

**CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM  
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM**

**INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT**

**INTERVIEW CONTROL NUMBER: 31D 6 KEARNS**

**INTERVIEWEE: Gertrude Kearns**

**INTERVIEWER: Mai-yu Chan**

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**Transcription of Interview Number 31D 6 KEARNS**

**Gertrude Kearns**

**Interviewed 6 May 2005**

**By Mai-yu Chan**

INTERVIEWER: Canadian War Museum Oral History Program Interview with Gertrude Kearns in Ottawa, May 6, 2005. Interviewer--Mai-yu Chan. [Tape 1, Side 1.]

We have both signed the Oral Release form--is that correct?

KEARNS: Yes. That is correct.

INTERVIEWER: Tell us something about your background and how you came to be where you are now.

KEARNS: I don't have much of a formal academic background, except for music studies after high school. So, continuing from that, I'm basically a self-taught artist, with no formal institutional training, though my father was a painter. His name is Frederick Steiger. He got a fair amount of attention for his works during the Depression, when he lived in Saskatoon and for his works in Newfoundland, where he painted all the Speakers of the House and Joey Smallwood. I was actually born on one of his painting trips in 1950. He was a rather reclusive individual. He did some wonderful work which is now just beginning to get a little bit of attention again, so that... He was self taught.

I certainly absorbed living with an artist who worked at home. In my early years, I absorbed, you know, the tenacity and the sense of being comfortable with a sense of bravado in his brush and knife work. Without thinking about it, I was absorbing it. So, when I say I'm self taught, I suppose, you know, I had a real platform from that.

The piano studies – with most people who have studied piano is children – and after high school, again, I didn't... I was accepted at university just to do visual arts but I decided to just get a job in a shoe store and study piano and live downtown on my own, in Toronto. So I was enjoying freedom in that way. I did my Performers and Teachers AR by the time I was in my early twenties and started to do some composition, which really excited me, at the same time that I started to do life drawing.

So, I suppose around the age of twenty-three or twenty-four, I could have gone either way—with composition or art—but I felt my first real attempts at seriously trying to record something on paper were during a life drawing session. It just—it was an epiphanous moment to feel that I had that facility. So, that's probably the extent of my education.

INTERVIEWER: From those life drawings in your twenties, where did you go?

KEARNS: I did a number of small abstract watercolour pieces and on a trip to Europe in '76 – a summer – I did lots of sketching and again, watercolors from that. I suppose I was still— I was thinking about art as something that I was just very excited to be doing, and not on any significant level, but a certain commitment. It was probably—poster type things—sort of punchy things with primary colours, I produced, you know, sporadically.

It was probably a trip traveling for two years through South America living in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for a year that really got me approaching portraiture a little bit more seriously and delving more into the individual.

After the time spent in South America, which was 1980-82, a number of years later, after several trips to Ireland which were family based, the last trip in '94, I think, resulted in a body of several series of large landscape/rockscape work based on time in Inishmore, which is the largest of the three Erin islands. I think the structure—the enjoyment of spatial treatment—in those works probably influenced, in particular, the *Somalia, With and Without Conscience* pair.

INTERVIEWER: So, how did you get involved with war related themes in your work?

KEARNS: I should backtrack before I talk about the real beginning, which is '91—certain – one major influence as a child. It was the suicide of a family friend who had been a British soldier in the Second World War. He shot himself in the head. When I presented that in story format in grade four, I was taken to the principal's office. My teacher shrieked at the front of the class, before I was marched to the office and said, "People don't do things like that." I stood up and I said, "People do things like this. This is a true story." She said, "It's not," and she sent me to the office. The principal was completely uninterested in this. It was unbelievable. It had great significance for me. I didn't think about it until about a year ago.

I think, also, I was somebody who was never part of the trendy way of thinking, in terms of attitudes towards either police or military. For example, when I was in my early teens and it was fashionable for my friends—most people our age—to be, you know—call policemen "pigs" or be just blatantly anti-military. I always felt, when I looked at an individual policeman or soldier that, in many cases, there was substance there and that it was a profound commitment. So, those feelings were brewing for many years.

[The] 1991 Gulf Crisis, I was absolutely—I found searing—and I was absolutely fascinated by the power behind it, which led to the trying to get a sense of the psychology of military might from an overall—what's the word? Well, from the big perspective down to the individual, which led to initially being interested in Kyle Brown, Clayton Matchee and subsequently to Dallaire, MacKenzie—just to give a general feeling for things here.

The works I did in response to the Gulf Crisis were called 1991 Conflict Group. They were large paper works—roughly six feet tall by four feet wide—using the handsaw as a metaphor for construction and deconstruction—destruction. This series of work was preceded by also using the handsaw in a group called Progress, prior to the Gulf Crisis. When my father passed away in 1990, I did some works called Grief which, again, used the handsaw. So, it had become part of my vocabulary and it seemed like just the most, you know, potent image to use to deconstruct and to have it in the Conflict Group series.

The main—the core pieces were called *Dialogue*, *Mindset Capability* and *Constricted*. They were specifically trying to relate to military responsibilities and senses of power. There were other groups—other works in the series that were smaller—they were—one was called *Manoeuvres*. It was like a chess board, abstracted and formation. Some of the Progress works, showed with the Conflict group pieces in an exhibition in '91 in Toronto—an independent exhibition that I did with a sculptor called Theo Willemse—and it was the first real press attention I received. Kate Taylor covered it in the *Globe* and made a reference to the Picasso-like *Guernica* aspect of it, which I appreciated. The CBC, Rogers, City—all came to cover it. So, that was very satisfying.

From that, I made a commitment to myself that – it might sound rather grandiose, but I felt that I wanted to be a war artist and it's something I just kept to myself. It was certain. I still feel that it's something that I will hopefully aspire to. I certainly don't consider myself a war artist yet, though I hope the things I've done are, you know—well, the fact that they're in the collection is, you know, an indication that they are being appreciated in that way. So, it's not for me to say whether they are or not. I'm just doing them.

The first individual that I focused on was Kyle Brown. It was some CBC footage—not the hazing footage – but something else that was shown around that time in, I guess, '93, where I was just struck by something in his face. He wasn't part of the nastiness going on around him. He was observing it. He looked cut off from it – either above it or certainly outside it. When I heard more about the situation in the pit and the whole thing, I felt very defensive towards Kyle Brown.

I was collecting material/articles about the situation. Then, amazing enough, in a newsletter I got from Visual Arts Ontario, as a member, which just lists, you know, gallery—things artists can submit for—competitions and so forth – there was an entry from the National Aviation Museum calling for artists to submit work for ARTFLIGHT. The theme was struggle for peace—Canadian involvement in UN military operations, but with air being—flight being, you know, the qualifying determining area.

So, I thought, “How can I manage to satisfy doing something on Kyle Brown, which I feel so strongly about, and entering this competition?” When I got information on the competition, I noticed that the jury – of the five people; one of them was a Dr. Laura Brandon—of course, she didn't have her doctorate then—so, Laura Brandon, from the Canadian War Museum and Pierre Landry, from the National Gallery. So, I thought, “If I'm worth my weight in salt, or whatever, I will do the works because I want to do them anyway and here's a chance to submit something to a jury.”

The other two works that I submitted were a piece called *Tension*, which was CF-18s being serviced on the ground, and *Fires Over Kuwait*, which showed a helmeted CF-18 escort—close-up just of the pilot, but the sense of the fires and so forth. The piece with the CF-18s on the ground won the competition. But it was through that, the Director of the Aviation Museum, who had been speaking to Laura Brandon who told me that the War Museum was interested in speaking to me about *The Dilemma of Kyle Brown*—that they were interested in acquiring it. So, based on that, it began dialogue about that painting.

I was so thrilled that it was appreciated that I decided to donate it, just to get it into the collection. There were, at the time, apparently, no funds for acquisition. So, it seemed like

the right thing for me to do, and I had won three thousand dollars at the competition. So, I ended up donating the *Tension* painting to the National Aviation Museum. So, I had works in two Ottawa institutions.

The full title of the first Kyle Brown painting is *The Dilemma of Kyle Brown*—colon or comma; it has appeared as a period—*Paradox in the Beyond*. Collecting material again, prior to commencing the work, I was overwhelmed when I read an article in *Saturday Night* magazine by Peter Worthington. Apart from the content of the article, there was a photograph which showed Brown in prison garb with his hands outstretched, obviously having emptied his pockets. He had a Lysol in one hand and some unidentifiable black blob in the other.

It struck me that that position—and there were five other soldiers in the photograph as well, in exactly the same position. But it—with Brown, his stature, his musculature, and his Métis—his native background—it struck me as having a totemic—like a totem pole—aspect, and at the same time—congruently—the weighing scales of justice. It seemed like the perfect balanced position, combined with the dazed look in his eyes, which I could reinterpret in different ways later – you know, an amazing body position to work from.

So, from that, I decided to put cubes. I thought a great deal about why—putting cubes. I thought “This appears very tacky.” But with the complexity of the choices that could have been made; that were made—what’s right; what’s wrong—in the situation of prisoner detention, it seemed that the cubes represented a lot. In his belt, I put the maroon beret of the Canadian Airborne regiment, just as a subtle indicator of the demise of the regiment.

INTERVIEWER: What is the significance of the two cubes in his two hands?

KEARNS: They represent the many facets to the reduction of decision making in a horrific situation—the situation being a detained prisoner under very stressful war scenario conditions. If the murderer had been—if Clayton Matchee had been incapacitated physically, the torturer of the prisoner would have been arrested. If Brown had attacked Matchee, he would have been guilty of assaulting a superior officer. That’s one dilemma represented by the black and the white. I mean, basically, black and white can seem like a facile approach on my part, but it comes down to saving the life or somebody, or not.

There were other areas of dilemma for Brown though and that came down to loyalty—loyalty to the regiment or loyalty to what was obviously something he was uncomfortable with and that was the inhumane treatment of the prisoner. Other gray areas for dilemma are the fact that he did participate in the beating, though in a very minor way—you know, a few kicks with his boot to a prisoner that was—had obviously been beaten already—is something that upset some soldiers. So, it’s a very interesting—if there hadn’t been a death in this, it’s a really great thing to be able to analyze. It’s very interesting.

Also, the fact that Matchee was a full blooded Cree and Brown is a Métis, with native and Scottish background is highly interesting, you know, with the well known feelings of Matchee—basically, that he was disliked by nearly every soldier there, and felt, you know, capable of being brutal. It’s interesting that Kyle Brown, who was a more thoughtful, introverted young man, was face to face with somebody of native blood. But I’m not

probably going to be able to resolve this line of thought very well. It shows the interesting scenario in that pit.

Again, the complexity of – in analysis of this situation is fascinating to the extreme. Kyle Brown was a young man who, in many ways I feel correctly, received a lot of support. On the other hand, maybe naively, I couldn't help but try to imagine what it would have been like if I had been a soldier and I had been the pit and seen what was going on. What would I have done? Would I have nobly attacked Matchee somehow, as he was drunk? So, these things fuelled my thoughts.

I ended up having a phone conversation with Kyle Brown, because I had sent him a package—a letter saying that if he was interested, I would be very happy to do a portrait of him. When the painting was finished, I sent him a photograph of it because I felt I owed him that. It was—the conversation with him was brief but it's what led to my doing the pair—*With and Without Conscience*. I became involved emotionally and even, you know, more analytical and led to more research on the whole thing.

The dynamics around the situation today in the War Museum, with the paintings being shown now for the first time, just indicate the level of concern with soldiers. I get the feeling that there are shades of gray in the analysis of this, still. Again referring to, you know, if I had been in the pit, as not a soldier; I probably wouldn't have done any better, though I've spoken to soldiers who have said they would have made sure that they would have stopped Matchee.

Kyle Brown did go and he did take photographs. The thing that interested me, after I heard a radio play on the CBC, which I've never heard anyone else refer to, which was in the play, it's Matchee who tells Brown to go and get his camera, which to me was interesting because in Peter Worthington's article, it's Kyle Brown who takes the initiative to get the camera,. Now Kyle Brown was always using his camera. He was fascinated by Africa.

But I felt that, if it was Matchee – maybe it's an insignificant point, but if Brown was following Matchee's orders to go and get the camera, and Brown, in taking the pictures obviously felt that he would be recording something. And he has said this, "be recording something which would be evidence of Matchee's guilt." Those were also moments in which, instead of taking photographs, Matchee could have been physically incapacitated with a weapon. So, it's just really interesting stuff.

INTERVIEWER: In your conversation with Kyle Brown, what was his response, if any?

KEARNS: He was very polite, but he said he couldn't understand why I would be interested in the whole thing. Again, that's fair game. It's, you know, me, like a journalist, just being nosy. I told him that he had a lot of support from many Canadians and that I felt for his situation. Again, I'm not a soldier. So, I don't blame him for, you know, questioning, you know, some female who takes it upon herself to think about these things.

Basically, I felt it was a tragedy that the Airborne regiment was disbanded. I mean everyone knows there were problems. It was a waste on many levels. Given the individuals involved, this situation could probably have happened in other scenarios as well.

INTERVIEWER: Tell us about the two paintings: *Somalia #1* and *#2*.

KEARNS: After *The Dilemma of Kyle Brown*, and again, the phone conversation with him, I wanted to do something which would show—well, based on the trophy photographs that they had each taken of—that they had taken of each other and which were so highly profiled in the news media. I knew I ran the risk of producing, basically tacky work, based on, you know, referencing tacky photographs. Or I should rephrase that. To create profound works on the subject, should I alter things—you know, abstract the figures more? But I decided to combine an illustrative approach of really just copying certain aspects of the photograph, with—I was thinking of Betty Goodwin in the first one—in the way the legs of the prisoner disappear. So, I combined a sort of a delicacy innuendo there with bringing in the elements of the 1991 Conflict group, where I had been looking into military mindset and power on a large scale.

So again, it was rather an epiphanous decision to see that I could combine what had been my initial commitment to trying to interpret the powers of the war and being interested in the military, with this situation in the pit—again, with an illustrative approach, in part, to the figures. The titles were an important part of the driving force behind the works. The first one, Kyle Brown, being called *Somalia With Conscience*, and the second one being Matchee with Arone called *Somalia Without Conscience*. By calling it – the first one – *Somalia With Conscience*, again, what I—the subtitle would be ‘How Much Conscience?’, because I still had a problem with the fact that Matchee had not been incapacitated, though he was clearly the murderer and totally without conscience. That painting did not require any sort of subtitle.

INTERVIEWER: I still don’t quite understand why Kyle Brown’s painting is *With Conscience*.

KEARNS: Well, I think in all the photos that Matchee took of Kyle Brown, Kyle Brown is very obviously sensitive to the situation. He does not have the eyes of a killer. He looks almost comatose in ways. He looks like he hates Matchee. There is a burning but passive aspect to him, which I think is an indicator of why his proactive efforts in the situation extended only as far as taking the photographs and trying to get help, so those were noble efforts on his part. They didn’t involve actually physically assaulting the murderer.

So, *With Conscience* is, in my mind, qualified with, you know, his temperament, [and] his reaction. He had lost both his parents and I think he had even maybe witnessed the death of one of his parents at an early age. So, you know, he could have been traumatized during this event. *The Dilemma of Kyle Brown* was painted in 1995 and the pair—*Somalia With* and *Without Conscience*—were painted in 1996.

INTERVIEWER: Tell us about two of the other works we have in our collection: *Study for Genocide Rwanda* and *Keep the Peace*, which is a poster based on Lewis MacKenzie.

KEARNS: *Study for Genocide* is a simple pencil sketch on Mylar. It shows a bloated head of a Rwandan victim with the tongue hanging out. I tried to, you know, just express pathos in it. I used this head in the ten by fifteen foot mural called *Mission: Camouflage*.

INTERVIEWER: And the poster?

KEARNS: The poster called *Keep the Peace or I'll Kill You* is based on the initial drawing, from life, of General Lewis MacKenzie for the portrait painting which was completed in 2004. I scanned the drawing, which is large—the same size as the painting which is seventy eight by fifty eight inches—and created a poster where the text is very large. “Keep the peace” is above the image and “Or I’ll kill you” below.

In reflecting on what I was doing of him, General MacKenzie had said, looking at the painting, the painting is saying, “Keep the peace or I’ll kill you.” We talked about that. He felt that this indicates the post Cold War approach to the challenges of missions, which in the most case involve military intervention – when there is no peace to keep; no peacemaking as opposed to peacekeeping. The title of the painting of him is *MacKenzie/Sarajevo/1992*. So, it’s—the poster is referring specifically to the challenges around his mission there.

INTERVIEWER: Are those words his words?

KEARNS: Yes. It’s rather amusing because I said to him—I phoned him when I decided to do the poster and I said, “I think you said to me—this is going to sound really aggressive—‘Keep the peace or I’ll blow your brains out.’” He said, “I would never say that.” So, he said, “I’d say, ‘Keep the peace or I’ll kill you.’” So, I said, “Fine, Sir.”

INTERVIEWER: Tell us something about the background to the portrait *Injured*.

KEARNS: The portrait *Injured: PTSD* is a painting I feel very, very special about. When I was researching the Dallaire material and had actually commenced on the initial editorial group—paperwork, preceding the camouflage – through phone conversations in the Department of National Defence, I got in touch with a soldier who I’ve continued to not name. He wished to remain anonymous. He really helped me in furthering my understanding firsthand, as he had been in Rwanda—what it was like to be there—as someone who suffered with PTSD—you know, the very real aspects of that condition, or injury, actually.

I bought stretchers to use as a platform for him. Actually, these five stretchers later became another Dallaire piece, which is in my studio, called *The Scream*, where Dallaire’s face is painted across the stretchers. But I used the stretchers as a metaphor for the attitude towards injury, which is psychological and not physical, to the extent that there are platforms of recovery. There are stages, you know, of recovery indicated by, you know, a stretcher which is closed at the end—maybe one culmination of treatment. There’s one that’s misty. So, there’s just to give the feeling of, you know, different overtones to, you know, psychiatric intervention and resulting care of the victim.

INTERVIEWER: Do the colours mean anything?

KEARNS: It was a major decision to put the reddish brown under the stretcher on which his feet are resting. The soil in Rwanda is very reddish. So, I was able to make a connection to Rwanda there. It also – I didn’t want to overdo any blood reference but, to my mind, it was like to indicate also the sea of blood.

The attitude towards PTSD is an interesting area. It’s a reasonably hot topic in the military today. PTSD is supposed to be a Nam terminology and again, a contentious area, in that

people opposed feel it's allowing a pathology to become mainstream. Well, you can understand the political aspects of that.

INTERVIEWER: Tell us about the sketches leading up to the *Camouflage* collection.

KEARNS: The process of using camouflage as the metaphorical platform for the Dallaire series was preceded by four very large paper works of about five and a half feet by four feet, which were very editorial in content. It's a process I needed to go through. I had read so much, even about the history of Rwanda and analysis of, you know, the sociology there, that I felt I was frozen in terms of thinking how I could really reduce things in a profound way in a final series.

So, I let myself get through a more pedantic approach, with these four paper works which show Dallaire in one, dressed in a flag, upside down thoroughly emasculated with, you know, his arms becoming wires that are frayed, to his being dressed in cricket gear—the red carp for the UN holding the world up as an enormous cricket ball. In other words saying—you know, his view to the mission being, 'Oh, it should be something that should be accomplished.' After all, the UN is the UN. It should be a gentleman's game. So those four works—it was when I completed those that the idea of *Camouflage* came and the search for the right sort of camouflage fabric, which was tedious in itself.

The camouflage fabric which I discovered—five foot width, heavy nylon was perfect. Most of the fabrics available were fashion fabrics which were cotton and flimsy. So, when I discovered this, it was absolutely incredible. When it came to putting paint on the fabric, acrylic would peel off, as would house paint, which I tried. I found some German waterbased sign enamels, with amazing colours, which I played around with. They worked. They could be put on very, very thinly, but still have vibrancy in the colours, so you could see the camouflage through. I was able to use oil paint as well, which when rubbed in was extremely permanent. So, a combination of the sign enamel and the oil paint.

INTERVIEWER: The Dallaire portraits #3 and #6 are on loan to the Canadian War Museum right now. Could you tell us about all six of them?

KEARNS: I broke the portraits down into six, because I wanted to give a sense of Dallaire's attitude to the mission as I imagined it. #1 shows him almost Hollywood style, you know, with the great optimism for the mission and looking forward to the challenges of it, and proceeds to #2 where he's the commander in charge but who is aware that there is more to this than might have been expected, to #3 which is in the collection, where he looks rather woebegone and realizes that this is, you know, a sea of discontent and danger and he's not getting the help he needs. #4 is actually one of my favourites. It shows his tenacity, his anger, his saying, you know, "Enough is enough." He's mad. #5 shows his horror. It's macabre—with his eyes bulging. #6 is the flipside of that which is the shame and the sense of guilt and responsibility. #6 is the most conceptual. It led into the murals. The hands chopped off are making as much a statement on their own as the recognizable Dallaire face.

The amazing aspect about the camouflage is that being an inert, two dimension pattern, it becomes 3-D when there are delineations, so that, for example, the hands outlined in white—they will pulse 3-D against the backdrop of the two dimensional camouflage. Somehow it

creates a powerful platform. It was interesting to see audience response to the works. Again, when they are properly lit, they will pulse 3-D.

At first, it is a somewhat difficult for people to get their eyes around, as well as their minds, but once they do, there were people who would spent hours looking at the works because, particularly in the murals, there's a sense of clarification and simultaneous obfuscation of images. The viewer enters into the act of camouflage and the process of revelation and disguise, at the same time.

INTERVIEWER: End of Side 1.

### END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 1

INTERVIEWER: [Canadian War Museum Oral History Program, Interview with Gertrude Kearns] Tape 1, Side 2.

Tell us about the commission of this portrait.

KEARNS: This is a portrait of Sir William Dillon Otter, born, I think, 1843—died early 1920s, I think. This work—this portrait—was commissioned by the Royal Canadian Military Institute in Toronto. It was completed in 2004. It measures forty by thirty inches and it shows him as full Colonel at the time of the Boer War, on his return to Toronto. It was an interesting portrait to do because I knew I was going to be – through the Canadian Forces Artist Program, have the wonderful opportunity to be imbedded with reserves in a training mission during the summer. Researching Otter, doing to the painting, gave me a sense of the history of the militia. It was also – as a painter, too, I think it is important to keep alive the skills of more traditional portraiture. It's a nice counterpart to the more conceptual portraits of General Dallaire.

INTERVIEWER: Tell us about your involvement with the CFAP program.

KEARNS: It's a recent involvement. It's a recent program. Initially, I requested and Dr. MacFarlane was extremely supportive that he approach the Forces—DND—to see if I could observe OBUA, which is operations in built-up areas, as that is what I was specifically interested in. You know, enough of the depression. I'm really interested in, you know, the technical now, the physical training, the mindset of what it takes to be a professional soldier. So, when I was told that, yes, I could be there for a couple of days, I said, "I want to be there for the whole week there, please. It's really not going to be enough for me to just sit in the stands for two days."

As it turned out, I was put in full uniform. I requested that I camp with the troops. I was in the field and I participated in their night raid, which was like a thirty hour activity and the helicopter entry and exit procedures. The only thing I didn't do, of course, was have a weapon. I had my sketch books and camera in the C9 pouches of the webbing. Somehow I seemed to get through it, not that I could have gotten through anything that was more challenging, I'm sure.

But I was so involved in the field that I really didn't do too much drawing until my last day. But photographs and sketches of, for example, the commanding officer of 39 LIB which is who I was with and some other people at Headquarters, combined with photographs of OBUA, which is what I had been basically interested in, led to a large painting—five and a half feet by nine feet—called *STACK*, which is the formation for narrow spaces—hallway, in urban warfare. I did four large paper studies of individual soldiers—reservists—as well, and some drawings—about thirty drawings.

INTERVIEWER: And these will go to DND as part of the CFAP program?

KEARNS: Well, the way things operate now, with the program, is that the artist is given the opportunity, free of charge, to be on a mission or to have this experiences I had. It is rather expected then, that the artist donate a piece to the program. Yes. One piece. It was left somewhat open ended for me, which I appreciated. So, that will transpire shortly.

INTERVIEWER: A few words on *The Lie*.

KEARNS: *The Lie* and the subtitle for this is *Screwing the Press/Pressing the Screw*. It's based on a CBC scandal—sort of mini scandal, but involving a CBC/BBC journalist, Nancy Durham. She's a video journalist who had an interesting episode with a KLA female soldier called Rajmonda Rreci, where the soldier lied on camera, saying that the Serbs had killed her sister, as she knew it was going to be—she was being covered in interview by the press. She felt it would lead to more international support.

When the lie was discovered, chance that her sister was alive, the CBC, with Nancy Durham, decided to do a follow-up piece exposing the lie. I didn't know any of the individuals. I saw it on television. I thought—well, I was drawn to Nancy Durham because she looked so uncomfortable. She was being honest. I thought, "All right. It's a lie exposed. But what the lie is exposing is a truth in itself."

So, it became the platform for doing a large work on the interaction between the journalist and the soldier. I used a lot of text from magazine articles in Serb newspapers, French and some CBC typeset, just to give a sense of the media response to the lie when it was exposed.

INTERVIEWER: Who are the people who purchase your works of art on these military connected subjects?

KEARNS: Well, the works that I have sold—that sold easily – were the large landscapes. When I did portrait commission work, obviously those were selling. These works are not. I have retained the Dallaire works. I could have sold some but really wanted to keep the series together and didn't want to sell them too cheaply, because I felt they hopefully had some significance. So therefore, the War Museum supporting my lending them is perfect, as far as I'm concerned.

The fact that the War Museum, via Friends of the Canadian War Museum, you know, facilitated the purchase of the Somalia works was remarkable, combined with my making a donation of *The Dilemma of Kyle Brown*. The MacKenzie poster and the *Study for Genocide*—it's been a good combination of various ways of the Museum acquiring works. So therefore, the War Museum has been the main, if not only, I think—no. Actually there is

a collector in Toronto who has a piece called *Three Airmen*, which was '91 Gulf Crisis. And the Royal Canadian Military Institute commissioned me to do the General Otter portrait.

The largest piece in the *UNdone* series is called *Mission: Camouflage*. It shows a UN vehicle almost life-size with a stack of bodies. Again, this pulses in the camouflage pattern. The Rwandan survivors who came to the exhibition in Toronto in 2002 seemed to be moved by it and said they appreciated the fact that I had not monopolized on blood and gore, but had, they felt, created something that was beyond that. So, this mural is--to me was a significant piece to accomplish.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you very much for talking to us.

KEARNS: Thank you very much.

INTERVIEWER: End of interview.

**TRANSCRIPT ENDS**