part of. And we had a set of some sort, which we commandeered some poor Sicilian's donkey and cart and had this set mounted on it. However, it was rather heavier than the donkey. So you would have to lean on the shafts to get his little feet down onto the ground and then he could go. However, we were alright. Everyone reached their objectives without any difficulty.

The Italians seemed only too willing to surrender. And I don't know what the actual casualties were, but I think almost negligible. Things certainly got tougher later. There were no Germans on our front, which was one of the things that made the difference. So we proceeded to go across Sicily, the Americans on our left and the British on our right. And we shook down fairly well. Sicily was a very difficult place with mountains and hills of various sorts. And there was lots of firing. Lots of things to shoot at. Quite a lot of prisoners. The Italians were surrendering very easily and it was very noticeable when you ran into a German unit. Things would just suddenly stop and progress was not anything like as easy. However, we got through Sicily and had a rest period at the top end near Mount Edna. Unfortunately, it turned out to be one of the worst malaria areas in the whole of Sicily. The consequences of which were that about two or three weeks later, people started coming down with malaria. The other thing is that, not having seen fresh vegetables in any quantity in a long time, the troops became pretty enthusiastic about what they could pick up in the fields and consequently, they got various forms of diarrhea.

At the end of when Sicily was declared secure, I left brigade major, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade and was posted to command the 10<sup>th</sup> Battery in 2<sup>nd</sup> Field Regiment. We crossed Reggio, across the Straits of Messina, in an absolutely cloudless day in a LCT, I guess, with our guns and started from the very toe tip of Italy, Calabria. Up towards Taranto where we turned left and proceeded up the main part of the boot. About this time, the Italians surrendered, we did almost no firing at all, until we came up around Campobasso. No not quite as far as Campobasso. At that time, Strome Galloway was acting CO of the RCR and my battery was supporting him. We were leading the division and ran into some German opposition and Strome and I figured out a small attack. The only problem was that we

had been moving so fast, that we didn't have any maps. We had run right off our maps. However, we provided support for the RCR. And during this time, the divisional commander and the RCA, who was Brigadier Bruce Mathews, arrived up. I was sitting on top of a haystack. And Bruce Mathews said, "Bob, what are you using for map?" Well I said, "Well, I'm using the only thing I got, Brigadier. I got one old Italian automobile club map with no grid on it." He said, "Don't ever let the school of artillery hear about this." However, what we would do, we would fire an airburst and adjust it and then bring it down to the ground. Fortunately, we didn't hit any of our own people. But it was that kind of time, because we were way, way off our maps. Again, that was caught up pretty quick and we had maps as we moved on up.

We rested in Campobosso. The division with the Canadian army, with some enthusiasm, renamed every street, 40 Avenue or Young Street, or St Catherines Street or what have you. And I'm sure the Italians appreciated this no end. We had about ten days of that and the gunners continued in action because there was some counter battery work to do. But the division, as such, rested. Then we were alternating between 30 British Corp and 13 British Corps. 13 Corps, corps commander was General Dempsey who had been the BGS of 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Corp before the corp was completely Canadian. General McNaughton was commanding it, but his BGS was General Dempsey. So we had good rapport with people we knew. And both corps were very good and excellent, because they had been in the desert for years and years and years. And our relationship was very good. Monty used to take an interest in us and come and visit periodically. And I say, again, that it was awfully good experience for Canadian soldiery and we learned a great deal.

INTERVIEWER: Interview with Colonel Robert Kingstone, end of side one. Canadian War Museum Oral History Program, interview with Colonel Robert Kingstone, tape one side two.

KINGSTONE: I think its interesting to compare what I would call the pre-Campobasso time to the post-Campobasso time and this can be seen by some of the war artists' paintings that they did while they were with us. Charles Comfort came to the 10<sup>th</sup> Battery and has painted a picture of E Troop deployed on a plain just deployed south of Campobasso, where the guns are not dug in at all. The gun detachments are stripped to the waist and enjoying the sunshine. And compare that to the pre-Orotona time when guns were dug in with great effort and were continually dug in from then on. Right up to the tops of the muzzles and everybody was wearing their steel helmets. And war was certainly much more grim than it had been.

We moved fairly frequently. And everywhere we moved, we, in the Orotona time, we dug in every way. Infantry had the same problem. They had to dig in where they formally had not bothered very much. They would scratch a small slit trench, but not really dug it out. After Campobasso and pre-Orotona, they were dug in with their heads well down. And the reason for all of that was because our opposition was German and experienced paratroopers and really first-class soldiers. The Germans used Italy because we were going up the spine of it and everything was being blown on all corners. The



sappers had bridge after bridge to build and roads to fill in. The Germans used a very small detachment of infantry and one gun, an 88, or something of that sort, or a Nebelwerfer and held up because we only had one route, held us up at every turn. It was - war really was hell then. I remember Monty coming up to say goodbye to us before he went back to take over second front, and by this time the weather had also deteriorated and was against us. It was pouring rain. Everything was mud. And in Italy, with all its mountains, everything was plugged too down in the valleys. And Monty had a bunch of us around and said, "Take it easy, it's going to be a long war. Don't keep banging your head against this thing. Don't take any more casualties than you have to." This was quite a different Monty than there had been previously. So there we were. We would move not every day. Sometimes we were in positions for quite a long time. Ammunition became a crisis because a large ammunition ship in the port of Barry had been blown up. And we were down to having to justify ammunition expenditures in no uncertain terms. Prior to this, we had fired absolutely recklessly as much as we wanted. In some cases, too much. I can remember using two field regiments to chase about three Germans across a field who were going to a latrine. And didn't think anything about using Mike Targets to do so. Those days changed.

INTERVIEWER: Mike Targets is a regimental target.

KINGSTONE: Yeah. Mike, Uncle and Victor.

INTERVIEWER: Now, did you directly support the RCR throughout the campaign right to the end in Italy?

KINGSTONE: No. I left shortly after where we got to. But, no, we supported the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade and that's a slightly interesting story. You had 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade supported by 2<sup>nd</sup> Field Regiment and 1<sup>st</sup> Field Regiment supporting 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade. And this came about because the CRA overhearing some infantrymen, infantry Brigadiers I take it, referring to their artillery regiment. And this was his method of demonstrating that it wasn't their artillery regiment. It was his artillery regiment and he would have it supporting who he wished. Within the regiment itself, we supported whoever was leading. I was with the 48<sup>th</sup> Highlanders quite often as well. And with the Hasty Ps. But mostly with the RCR.

INTERVIEWER: You said that you left at that point. Would that be after Orotona?

KINGSTONE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And where did you go from there?

KINGSTONE: In the midst of after Orotona, a telegram came from Canada saying that they wanted me back in the Directorate of Military Training. And the priority that was given it, was such that next to God, I had a seat on any airplane in anywhere in the world. I was taken down to Naples and I boarded a plane and said to them, "Now, I've never seen Cairo. And here I am going back to Canada. Is there anything you could do for me?" And they said, "Sure. We'll give you 24 hours in Cairo." So we just fly over there

and it was an American aircraft. Taking some prisoners actually. And we stopped in Cairo and I managed to see the Shepherds Hotel and the bar and a couple of things. And we took off the next day and flew right across the desert, as far as Dakar, where we changed planes. We made stops. These were DC3s. We made some stops and then you changed planes and flew up to England, which turned out to be Preswick, actually. And I changed planes again and got to London.

Went into CMHQ and saw General Fleurrie, who was an old friend. And said, "I've been told to report to something called the NETD." Which has the wonderful name of the non-effective transit depot. And so he said, "We'll you're certainly not going there. That's down in Aldershot and you just won't have any fun down there at all. So you go, get into your hotel and you stay there and I will tell you when you can go down to the NETD, which will be the night that you are leaving from the NETD to go back to Canada." So, that I did for ten days. And you wouldn't have thought that all of this rush was worth it. Stayed in the Savoy. Eventually got a call and went down to Camp Bordon, I guess it was in Aldershot area. Reported into this unit. Left the unit almost immediately and went to the Port of Liverpool, I guess. Was put aboard a ship called NEW AMSTERDAM. A whole new American line, which had brought over thousands of Americans over to England. We had nothing except a few people from the NETD and a few nursing sisters and no escort. We pushed off a high rate of knots and sailed across the Atlantic to arrive in Halifax. So, as I thought the war was pressing and they were just waiting for me to put it all right, I dashed up to Ottawa and as I got there, somebody said, "Oh, what are you here for." "We'll I don't know, you sent me this." "Oh, well, have thirty days leave." So, that's what happened. War was pretty pressing. I went on thirty days leave and went into the Directorate Military Training to be the artillery representative, MT1A. Where I stayed for about four months.

INTERVIEWER: Whereabouts are we now time wise?

KINGSTONE: 1944.

INTERVIEWER: 1944. The spring.

KINGSTONE: Yeah. I left Italy in April '44, so this would be May. In the meantime, Brigadier Graham, my former brigade commander, had become Deputy Chief of the General Staff and he called me in and told me that I was to go to the US Command and General Staff College in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Which I did. It was a short course and subsequently, he told me that I was to take a group of officers to the Pacific to report on the difference in various parts of the organization. Because we were about to start a Pacific force and find out the differences in organization required to cooperate with the US.

INTERVIEWER: What rank were you at this point?

KINGSTONE: Major. I became a major. Well, I didn't touch on Staff College, I skipped a whole part.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, I was going to ask the question. Because when you became Brigade Major, had you come back to Canada for the staff college?

KINGSTONE: No, I took my staff college in England in 1941. I'm sorry, I should have put this in chronological order, but I didn't. So, we met in Vancouver. There were ten or twelve people. Mine was the second group to have been formed. Major Cunnington had another group that was down with General McArthur in his part of the Pacific. And we were to be with Admiral Nimitz, in the other part of the Pacific for the Okinawa landings and subsequent operations. So, we had a pretty broad directive. You could have done almost anything with it. I had about ten or twelve, some of which had no experience whatsoever. Others, there was a captain from the Royal Winnipeg Rifles. There was a gunner who had some experience. But most of them had none.

So, we flew from San Francisco to the Hawaiian Islands and then onwards through Johnson Islands, Kwajalein and so on to Guam, where we joined the people who were to go to Okinawa. We went under command of 10<sup>th</sup> Army in Okinawa, the commander of which was Simon Bolivar Buckner. And subsequently he was relieved and Vinegar Joel Stillwell took over. At this time, I can't say that I was putting my neck out any further than necessary. I thought it would be rather a wasted time to be killed by some Jap. But there seemed to be no likelihood of it anyway, because the Americans did land, two corps, side by side, in the middle of Okinawa. One went right and one went left and they went right across the Island. When they got to the other side, one turned right and other turned left and they swept the whole island. I never seen anything like it in my whole life. Consequently, they had huge casualties. Because there were no maneuvers. It consisted of--the Japs were in caves--and it consisted of a tanker and an infantry section. And a flamethrower approached the cave and invited the Japs to come out. And nothing happened. So you blasted the cave to pieces and set it on fire. And you went onto the next one. It was not a very dangerous war from the point of view of the attacking troops, despite the fact that the casualties in Okinawa were considerable. Stayed there until the Island was declared secure, which was June or July. I'm not sure which. My mind's a blank about when.

Went back to Honolulu and wrote our report, which I must say, I don't think anybody has ever read. Well, the war was over. We stayed along Waikiki beaches as long as our consciences would allow. And then we went came back to Canada, ready to join to join the Pacific force. But by that time, somebody had dropped the atom bomb and the whole war was over. So, went back to DMT to doing what I have been doing before I left.

Now, this is really post-war. The forming of the post-war army was going on and we were selecting personnel for the post-war army interviews and what not. And I was then taken out to go down to be PA to the commandant of the National Defence College, which was being formed. The first commandant was a British Major General, Sir John Whitely, a sapper, who used to encourage me by saying that at the end of the First War he had been a lieutenant colonel in the sappers and he reverted and it had taken all the time to the second war to get back to being a lieutenant colonel. But he had been

Eisenhower's Chief of Operations in the desert, in North Africa. And was an ideal man for Canada. He was here because--and this is political-- General Simonds was not allowed home for fear that General Foulkes and he would be competing for the job of CGS. So, General Foulkes was the CGS and General Simonds stayed in England for quite a long time.

INTERVIEWER: In your own case, you talk about General Whitely talk about rank reversion. Did you revert to pre-war?

KINGSTONE: No. We all signed an undertaking that we were willing to revert. But very few had to. Some did. Some did have to.

INTERVIEWER: The structure was very shaky. Because I remember my father was a temporary acting major from 1942 until end of war and was then confirmed. But temporary acting is a pretty shaky sort of platform.

KINGSTONE: But we weren't temporary actings. We had a substantive rank, but we had to agree that if they needed to reduce things, that we would be part of it. That's fair enough actually. Then, of course, fortunately, I guess--that's the best way to put it--the Korean War broke out in 1950. And this allowed us to recruit all over again. Well, as I have been saying, I remained in Director of Military Training until I was sent down to the formation of the National Defence College at Fort Frontenac and remained there until 1950, when General Simonds arrived to take over from General Whitely. And I was posted to Ottawa to the Joint Staff as Assistant Secretary of the Chiefs of Staff Committee.

INTERVIEWER: I think Bob, I would like to leave it there, because we are targeting the immediate post-war. And I think it might be a good spot to stop there. I would like to come back and pick up something you said off take about the activities that went on with the mobilization of your unit in 1939 in Montreal.

KINGSTONE: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: You were talking about the folks arriving on trains.

KINGSTONE: Yeah. I'll just start. Yes, I would like to say a word about the mobilization in 1939, because if you remember this was a time of high unemployment and you could see every day freight trains coming into the city of Montreal where the tops of the cars were just loaded with out of work Canadians, who once war had started, came to join up. And we were hard put because we had no equipment and no place for them to live, until we managed to secure the old Place Vichy in Montreal, move in some beds, clean it up and this became their quarters. These were a really fine bunch of men and we were very lucky to get them, however, the state of their health, because they had been out of work so long, the state of their health was anything but good. And we lost an awful lot of them for health reasons. Which again is not surprising. We also ran into some very strange things. We discovered when we later got to England, that we had

taken all of the machinists out of a couple big plants. They had all got a burst of patriotism and rushed down at noon and joined up. However, the plant ceased to function. So we had to demobilize them and send them back and then make them civilians. And then they went back to their former jobs. And there was quite a lot of that. There was a patriotic outburst and anything had some money in it was very popular.

We paid the troops ourselves when we first started. What usually consisted, we paid them every week, it usually consisted of saying, "Please sign here. Here's your pay, but don't forget you owe me." Because you have been supporting some of these fellows in the meantime. They really made our lives interesting, because these were fine men and we had nothing to offer them really, except the foretaste of the excitement that was likely to happen in World War Two. And there I think I should leave it.

INTERVIEWER: I don't want to quit there, because you mentioned something really interesting about the government having nothing but money at one point.

KINGSTONE: Well, that's true. I did say that the government had nothing but money. The only thing you could get out of MD4 or I guess any of the other military districts was you could get all kinds of money, which you needed for renting a car. So the battery commander could have somewhere to get to see anything, you know. And you could get money and we got money enough to pay every week in cash. There were no paymasters. There were some paymasters, but units didn't have paymasters. At that time the officers paid the troops. It's an aside, but in the Greg Street Armoury, that part of the city, every prostitute in the business, was standing on the corner every Friday night, pay night. And I guess relieved the soldier of his pay as fast as he got it. Now, what else can I offer?

INTERVIEWER: I think from my point of view, it's been a great interview. Do you want to add anything at all to it?

KINGSTONE: No, I think of any interview of this sort, my thoughts have been rather disorganized. I feel that perhaps I could have done a great deal better. But if this serves the purpose, then I am happy. It's been a pleasure.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you very much. Interview with Colonel Robert Kingstone on 6 October 2000, interview ends.

**TRANSCRIPT ENDS**

**CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM**

**ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

**INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT**

**INTERVIEW CONTROL NUMBER 31D 1 KINGSTONE2**

**INTERVIEWEE: ROBERT KINGSTONE**

**INTERVIEWER: D.W. EDGECOMBE**

**DATE OF INTERVIEW: 12 JANUARY 2001**

**LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: OTTAWA ON**

**TRANSCRIBED BY: TANYA HALLEY**

**Transcription of Interview Number 31D 1 Kingstone2**

**Robert Kingstone**

**Interviewed 12 January 2001**

**By D.W. Edgecombe**

INTERVIEWER: Canadian War Museum Oral History Program. Interview with Colonel Robert Kingstone. Recorded on 12 January 2001 at Ottawa, Ontario. Interviewed by David Edgecombe. Tape one, side one. This interview will deal with certain aspects of Colonel Kingstone's postwar career.

KINGSTONE: My name is Robert Kingstone, KINGSTONE. You have asked me a considerable number of questions and we will start by going through those with those relating to my appointment to National Defence College. The NDC in Canada was modeled on the Imperial Defence College in London and the first Commandant was a British engineer, Major General Jock Whitely, who had been General Eisenhower's Chief of Operations in the desert and later, I believe. General Whitely was sent to Canada when General Simonds was considered by the politicians too much to swallow to bring him back to bring Chief of the General Staff because he and General Folks never saw eye to eye during their entire military service. So General Whitely was appointed and came to Canada in 1947 and I was appointed as the staff officer at the National Defence College, which at that time was getting itself set up at the Royal Military College in Kingston.

The composition of the National Defence College was to be four directing staff, one from each service and one from Department of External Affairs and a Commandant and myself. And that was with various secretarial assistance and a librarian and so on. So we foregathered at the RMC and later moved over to the accommodations at Fort Frontenac which they continued to occupy as long as they were in existence. The student body, if my memory is correct, is six from each service and six from other parts of government, including one from civilian industry. And the six from each service was no problem. Well, it was a bit of a problem for the navy, but it wasn't a problem for the air force or the army. The senior members from the civil service were somewhat of a problem as time went on. They always included one from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. At least one from External. Occasionally one from Trade and Commerce and a variety of others. The first civilian industry student was a fellow called Merve Crocket, I believe, from Imperial Oil.

Now, my duties were to assist all four of the directing staff in the preparation and production of the exercises which we were going to conduct, to handle the invitations to lecturers, the reception of lecturers, and arrangements for their accommodations or whatever else was necessary, because this included lecturers from outside the country and from other parts of Canada. Here we were very fortunate in having General Whitely,

because as a senior British officer, he knew a great many of the senior Americans, including the President of the United States, General Eisenhower and we got in on a lot of things, which we would not have otherwise been able to do. Such things as the Kermit Roosevelt Lecture series, which was one British officer came to the US National War College and a couple of other places in the United States to speak and the same thing happened with an American officer going to Britain. So we set up the library right from scratch. We inherited some books from the RMC library, but Bill McBrien who was the air force directing staff, and I came up to Ottawa several times and ordered books through the Parliamentary library and in that way, established the Fort Frontenac library. My duties with General Whitely were partially as an ADC if he needed one and any other assistance that he might require. We had some secretarial assistance and that was all. Now, in addition to the National Defence College at that time, General Whitely became Commandant of the Canadian Army Staff College. So, he had those duties which were across the square and had nothing to do with me whatsoever. That in general is what those duties consisted of.

INTERVIEWER: Were there much of any travel in those early courses?

KINGSTONE: Well, we decided that we had to do some travel. And each member of the directing staff that had places that we might want to see, where the students might want to go to receive lectures and tour, would submit these. And the air force member of the staff coordinated this with Trenton and we started. Well, we had the Arctic as well to deal with and made trips starting in 1948. When the course began, we did a trip to the Arctic, a trip to UK, sometimes, well onto the Continent, France, Holland, Germany, and the British zone, to the United States, to SAC Air Defence Command, SACLANC. On the missile side, to Cape Canaveral as it was then and to Vanenburg Air Force Base in California. So it was a fairly extensive amount of travel in a little, well, the longest would have been less than a month. Sometimes, for instance, when we came to Ottawa to the National Research Council, it would be all done within a day.

We were fortunate in having support from the Secretary of the Cabinet and the Undersecretary of State for External Affairs, Arnold Heaney and the other one was Robert Normandson. So we had pretty good entry into almost anywhere we wanted to go and lots of support, which resulted in lots of friends to be able to do all these things. We built up a lecture, a visiting lecture program which ran sometimes five days a week in the morning. And the afternoon there were syndicates studied or contributed or had discussions amongst themselves on whatever the problem was that they were studying at the time. The focus of the course was pretty broad. This was at a time when Canada was sort of coming out of its shell in an international sense. And therefore, we had much to see that was new to us and this is the way the course was built up. I don't know that there's anything else that you need to know about it.

INTERVIEWER: Was there any sort of memorable moments of senior speakers and so on that made a particular impression?



KINGSTONE: Well, we had a lot of very senior speakers like Field Marshall Montgomery and Lord Montbatten and Vincent Massey. And Cabinet Ministers, sometimes here, but most often they came to Kingston. So we had a pretty exhaustive list of visitors. The pattern usually was that if they arrived the night before at the College, the Commandant would entertain them. And this threw a considerable strain on General Whitely's wallet; because Canada was anything but generous in the way they treated him. They left him with ordnance furniture and practically no allowances. We had trouble getting allowances established and whatnot. When they sent us on trips, for instance, the civilians were on actual expenses and the armed forces were on their per diem system, which meant that if they were invited out to dinner, they couldn't charge it. There were lots of nonsensical things this way. Eventually, it became much more sensible and everybody was put on an actual expense basis and the armed forces people were not at a disadvantage.

The students, some of them lived in. Quite a few lived in; particularly we had students from Britain, from the foreign office, from the navy. Well, from all the armed forces every year. And the same thing from the United States, State Department student, army, navy and air marine corps students. One of each, sort of like the Ark. There was considerable prestige amongst the people to come and get this course. And the people who were sent, from my experience, was that these were pretty senior people in their own service. There were colonels from our armed forces, and colonels from the visiting armed forces.

INTERVIEWER: What was the reaction of the directing staff, and perhaps with the students, when General Simonds was appointed as Commandant?

KINGSTONE: Well, everybody knew that he was going to be long before he was, for one thing. What had happened was that he took General Whitely's place at the IDC and General Whitely got to come and live in Canada. So, everybody really knew that General Simonds was coming. There was no particular reaction at all. In fact, we very glad to see him. We knew he wouldn't be there for long because we knew also that he was going to become CGS and it was just a question of time. So, to answer that fully, there was no reaction one way or another, except for the pleasure of having Guy Simonds, which it was a great pleasure. Again, he had so much prestige amongst the military in the United States and the UK, that we could get pretty nearly everything we wanted when we traveled.

One incident in these travels with a group of 35, was that people's habits became fairly pronounced and some of them liked to buy every newspaper that existed and read it, sometimes holding up the rest of the group. And in one occasion, we were waiting to get on an airplane and to go to France, I think, and we were sitting outside the Parklane Hotel, on the bus and General Whitely got on and said, "Bob, what time is this bus supposed to leave?" I said, "8:00, sir." And he said, "What time is it now?" And I said, "It's ten past." He said, "Well, why aren't we going?" And so we went. And three members of the course didn't catch up to us for four countries. One of whom was Admiral Storge, who later became Commandant.

INTERVIEWER: It sounds very familiar. At my time at NDC, it was threatened, but it never actually happened.

KINGSTONE: Well, it happened. Who was Commandant?

INTERVIEWER: Lyn Johnson.

KINGSTONE: Didn't know him.

INTERVIEWER: No, this was '83/84.

KINGSTONE: Well, I was there for the first three courses, and then I left.

INTERVIEWER: Well, let's move along. After NDC, you moved on to headquarters.

KINGSTONE: Yeah, to the Chiefs of Staff Committee. Well, no, to the Joint Staff as Assistant Secretary to the Chiefs of Staff Committee. The Secretary at that time was General JDB Smith and we worked in A building on the top floor and the Chiefs met usually once a week. We tried to set up a system similar to the British system, that is that the Chiefs would meet, we would take the minutes, we would transcribe the minutes, and would get them back to them within 48 hours. Sometimes, that was quite a chore, because the Chiefs were all individuals and sometimes they were not terribly well-briefed by their staffs, in that they would have a written brief which they would forget to use. And then they would complain when what they were supposed to have said did not appear opposite their names in the minutes. This went on to the extent that Charles Folks said, "Well, you're complaining about the Secretary. I'll put a microphone on the table." Well, the next meeting, there were the microphones. And nobody said anything. So, they allowed that even though the Secretary was pretty stupid, he was better than having it all recorded.

INTERVIEWER: When you first arrived, what did you sense as the mood of the committee and their view of Canada's position in the world. Were there different views of this amongst the various members?

KINGSTONE: No, I wouldn't say. Well there were different responsibilities. The air force was very mixed up in getting air defence command organized. We were trying to decide, as we still are, what role the armed forces of Canada should play. NORAD was starting. Peacekeeping was starting. NATO was starting. So there were many things. The navy, who were smaller than the rest, were having trouble with keeping up with the staff work required because of SACLANT, because of all the responsibilities which we had for our coasts and for as part of NATO and nationally. The army was coming out of its period where it had been trying to exist by civil defence measures and was starting to act like soldiers again. Well NATO did start shortly after this. We had people at the UN, military people. We had people integrated throughout the US military system, including liaison officers at Quantico, Virginia with the US Marine Corps. We had students going

to the US Command and General Staff College, the National War College, etc. So, no we had lots to do. But I don't think there was anything particular.

INTERVIEWER: I'm curious about the mechanics of the thing. Prior to General Foulke's appointment as the chair, how were decisions reached?

KINGSTONE: Well, there was never a vote taken, although there was provision for such in the Chiefs of Staff Committee. The theory was that the Chiefs of Staff would meet over any particular issue and would discuss it and come up with a joint opinion. There was provision also for the Minister to be brought in on this joint opinion and for him to make the ultimate decision. Otherwise, if the committee could agree, the chairman of the Chiefs of Staff, General Folks in either position as Chairman as the Chiefs of Staff later, but as Chief of the General Staff would go to the Minister and say that we had agreed that this problem should be handled in a certain way. And there was no further discussion.

The great trouble was that the Chiefs had different priorities and they were all competing for the same dollar. And the big spender at that time would have been the air force because this was the time when we started to talk about missiles and Beaumarks and new fighters and to develop our new fighter, of which I'll say a little more later. The navy, of course, like do keep – well we had a two ocean navy of a sort, but you had an admiral on each coast and one in Ottawa to keep them sailing along. And they weren't nearly as involved as the other two services were. Well, I guess they were, but it didn't seem that they had nearly as large problems as the army or the RCAF.

INTERVIEWER: Were any of the, taking now about the theatre actions of the Chiefs amongst themselves, was anyone more dominant, if you were, than others?

KINGSTONE: It's a little hard to answer. There was no doubt that General Folks was the dominant member prior to the arrival of General Simonds. However, the great problem also arose is because the competition of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, which included the Chairman of the Defence Research Board, the Deputy Minister of National Defence, the Undersecretary of State for External Affairs, and these latter gentlemen had no service responsibility. Therefore, they should have either refrained from expressing an opinion, or had only been invited been invited for the items on the agenda that pertained to their prime responsibility. However, being as all the kinds of people that get these jobs in the first place, they tended to stick along and to put their oar in. This was a favourite point of General Simonds when he became the Chief of General Staff, because he would say, "Well the Deputy Minister of Defence really is the administrator of National Defence. He's got nothing to do with the armed forces as such." Which under our system, the Deputy Minister of National Defence went to the Minister and dealt with the Minister on the day to day basis, where the Chiefs didn't. Therefore, his powers were considerably enhanced. The Chairman of the Defence Research Board was in a similar position. He had his Defence Research Board and they had their own budget and their own responsibilities, but Dr. Salant was fairly strong character and very intelligent and would tend to express his opinions on any subject that he wanted to. So you had these

pulls in various directions from people who were speaking without responsibility for a service, which made it very difficult for the head of that service to get along.

INTERVIEWER: How were decisions taken by the Chiefs of Staff Committee taken to Cabinet Defence Committee?

KINGSTONE: Well, yeah. Well, practically all of them did if they involved the purchase of equipment or the deployments of troops or the opening of new facilities. They went from the Chiefs of Staff Committee, via the Minister's office, to Privy Council Office and appeared on the agenda of the Cabinet Defence Committee. They were sponsored at the Cabinet Defence Committee by the Minister of National Defence and the Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff, or in fact, any individual Chief of Staff could be invited for those items. There were enjoined not to speak unless spoken to. And in fact, the Chairman at the time was told often in no uncertain terms one day when he spoke without having been invited to and was told very sharply by the Prime Minister that he was there for their benefit, not for his. Yeah, we didn't really, I don't think we knew how to run either the Chiefs of Staff Committee or getting the right pressures brought on the Minister of National Defence, because we had no experience in it. And we had no experience in this higher art of government, which the British did. And I guess, the Americans did. Although their systems so different that it isn't even comparable.

INTERVIEWER: It's said that General Folks knew his way around the politics of Ottawa, but the others didn't. Is that a fair comment?

KINGSTONE: Well, that is a fair comment. He did, and he knew his way around NATO. He was in it from the start and fairly prominently. The Joint Staffs would prepare the briefs for NATO meetings for him and these were very exhaustive on all of the agenda. So, he knew all of these people. The other Chiefs did not. They were not interested in the politics of Ottawa. They were interested in doing their own job.

Now when it came to General Simonds, he was a different kettle of fish. He was controversial, but well known abilities and invited by various by elements to speak or to visit or so on. And he tried to honoured those, I think, to the detriment of his career. He also had military commitments across Canada in things like the Conference of Defence Association, various regimental responsibilities, having been a corps commander and having commanded most of these people during the war. And he was well known as a soldier. He was certainly not a statesman and didn't really take any interest in the political side of living in Ottawa.

INTERVIEWER: It said in the biography of Simonds, written by Dominik Graham, that very often he would produce one of his succinct staff papers and send a junior to Chiefs of Staff Committee when he felt that there was no need for discussion.

KINGSTONE: Never sent a junior. His junior would not have been acceptable. I am not sure that Graham does say that. Because Graham got a lot of his information from two people. One is Elliot Roger and the other is myself. No, a substitute would not have

been acceptable at the Chiefs of Staff Committee. Now there are other places that it would have been and other committees. No, Guy was not one that did that sort of thing. And perhaps that was a bad thing. Perhaps he should have done it more. Because it meant that everything piled right on top of his plate.

INTERVIEWER: Moving right along, I would like to explore what went on as the Korean emergency developed and that some of the different ways that things were done at that time in terms of abandoning the mobilization plan and moving onto a completely ad hoc thing. But before we do that, prior to the outbreak of the war, what was the tenor of advice being given to Cabinet about the Soviet threat and what was Canada's recommended response to it?

KINGSTONE: No real idea. I only came into this picture in 1950, when I first came to the Chiefs of Staff. I couldn't really answer that and I don't think it's sensible that I should speculate either.

INTERVIEWER: Well, we want to get your first hand views on these things.

KINGSTONE: No.

INTERVIEWER: During your early days there, did you see any of the early attempts at integration?

KINGSTONE: Well, yes. There were lots of. Well, the Joint Staffs in itself was an attempt at integration in that we had officers of all three services and civilians and Department of External Affairs officers in the Joint Staff. So, to that extent it was an integrated body. I guess, the first signs of integration perhaps was when we started talking about the army service corps being responsible for all vehicles and what not. But it didn't generate much excitement. And it wasn't until we got really silly about it where we expected brigadiers to command ships and they even suggested that Bill Carr as an air commodore should command an infantry brigade.

INTERVIEWER: That was several years down the road.

KINGSTONE: That was during our more silly season.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, you were there shortly after the outbreak of the Korean War.

KINGSTONE: Well, yes.

INTERVIEWER: What was the initial position taken by the Chiefs in relation to a Canadian contribution?

KINGSTONE: Well, they were interested in, once a decision had been taken, that we were going to take part in the Korean War. They were interested in their raising of troops and equipment. And again, this fell mostly on the army. We got off to a rather bad start

when we kept getting the Minister trying to run the whole thing himself, and the recruiting of people for the force. We supported General Rockingham being appointed brigade commander and the people who were selected as the first commanding officers of the Patricia's, the RCR and the Vandoos. And we were very lucky, that this being just 1950, there were still an awful lot of very experienced people around who had been through World War Two, but had not been too happy being civilians. So, we managed to recruit pretty quickly. Perhaps not all the best, not in the best way. But we did it fairly rapidly and we got the troops off to the United States to Yakima where they could do some training and I think that was a very wise move. We discovered that the US were sending their troops into the Korean War with about six weeks of training and we were determined, I guess, with our eyes hearkening back to Hong Kong and other events, that this wasn't the best way to raise a force. So, we dug our toes in and managed to get the time for Rocky to assemble the brigade properly in Yakima before they were sent to Korea, with the exception of the Patricias and Jim Stone, who went off ahead of everybody else.

INTERVIEWER: Interview with Colonel Robert Kingstone, end of side one. Canadian War Museum Oral History Program interview with Colonel Robert Kingstone, tape one, side two.

KINGSTONE: You've asked here about the discussion, if any, about Jim Stone being appointed with discretion vis a vis American four star generals.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, it struck me as putting him in one devilish tricky situation.

KINGSTONE: Yeah, well Jim Stone was quite capable of dealing with tricky situations and I don't think it worried him a bit. I don't think it worried the Americans either, because they had all kinds of funny people. Much funnier than ourselves. Once this had become a UN operation, they had Turks and, you know, South Americans and all kinds of people to look after. And I think, probably it did them good. It certainly-- we were not going to permit, and it seems to be that it became a normal thing that we did not permit a foreigner to command --to tell Canadian troops what to do.

This appeared in the same in NATO, because the British, God bless them, were quite prone to want to use the Canadians in any way at all. And we had various strings which we attached to any force, both 25 Brigade and 27 Brigade and their own other brigades after that. As an instance of this, when I had my regiment in Germany, the roads in around Hohne, deteriorated at the time that we had gone up to our practice camp, which was with 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division, I think, that year. And the CRA of 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured came to me and said, "I'm going to have to cancel your regimental exercise, because the roads are so bad that I can't get my SPs from one range to another. And I'm sorry, but that's what going to happen." And I said, "Well sir, I think before you do that, you had better be aware that this will not be acceptable as far as Canada's concerned." And he said, "Well, what do you mean?" And I said, "Well, you've got to realize that if I don't practice this year, the Canadian artillery in Europe does not practice this year, and therefore, I think this is perhaps beyond your authority." He said, "Oh well, we shouldn't

have any trouble with that.” Within an hour, I had reported this immediately to General Anderson, and within an hour he had a call back from the commander in chief, Northern Army Group, to tell him that he could cancel anything that he liked, but he could not cancel 2 RCHA’s practice. And this came down straight from Commander Northern Army Group. But these kinds of situations have existed with the British. They refuse to learn sometimes. I think they know now.

INTERVIEWER: Was there any sense though in Canada in sending 2PPCLI over there, we were sending essentially an untrained battalion into a pretty tense situation.

KINGSTONE: Well, it wasn’t, yeah--it wasn’t all that untrained. I would think most of the officers may have been out of practice, but they were more than semi-trained, let’s put it that way. But I think that was done simply as an expedient to get something on the ground to forestall pressures that might come later for more things to happen. And having got Jim Stone on his way, they had the time to mobilize the rest in a more orderly fashion. And I’m sure that’s the reason for the whole thing. And why it was the Patricias, I don’t know. I think probably it was a wise decision though, because Patricias were probably in the best state to take this on. Now what else can we go on to.

INTERVIEWER: Let’s look at some of the concurrent events, because at the time Colonel Stone was in Korea getting his battalion up to speed, NATO basically called in all the chips in terms of activation of the medium term defence plan and Canada was required to send a brigade there as well.

KINGSTONE: Yep, and it happened almost like that. One day it was this and the next day it was the NATO side. And both these were going on at the same time. However, we had come out of World War Two with our stock pretty high amongst countries of the world and Mike Pearson was trying for considerable influence in the UN. We had been one of the founders of the UN and one of the founders of NATO. So this just seemed a logical thing and the people of Canada certainly were behind it. The armed forces certainly were behind it, because the army, as I say, would have been tasked for civil defence and nothing else if some of these “fortunate” events hadn’t happened. It was a good thing for us. In fact, it allowed us to build up the Canadian army to the best, I think, it ever was by within a few years.

INTERVIEWER: Do you recall any discussions at Chiefs of Staff Committee or Cabinet Defence Committee about the desirability of conscription in relation to mounting those two brigades?

KINGSTONE: Yeah, well, the army were the only people who would have suffered and as I recall it General Simonds was pretty keen on some form of national service. I think also this perhaps would have been acceptable to the Canadian public at that time. However, it never got to that state. It was never discussed as a subject, I don’t think. It might have been in smaller bodies than the Cabinet Defence Committee. Some of the Ministers would have been in favour. Some would not.

INTERVIEWER: What sort of discussions, if they took place at Chiefs of Staff Committee, as opposed to within the army itself, took place about the Korean War mobilization process, which essentially Brooke Claxton brought in-- about the general lack of training that the troops were given being dispatched particularly even be as late as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion's going over?

KINGSTONE: Yeah, well you remember as far as 27 Brigade was concerned, that it was to be raised by 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalions and the Black Watch and the Queen's Own and so on. And they were to have a company from various other elements. In the case of the Queen's Own, there was to be a company of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles and a company of something else. I forget the details. But this was General Simonds answer the raise to this brigade. Well, as it turned out it was pretty disastrous. These individuals companies did not integrate into a cohesive battalion in any way shape or form. It was a dumb idea, I guess. But it did get the job started and --but you see it led to having to take families and what not. But, I doubt if we would have been able to do anything else. This was at the time, too, of the Guards business and that had various degrees of popularity. I think it was good thing. I think if you asked General Rolley and he would tell you that it was a good thing.

These battalions were good eventually, once we got 27 Brigade out of the way. 27 Brigade was a pretty disastrous outfit in many ways. Although I guess some of those people in it would not be quite damming as I am being. I remember their VD rate was incredible. Well, they were not a proper battalion. There were too many pulls from the various elements. The Black Watch was pretty much a success, but I don't think--well, we took over the barracks stores of the Rifle Battalion when we got to Germany and these came down in three ton trucks from Hanover area down to Hemer where Fort Prince of Wales was located. And the second in command came and said "you had better come and see the barracks stores you are getting." Well actually there was not one whole piece in the whole load. There were bits of everything. All wood, you know, everything had been crushed, junked and treated very harshly. I don't think--somebody had better write a story about 27<sup>th</sup> Brigade. I was not impressed with it. It was pretty bad.

INTERVIEWER: About shortly after 27<sup>th</sup> Brigade went over, there was some discussion with the British about theatre stocks and war reserves and the notion that Canada wanted the British to provide them, but would only pay for them if they were drawn. Do you recall any discussions on this?

KINGSTONE: No, I don't.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned earlier, in fact, in our earlier interview about the issues of families in Europe. What was the nature of the discussions?

KINGSTONE: Well, it became obvious that one of the problems that 27 Brigade suffered from was the fact that they were there and they were away from their families. And the British were where they had been when the war ended, and all had their families. So, it became pretty obvious that we had to do something. The Belgians in whose area



we were had all their families there. The Americans had their families down in their area. So, we were the only ones that were being a bachelor outfit. And it was obvious that something had to be done and the answer was that we had to get into taking families. This was not a popular decision with some of the people at National Defence Headquarters. But you see, the solution seems to have been--and what we now do--that we only go for six months. Not two years or three years or whatever. And any further than that, would not in today's terms, be acceptable. This was just the start of that process to realize, you know, it involved housing, schools. However, they did bite the bullet. We found accommodations. The rule was that, until you could assure your commanding officer that you had accommodations--adequate accommodation--your wife could not come from Canada. Well, that didn't last very long. And neither should it. We accommodated them. There were some of them pretty indifferent. If you asked my wife, she used to go around and visit them all in the staff car when I wasn't using it. Or even in another staff car. They were living in extraordinary conditions. Barnyards and all sorts of things. However, they were together. And I don't know very many cases where any trouble arose out of that. They eventually all got housed and were happy. So, it was the right thing to do at the right time and may have cost us something. I doubt it.

INTERVIEWER: Well, there were married quarters built. So there was obviously a cost. Okay, let's move along a little to some of the other, sort of, hot topics of the early '50s. Let's talk a little bit about air defence. Do you recall the discussions of either Chiefs of Staff Committee of Cabinet Defence Committee on deliberations on what eventually became the Mid-Canada radar line?

KINGSTONE: No. I don't. But those would not necessarily have gone to Chiefs of Staff Committee. They would go to Cabinet Defence Committee, but straight from the air force. No, I don't think I ever....

INTERVIEWER: There's a sense in some of the history that has been written of the period, that Cabinet was looking for a way to salvage Canadian sovereignty in the face of the Americans demanding air defence at the least cost.

KINGSTONE: Yeah. That's a traditional Canadian position. It came along. Well, it was absolutely essential. And we were under considerable pressure from the Americans to do something about this great whole over the top of the world in the heartland of the United States. And, I think, the United States were saying, if you don't do it, we will. And, I think, that kind of threat was listened to and it was realized that it was really our problem. So we better do it. And I don't remember there being any great objection to doing it. It was just pressure from the US and you're part of an alliance, North American Alliance as well as European Alliance and a United Nations Alliance. These are the bills that you have to pay. And I think that we did a fair job. Certainly, we got civilian contractors to man most of these places. And I imagine that you have visited some of them. They were a little depressing to see fellows who were 40 or 50 pounds overweight, raising tropical fish in the Arctic. They were all well-paid.

INTERVIEWER: Now, again--you're in your tenure, I guess, at about that time--the major developments of the 1950s were just starting. The ARROW interceptor, the BOBCAT APC, the DDH 280 destroyer programs. Were there strong industrial and political pressures to proceed with this kind of thing? Where was this coming from?

KINGSTONE: Well, I think it was an obvious one as far as we had people serving with NORAD and so on and coming in contact with the Americans, and seeing the kinds of comparisons of equipment between ourselves and the United States. In the case of the air force--we knew we wanted an APC. We had a little trouble making up our minds what one we wanted. But there was an idea that you should put a maple leaf on it. Do original development in any form. However, our industrial base was there and I think there was pressure from business to get into this kind of thing. The ARROW has an interesting story attached, in that we had one meeting of the Chiefs of Staff with the Minister to which came the commander of SAC. I have forgotten his name.

INTERVIEWER: Curtis Lemay.

KINGSTONE: Curtis Lemay. And he was then later commander of the US Air Force, really. We had our meeting, discussed things and everything was fine. And we were sitting around with nothing further to talk about and Curtis Lemay lit up his big cigar and said, "It's too bad you fellows didn't build that ARROW. We could have used it." And there was a deathly hush around the table. And somebody said, "Well why didn't you say so." Oh, he said, "We wouldn't have bought it. But it would have been a good airplane. We didn't invent it, so we wouldn't buy it." So there were those kinds of things. Now, the BOBCAT wasn't the same. But it was just putting a national insignia on the things that you were building. I think that we have got over that now. You accept the American equipment or British equipment without any strings attached.

INTERVIEWER: Just, on that equipment theme, was there discussions at Chiefs of Staff Committee about General Folkes' decision to take a mixture of equipment to Korea? We had the Enfield Rifle which turned out to be a disaster, then we had a mix and match of equipment.

KINGSTONE: My impression that it was decided that we would take US equipment because having gone through the end of the war process of forming the Pacific Force, it was to be equipped with US equipment. And I think that when Korea came along, so shortly afterwards, it was naturally assumed that the US was the dominant partner, so we would go equipped with US equipment. Now, after this, it became apparent that they were going to form a Commonwealth division. This allowed us to play a bigger part in the Korean War than it would have been had we been simply a brigade in an American force at a Commonwealth division had a fair amount of clout and I think justifiably. So, we still had British equipment back here from World War Two, so it was pretty logical to say, well if we can get into this Commonwealth Force, that will enable us to use stocks of equipment that we still have. And I think this is how it came about.

INTERVIEWER: A few sort of odds and sods questions, if you will. One of the issues has been suggested that discussed at Chiefs of Staff Committee or a concern of them, was the army versus the rest, in a sense that the army manpower and equipments needs are quite different from the other two in terms of how you equip the man and the others tend to man the equipment. But were those sorts of discussions held, or did they surface at all?

KINGSTONE: Not too any great extent. We were very, very busy and I don't recall any specific instance. No I can't really help much.

INTERVIEWER: Mobilization planning. After Claxton proceeded to sort of do a San Hughes on Korea, what sort of discussions incurred about having a proper implementable mobilization plan?

KINGSTONE: I think—well, each of the services had a mobilization plan of one form or another. Some of them not very well developed. I think there was a sense of, let's put this together and do it properly. And I think some work was done on it. I don't know how much because I had gone from them and I didn't get back to Ottawa for—well, I didn't get back to Ottawa at all. But there was a realization that these mobilization plans were pretty haphazard; however, they had got us up to speed in World War Two and they did get us up to speed despite Brooke Claxton in the Korean business. I don't why he did what he did, but it was an absolute bloody mess. He did this all in Toronto and it certainly wasn't popular.

Brooke Claxton got on with the Chiefs quite well. He had a strange way of putting things. He would put things as though he didn't want to do them. When in fact, he did want to do them. But he had a negative approach. He approached every problem from the back end, not from the front end. But he was a bit mercurial. It came to pass, though, that when 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade had established its reputation and itself in Germany, that we had lots of praise from the Brits and everybody else as to how good we were. Brooke Claxton came to Germany and all the commanding officers had dinner with him up at Brigade Headquarters and afterwards, he got a drink in his hand and he was sitting on the sofa and he said, "You know, you fellows have done a magnificent job and I'm terribly proud of you and Canada's terribly proud of you. Would you please tell me what you would want. Name anything that you would want, and you've got it." Well, there was this stunned silence and I must say we didn't do very well, because the only thing we could think of was a couple of ice hockey rinks, you know, silly things like that. However, I guess, in fact, what he was saying as you have pulled me out of a hole, now I'm in a position to do something good for you. What would you like? And we were so naïve that we couldn't think of anything.

INTERVIEWER: Doing your time in the Chiefs of Staff Committee area, was there any sense when NATO came calling that they were really after the army and not the air force and that air force saw it as essential that they get in the game in Europe?

KINGSTONE: The air division was there before--really before we had troops there. The air force [is] a pretty portable outfit when it has to answer things, like this. They don't require the administrative tail that the army does, and they had been in Metz for God knows how long. Well, we used to visit them in the National Defence College. So it was early on. So, I think they just took it as a matter of course.

INTERVIEWER: That's interesting because one writer--not a well-known writer particularly--has suggested that the air division in Europe was as much a creature of the Canadian aviation industry as anything else.

KINGSTONE: Oh no, I don't think so. There was always a desire on the part of Canada--not on the part of army, I don't think, and certainly I don't think on the part of the air force--to have our what we had in Europe all together. In other words, to have Canadian troops supported by Canadian aircraft and Canadian ships, if that were necessary or possible. I think that's the sort of national desire. I'm not sure that it's a real necessity or even an advantage. But, I guess for the Department of External Affairs' point of view, it looks better to have a single force that the Canadian Ambassador can look at and say, "Well that is Canada's contribution." Whereas the way it worked, we were in the north end of Germany and the air force was down in the middle and we never saw the navy because they were doing other things under SACLANT.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, one last question in relations to the Chiefs of Staff period. Were there discussions on the source of officers, RMC versus the rest and laterally [the] RCAF's reluctance to accept responsibility for CMR, or was that after your time?

KINGSTONE: Well, air force was never really interested in the training of officers in colleges like RMC, CMR or Royal Roads and that was because you taught people to fly, and you had most of pilots were short service commissioned people and you didn't need a military establishment like the colleges were. The air force officers commanded nothing except themselves and one airplane and a ground crew that they became fairly close to. But they didn't do the other stuff. The air force are very broad brush people. It seems to me they --man management but they don't really engage in and god knows, it shows. They certainly would not have wanted to be saddled with a French Canadian college, even if the object was to teach French to everybody in Canada. CMR was--I can quite see why they wouldn't be the slight bit interested.

INTERVIEWER: But the suggestion was that CMR was essentially established to solve the French Canadian officer problem for the army. You know, the navy had Royal Roads and essentially the army at RMC.

KINGSTONE: Well, yeah, but when you have three services, you have to have three of everything. But, I'm not sure that it really had anything to do with production of French speaking officers, because we were getting plenty of them before. The Vandoos. Mind you, if you want to expand the Quebec army, as such, that's one way of doing it. I'm not sure that it's the best way. No, that's about all that I can contribute.

INTERVIEWER: That's fine. I would like to ask you a couple of questions about your time as military attaché in Cairo. Could you describe the conditions both generally and from a position of Canadian attaché during your tour there in '65/66?

KINGSTONE: '63 to '66. We don't know how to use intelligence really. We don't train officers in their careers to be intelligence officers like both the UK and the US do. We seem to prefer to have the habit of taking a rank amateur and making him into an intelligence officer, temporarily. I think it's good for some purpose to have military attaches the way I was one, but it takes you out of the mainstream of the Canadian army. And that's the mistake I made. If I had known what I was getting into, I never would have done it. I would have said, no thanks. But when you sat on your bottom from Halifax to Vancouver and you had seen that there was another world outside and you got a chance to be part of it, it's much more exciting. We don't have that problem now, because we've got Bosnia, we've got various places where we are involved. But we didn't have those then. And but I think that if we're going to have military attaches, we better train them. Give them the language training required, the intelligence training required. Well, it's a career in itself. Otherwise, you only have a uniformed member of the Canadian Forces who is associated with the embassy and he will be utterly useless as an intelligence officer. I'm afraid that's my opinion, having been one.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get any sense during your time there, that the Egyptian Army was being built up, particularly toward the late '65, early '70s?

KINGSTONE: Oh yeah. The Egyptian Army was full of Russian trainees and Russian equipment. And, oh yes, you could see that they were being built up under Nasser and under Sadat and the senior officers you met from the Egyptian had all been to Moscow and had been trained and so on. The size of the Russian embassy in Cairo alone was huge. But it was not only Soviet Union. It was also the Czechs and the Poles and the Romanians and everybody else. So there were loads of Indonesian--big embassy in Cairo. It was no doubt that they were being built up for a war with Israel, which they got eventually.

INTERVIEWER: Was the outcome of that war any particular surprise to you in terms of what you saw in military effectiveness?

KINGSTONE: No, not in the slightest. Last time I went through the Suez Canal, on our side, the Israeli side was lined with Israeli tanks watching us go through, with the fellow sitting on the tops of the tanks, and on the other side there was nothing. A lot of soldiers, but no real equipment, no real threat. No it was not surprising. The Israeli were very, very good. I've traveled down the complete Jordan-Israeli border from the top to the bottom and believe me, the Jordanians understand this. They would say to me--they're all trained in Britain--they'd say, you know, just take a look over there. They're very, very good and they could be over here anytime they wanted. They knew this. That's about it, I think.

INTERVIEWER: I think we can close it off there, Bob. Thank you very much for the interview.

KINGSTONE: Well, you're very welcome. I hope it's being and will be of some help.

INTERVIEWER: Interview with Colonel Robert Kingstone on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2001.  
Interview ends.

**TRANSCRIPT ENDS**