CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

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INTERVIEWEE: David C. Iley

INTERVIEWER: J.R. Digger MacDougall

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Transcription of Interview Number 31D 3 ILEY
David C. Iley
Interviewed 24 April, 2003
By J.R. "Digger" MacDougall

INTERVIEWER: Canadian War Museum oral history program interview with David C. Iley recorded on 24 April 2003 in Ottawa interviewed by J.R. Digger MacDougall, tape one, side one.

ILEY: My name is David Iley, spelled I-l-e-y, pronounced like Riley but take off the R.

INTERVIEWER: Dave, why don't you start off by giving us some information about yourself, where and when you were born and raised, and then outline your history of service from the time you enrolled until retirement.

ILEY: OK, Digger. Well, I'm 62 years of age. I was born in December 1940 in Perth, Ontario. I grew up in Ontario, lived in a variety of towns in Ontario, starting with Perth and then Peterborough, Hamilton, Windsor, and Sault Ste. Marie. I suppose you could say that my high school years were all in Sault Ste. Marie where I lived for five years, went to high school there. Played basketball, and all the various sports in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. When I finished high school I went to the Royal Military College in Kingston and got a BA in economics at RMC from 1960 to 1964, graduating in '64. And then in the fall of '64 is when I got posted to Germany, to 4 Brigade. That was on completion of my phase 3 officer cadet training so immediately after college and my summer training, I went to Germany to 4 Brigade and, in particular, to the Fort Garry Horse Regiment, an armoured regiment located in Iserlohn in northern Germany. I served in Germany until January 1966 and was posted back to Calgary where the Fort Garry Horse had been relocated from Germany to Calgary.

I joined the regiment in Calgary in January 1966. Served with the regiment in Calgary until the fall of '66 and then went to Cyprus with the Fort Garry Horse Recce Squadron to Cyprus in the fall of '66. Returning from Cyprus in the spring of '67 and was posted to the Armoured Corps School in Camp Borden. I served in the Armoured Corps School in Camp Borden, and in Gagetown, for three years until 1971. And after that, I went back to the regiment and did a job in the regiment as adjutant and then went to Cyprus again and, subsequent to that, I went to my first NDHQ posting in 1974. Was in NDHQ in International Plans Co-ordination and from there back to the regiment and from there to the staff college in Toronto where I took the staff college course and stayed on in staff. From there on I did a variety of staff jobs throughout the armed forces serving a total of 35 years. I did 35 years and retired in 1995.

INTERVIEWER: And you retired in Ottawa?

ILEY: And I retired in Ottawa. I came to Ottawa in 1988 and retired in 1995. I did a variety of jobs in Ottawa with the Canadian Rangers and the Directorate of Reserves in the construction of armouries and subsequently retired in '95.

INTERVIEWER: Dave, how about you tell us now about your arrival at the unit, what your

duties were and what you did as a lieutenant?

ILEY: Well, Digger, as I mentioned earlier, I finished my summer training at Camp Borden. I was a newly commissioned lieutenant in the armoured corps and my first posting was to Germany. I arrived in Germany in September of 1964. The regiment wasn't there when I arrived at its home base. The regiment was in the field at Soltau which is a training area and gun camp. My first impressions of Germany and the regiment were of the orderly room and the quartermaster stores where Sergeant Major Dowling kitted me out with some German operational kit. Got my NBC equipment and got some other military stores, sleeping bags and the camp cot and other gear. Because I was newly commissioned, I knew very little about Germany, I knew very little about what the regiment was doing there. I did well to figure out where we were in Germany and where I was posted to. Telling my parents where I was going I said, "Well, I'm going to Germany," and to northern Germany, but I didn't really know much beyond that. There was three or four of us, all newly commissioned lieutenants. We were picked up at the airport in Dusseldorf, went to Iserlohn where the regiment was located, signed in at the regiment, got our kit, were put on a Volkswagen kleinebus and sent off to join the regiment.

Most of this movement occurred at night so I had no idea where we were and where we were going and subsequently arrived late in the evening to Soltau where I met up with the commanding officer, Colonel Little. He introduced us and welcomed us to the regiment and there was an officer from A Squadron at the CO's tent and he took me down to A Squadron. The squadron was still out in the field doing an exercise so I was introduced to one or two officers who were at A Squadron at the time. The captain who came and picked me up was Bill Robinson -- I think he was the 2IC of A Squadron -- and introduced us to the few officers that were in the A Squadron lines at that time. Maybe an hour or two later the squadron came back and the tanks were put to bed and I met up with the squadron officers.

INTERVIEWER: Now, what did you do in A Squadron?

ILEY: Well, obviously when I arrived in the field I was a true rookie. There was one other officer who joined A Squadron at the time, so there was two out of four troop leaders. I was supposed to be a troop leader, one of the tank troop leaders. Obviously at this particular time there was a troop leader for the troop I was going to go to, so I went in as assistant troop leader. Which meant that I was the operator/loader for the troop leader's tank. The troop leader introduced me to the troop. I went down and put my kit in the troop lines, which meant we were living in a tank bivouac that sleeps four people. I was the rookie so I was given a straw palliasse and I ended up putting my kit on the ground and sleeping on the ground. Of course, I was sort of used to that because I had just come out of Phase 3 officer training so I was used to living on the back deck of a tank or on the ground. I thought this was rather luxurious because I had a straw mattress to live on. But Germany being Germany, was rather wet in September and I had a small creek running through my straw palliasse so I had to do a bit of house maintenance to make sure I didn't have this creek running underneath my bed. Sorted that out after the first night's sleep.

My job as an assistant troop leader was to assist the troop leader as a communications location and the gunner but the main aim was to understand the troop, get to know who the members of

the troop were. Obviously, as one of the tank troop members and a member of a tank itself, I continued on with the maintenance. I could do all the maintenance that the soldiers, the troopers, were doing because I had learned all that during the summer and I just carried on doing troop maintenance, whether it be tightening the track or changing oil or changing fan belts. That was my particular task. At the same time I had to know all the communications operating instructions so that the troop leader and the tank could communicate with the rest of the squadron. So I had to do the standard changing of frequencies every day. Because we were in the field we started up every day -- we did a troop communications net check every day. We went off and did troop tactics. We did squadron tactics, but I can't remember what we really did other than we did troop tactics and squadron tactics because we did not do a regimental exercise in Soltau. That came later in the fall when we did Exercise Treble Chance. In Soltau it was basically gunnery, troop maintenance, troop tactics, and squadron tactics.

INTERVIEWER: Dave, how about giving us an idea of the organization of the unit, the subunit, and the equipment that you had in the tank squadron or troop, say.

ILEY: Well, I was in 1964 so I was in a regular tank squadron. There were three tank squadrons in the regiment and I was in A Squadron. In A Squadron there are four tank troops of four tanks each. So ended up with sixteen battle tanks plus three tanks in the headquarters, the OC's tank, the battle captain's tank and the ARV, or the recovery vehicle, was a modified Centurion tank. The tank we were using was the Centurion. I can't remember which mark but it had the twenty-pounder gun on it. It did have external fuel tanks but it had no infrared equipment. That came later. It did have, in the troop leader's tank, a navigational aid. It was run off the gyroscope in the tank because each tank had a gyroscope to help keep your tank gun on the target when you were moving down range. You pressed a lever in the crew commander's hatch and you could follow the enemy vehicle with your tank gun. So it was great for firing on the move but it also helped in your navigational equipment.

My job as radio operator, or assistant troop leader, I ended up doing the communications, the radio operations, the loading of the tank gun and also feeding the maps to the navigational aid. The Navaid used 1 over 50,000 maps and, even though it was a navigational aid, you still had to make sure that you knew where you were because its not like the GPS system nowadays. You had to stick your head out of the tank and make sure that you were at a known crossroads, that your navigational aid showed that you were at the same crossroads. You couldn't dispense with your navigational skills. You basically spent a lot of time updating your Navaid because you said, "I know where I am. I'm at this grid reference. I'm at this intersection," and you had to make sure that your Navaid was coordinated because the Navaid was not that accurate. Subsequently, in one of my later jobs in the unit, I was in reconnaissance squadron and the Navaid, we'd sort of dispensed with it because it ate up too many maps. Especially when you were doing reconnaissance, you went through a 1 over 50,000 map very quickly and we didn't use it in reconnaissance. But in the tank, going much slower and your range was shorter, the Navaid worked. But as I said you had to know where you were anyway. It's not like a GPS system where you can live off the satellites and they can tell you where you are. In the tank troop there was four tanks, all equipped identically, except as I said the troop leader's tank had the Navaid. The standard equipment was a 30-calibre machine gun on the turret and also the co-ax

machine gun.

INTERVIEWER: Dave, how about the other vehicles in the squadron and other equipment and personnel? What would you have run into here?

ILEY: Well, being an operational tank squadron we have no civilian vehicles. All our vehicles were standard military pattern. We had the 3/4 ton truck and the deuce and a half, the 2 ½ ton truck, as our cargo carrier. There were a few jeeps that the OC had and the 2IC had. And the LO had a jeep. The OC and the battle captain -- the OC had a tank and a jeep. The 2IC had a jeep, and the sergeant major had a 3/4 ton truck, with radio, which he could communicate with his A1 echelon and his A2 echelon, because, being a tank squadron, we used up a lot of fuel. If we were in combat, we'd use up a lot of ammunition. It, being peacetime, we mostly used up fuel.

The echelon was divided up into two parts, A1 and A2. The A1 echelon would come forward every night and refuel the tanks and resupply us with ammunition, if we needed it, and rations. After we refuelled at night, the A1 echelon would go back to B echelon, and get refuelled and bombed up while A2 echelon was available for immediate resupply. There was two parts to the echelon, A1 and A2, and they were identical so that one would replenish us and one would be available for immediate resupply or could wait until the next night, depending on the operational need.

The sergeant major looked after the rearming and refuelling and resupplying. Normally we did the resupply at night so you got very good at finding locations in a harbour or a hide, that being a wooded area, normally, where the sergeant major could bring around the supplies at night.

Because our gunnery equipment was basically designed for daytime firing, we didn't have a very good night time firing capability. At night we basically went to ground and hid. We either hid in a woods or in a small town, but normally it was a woods. Because this was in the nuclear age we were spread out quite a bit, too. I mean, we were not just sort of side by each. Our tanks were normally spread out fifty yards to seventy-five yards apart in our tank hides. It was a very large tank hide to cover 18 vehicles. Each of us, each tank troop and each tank, had individual arcs for defence of the hide. Once the sergeant major approached your area for refuelling, you had to have guides out to meet the sergeant major for refuelling and resupplying. You could not go to bed or get some rest until the sergeant major had done his resupply. Many times it was late at night that we were resupplied.

We then had to get up at first light to be ready for stand to. Remember the word 'stand to'. It's half an hour before first light to half an hour after first light when we had to be ready for any pending, possible, attacks by the enemy. Because we did not have good night sights we had to be ready for the first light attack.

Our other vehicles in the squadron was the maintenance team, the LAD. We had LAD, our vehicle mechanic section attached to us. Obviously, we had the ARV which was our recovery vehicle. It was run by maintenance people, not troopers or crewmen. It was run by the RCEME organization. But we also had, in vehicles -- two 3/4 ton trucks -- was a small LAD detachment and they were divided up into two parts so that if you had a vehicle breakdown, which we had

quite regularly, the LAD team would come to your vehicle and repair it. If the repairs were beyond their capability, they had to request further first line repair from the regiment. The LAD could change fanbelts and I think they could replace clutches, because those were the main things that use to go wrong with the tank. If you got into transmission problems or gear box problems, then it had to go back to regimental first line. If it was beyond the capabilities of first line in our regiment, it had to go to a workshop, to the RCEME workshop which is part of the brigade organization. But first line was normally done by the tank crew itself. You had to prepare the vehicle for repair. If you knew that you had to change the fan belt because they'd broken, you had to take certain things apart before the LAD team got to you and that would speed up the maintenance.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of maintenance did you need to do on tracks?

ILEY: Well, the biggest thing that I recall on tracks, we very seldom threw a track because there wasn't a lot of rock. In Meaford where we did our officer training there were a lot of rocks and if you were doing night movement you could throw a track. That took a lot of time to put the track back on and it normally involved using another tank crew plus yourselves to get the track back on. In Germany, we didn't usually have that much of a problem for throwing a track. But we put a lot of miles on the track because we did a lot of road running and the biggest job with that was tightening the track. Every day you had to tighten the track and when you got it as tight as you could go, and based on the number of threads showing on the track tightener, you had to sometimes loosen everything off and take out a link in the track. That was a good six hour job to take out a link in the track. I don't really recall ever replacing the whole track because it was worn but I certainly do remember doing a minor track repair.

INTERVIEWER: How about communications equipment, Dave? What did you have?

ILEY: Well, each tank had, as I recall it, two radios in it. The principal radio was the C42 set and every tank had one of those. And I think the tanks had a smaller radio, I can't remember what it was, B47, smaller....

INTERVIEWER: Was it the 5-10?

ILEY: Well we had a 510. Whether that was a man-pack or whether each tank had one and you could pull it out of the tank and you could use it for local communications -- maybe it was the 510. But for both of them you had to tune the antenna and I remember all those communications drills. You set on the frequencies and then you had to tune the antenna. You changed frequencies every day and tuned the antenna every day. And can't remember if it was done at noon hour. I think it was done at noon hour, and in the middle of an exercise and you're in the war or the exercise, you'd have to remember to change frequencies at noon hour. Well, a lot of people forgot that because you're in the heat of battle or you were moving. It was always fun to see who remembered to do the change of frequency at noon hour because you had a squadron radio check and invariably there would always be one or two or maybe more tanks that would forget to change their frequencies. Also, when you changed your frequencies you had to change your daily operating codes. Because we were also in the nuclear environment we also had alternate frequencies. Sometimes during your exercise you would get jammed, and the key in all

this jamming process was: "do we change frequencies or do we hang on?" You know, with the old frequencies. Sometimes you would change frequencies and try and do a radio check and find no one else had changed frequencies so you would have to change back again. That was always a sticking point, you know, when to change frequencies under jamming conditions.

But we had that capability and you had to, sort of, become aware of it. And because we were spread out -- I mean, we did not work very close together -- you had your tank troop but invariably you were at least 100 to 200 yards apart from tank to tank when you were doing tank tactics. There was a compromise between firepower and concentration of force by having your four tanks together to being spread out enough that you wouldn't all get destroyed because of large bombs or multiple rocket launchers that the enemy had. We would spread out and you learned to become very independent. But you also had to be aware of where your other tanks were on the battlefield. Not only just your own four tanks but where the rest of the other three troops were. It taught you independence.

But the communications -- you did a lot of hand signals because you didn't want to use the radio because you worked off radio silence a lot. Radio silence was key to most of our operations because you had to go into location in radio silence and you would only break radio silence if you came in contact with the enemy. That became rather difficult. You put a lot of miles on, or yards, running back and forth, vehicle to vehicle, passing on the instructions. Invariably when you came back from a squadron O Group, operations [Orders] group, where the squadron commander, the major, told you what the plan was for the day, and what the operations were you came back with a trace of what you were going to do. You had to pass that trace on to the other three tanks and you had to brief them on where you fit into the squadron scheme of things. Invariably you didn't have much time to do this and, because you were spread out, you had everybody come and meet you at your troop leader's tank, and you would pass on the information.

It would be ideal to have an hour to brief your troops and then they could get back to their individual tanks and to pass on the information to the troopers in the tank. It was always important for the troopers in the individual tank to know what the exercise was, what the scheme of things was for that day. Were we going to attack, were we going to withdraw, why were we attacking or withdrawing? And we'd pass on the enemy situation to the soldiers. Sometimes you didn't have a lot of time to do that but when you first started an exercise you could pass on -- battle procedure it was called -- you could pass on detailed briefings to the troopers. But once the battle was engaged, and you were engaged with the enemy, your timings for battle procedure and map marking was restricted. You didn't have as much time to pass on the information that you needed.

The important part was to make sure that you had the operational scheme down. That is, your map was marked. You had to know where your boundaries were, where A Squadron was going to be, where you were going to fit in to the A Squadron scheme of things, whether you were going to be left forward troop or right forward troop or rear troop, and when the squadron commander was going to leap frog the rear troop into the advance, if he was going to do that at all. Or whether it was going to be a straight road move down a road and into a location, then deploy into an operational setting, that is, a quick hasty defense. And where you were going to be

in that defensive scheme, left forward, right forward, rear. You had to make sure that you had your map marked and all the troops knew where you were.

Because what we'd seen from history was, in many cases -- the Soviets and the East Germans -- their troops didn't know where they were going. From what I understand, the officers in charge of the enemy tank company, they may have one map and one radio and the individual Russian soldiers or East German soldiers didn't know the master scheme. They just said, "We had to follow the squadron commander's tank or the tank company commander's tank." In our case, our soldiers knew where they were, what their role in the battle was. They had to be prepared to do all this in case you had casualties. You just couldn't leave it up to the troop sergeant or the troop leader to know what was going on. The individuals had to be briefed so that in case there was a casualty they could take over the job because in our tank crew we had four people in a tank. You could operate with three. If somebody became injured, you could move from the crew commander's location into the radio operator/loader's position and still run the tank. Not to the same capability as if you had four people, but you could communicate, you could load the tank gun with three people out of four. There was a bit of redundancy built into it.

INTERVIEWER: Dave, how did a troop or trooper or a soldier in the field eat? What was the provision of rations?

ILEY: Well, northern Germany, we were with the British Army on the Rhine and therefore, 4 Div was part of British Army. We had British rations. When I was in Canada in summer training we had Canadian rations. But in Germany we had British rations supplied to us. They were somewhat different than Canadian rations. There was a lot of mutton in the British rations and there was lamb stews. When we were in the field, this is what we were issued at the overnight resupply. And when we had an opportunity, we would trade some of our British rations with the Germans. When we traded, we would normally send one of our troopers down into the village, or even into the closest farm and we would exchange our tins of mutton, lamb stew, our tins of tea. And we would exchange it for bread and eggs because those were fresh rations which we didn't get very often and it certainly supplemented our meals. We either got onions from the Germans or the sergeant major at night would bring us onions and potatoes. But in many cases we got onions and potatoes from the locals. Sometimes, because we were out on these fall exercises, we would do a small raiding party on a potato field and come back with some, four, six or eight potatoes which we would supplement our rations with.

Each tank had to do its own preparations of meals. Each crew member would be assigned cooking duties on a rotational basis. The driver would cook the main meal one night and the radio operator would cook the main meal the next night and sometimes it would be the gunner and many times the crew commander, myself as troop leader, would have to cook as well.

Having been feed from the silver spoon at home and at military college and in summer training, I was not a very good cook. My skills were limited. I could cook off the Coleman stove but my gourmet delight was grilled cheese and onion sandwiches because my skills were not that good. Over time I became much better at it. But my crew really didn't like me cooking that often. They'd been in Germany for a year and a half and I had just arrived and their Coleman stove cooking skills were much better than mine. They could whip up some pretty good meals with

items from the ration packs, items picked up from the Germans, and in any case many of the items would be brought by the soldiers to the field. Peanut butter was not part of the ration pack. You could not get peanut butter from the local economy or the sergeant major, but every troop brought a couple of jars of peanut butter. For breakfast in the morning, toasted peanut butter sandwiches were the mainstay for breakfasts. Peanut butter, toast and coffee or even sometimes peanut butter, toast and washed down with a beer at 5:30 in the morning got you going. If you've been up all night long and you've had two or three hours sleep, and you had to be up for stand to, something easy to prepare was peanut butter and jam sandwiches.

INTERVIEWER: Dave you've provided and excellent summary of a young officer in the field joining a tank troop, everything that you did in the field, but how did you get back into garrison and what was life like in garrison?

ILEY: Well, what I've recounted up until now was basically the first six weeks of my time in Germany. As you'll recall, I arrived in the middle of the night and moved to the squadron in the field in the middle of the night and I went up by bus, a little German Volkswagen kleinebus along with some of the other new officers. In reality, I spent six weeks in the field from the middle of September until the end of October on exercise. We may have gone back to garrison but, if we did, I don't recall too much about it other than the fact that we probably went back by bus, spent a week in garrison and then went back to the field again.

Whereby the tanks had been moved from the Soltau area to the division training area where we were going to do exercise Treble Chance in the Warburg-Kassel area. We did that exercise in the Warburg-Kassel area. I think we acted as enemy against the rest of the division who were the friendly forces. We acted as enemy fighting against our own friendly forces. I was still assistant troop leader acting as the radio operator and the loader because the troop leader, Chris Cathcart, he was being posted back to Canada right after the exercise. I was obviously being groomed to take over as troop leader. When the exercise finished, we went back to garrison.

The only way we could get back there was by tank train so all the tanks were put onto railway flatcars and shipped back to Iserlohn. Not everybody was required to go on the tank train. It was the drivers and the loaders put the tanks on the tank train. And there was some officers and senior NCOs went on the tank train with the tanks back to Iserlohn. Well, that may have been only a distance of 200 miles as the crow flies but we would take 14 to 24 hours, sometimes 36 hours to get back from the exercise location to Iserlohn. It was not always a direct route because the tanks were big. There was a roundabout routing to get back to Iserlohn. Obviously, the priority trains were the passenger trains and the freight trains and we were fourth class, if you want to call it that. We lived in the passenger cars accompanying the tanks.

In the German railway cars you had seats for 4 to 6 people and because we were en route for 14, 24, 36 hours you learned to sleep in a variety of locations. I mean, I remember sleeping once up on the baggage rack above all the rest of the crew. I can't recall how we ate. We certainly didn't bring along our own cooking equipment with us to feed ourselves. I think somewhere along the line the squadron 2IC or somebody in the brigade organization would have a pit stop where we were fed. Every now and then when the train was stopped our guys could go back to the tanks on the flat cars and raid some of our food supplies and bring them back to the crew

compartments, the passenger compartments. It seems to me that a lot of our meals were supplemented with beer on these particular tank trains because you had nothing to do other than accompany the tanks. The biggest concern for me as a troop officer and the senior NCOs was to keep everything under control because at the far end when we got into location in Iserlohn we had to off-load the tanks and put them onto tank transporters. They were big trucks and trailers. The trucks were driven by Polish drivers. The trucks came from the Brits. They were monster size trucks. They didn't move very fast but they could carry a 55-ton load. Our biggest responsibility was to make sure that all our troops were sober and could drive the tanks off the flatcars and put them onto the road tank transporters. When I say drive the tanks off the flatcars, you had to go from flatcar to flatcar to flatcar to eventually drive it off the end. You just didn't do a pivot turn on the flatcar and drive it off onto a loading ramp. You had go from one end to the other so it was a very tricky operation because you only had about six inch clearance.

INTERVIEWER: And that required a lot of skill.

ILEY: Yes it did. Oh, very much so, and you had, every now and then, but not very often -- I only recall it once, and I wasn't there -- when a tank slipped off the flatcar. That was quite an administrative nightmare getting that tank back onto the flatcar and it could certainly disrupt the dis-loading, or the loading operation. So that was us getting back to garrison.

In garrison, I didn't know my way around Iserlohn, where the regiment was located, and our officers' mess and officers' quarters was approximately 2 to 3 kilometres away in a separate building. We didn't live in Fort Beausejour where the regiment was located. We lived down the road two miles away in isolation. There was two parts to my garrison duties. Obviously there was the day to day life in the garrison with the regiment and then there was the officers' mess life.

In garrison, it became a bit of a blur to me. You know, we went to work five and a half days a week. We worked until 12:00 Saturday mornings. It was very difficult for me to get assimilated into the German economy because we worked Monday through Friday and then we worked on Saturday mornings until about noon hour. The Germans' stores were open until about 5:30 at night during the week and on the weekends they pretty well closed at noon hour so it took me a pretty long time to integrate myself and become familiar with the German economy.

But in garrison we basically did troop leader administrative duties. Now I'm a troop leader. I've got my tank troop. We had to maintain the tanks because obviously we'd just did six weeks of exercise and, with six weeks of exercise, you had to do a lot of routine maintenance to get the tanks operational again. Little things were always wrong with it, whether it be a headlight, tank tracks had to be changed. Because now that you were in garrison you had the time to do preventive maintenance. The was a lot of preventive maintenance duties to be done. There was administrative duties as a troop leader. You had to bring your troop records up to date. You had to do your performance evaluation reports. Not necessarily your yearly one but you had to do a written report on all your soldier activities while you were in the field. In my case, the troop leader did most of that, because he knew the men. He wrote up a performance report in conjunction with what I saw so that I could understand my men. Because now I was a troop leader and I had to know when the individual soldier was born, where he was born, whether he

was married or single.....

INTERVIEWER: Interview with David Iley, end of side one.

INTERVIEWER: Canadian War Museum Oral History Program interview with David Iley, tape one, side two.

David, we were talking about your life in garrison and what you needed to know as a troop leader. Would you just continue on with that please?

ILEY: As a troop leader, and likewise for people in the infantry and the artillery, you had to know your soldiers. What it was called was your troop book. You had to make sure that your troop book was up to date. You also had to make sure that you knew what was in your troop book such as your soldier's wife's name, whether they had two kids or three kids, where they lived, if they lived in PMQs or married quarters close to the base, such in our case Iserlohn or Hemer or whether the individual lived on the economy. That is, in the local German communities and how far away he was located because some guys would live 40 minutes away, in Werl or up in Una and they had to drive to work every day. When you had an emergency deployment, or "bug-out" as it was called, you had to know that you had a certain percentage of your soldiers living close by in garrison and could get to the tanks and man the tanks and get them out of the hangars and ready to load up with ammunition and ready to deploy to the field. Some of your soldiers lived a long distance away and you knew that you couldn't count on them for some time while you were in garrison and getting ready to deploy. We did not have the same telephone communications that we do nowadays. In many cases you had to send a runner to the soldier's house, wake him up and say, "It's a bug-out. Report to garrison". That process took time. Again, while in garrison you had to know your soldiers, where they lived and their wife's name, you had to know their shoe size, their clothing size. Whether they had any administrative problems whether, you know -- the wife was pregnant, when the baby was going to be born, whether the soldier had problems back in Canada, whether there might be a chance that he had to be sent back to Canada early because of family problems.

INTERVIEWER: Did this knowledge of your troops while you were in Germany....?

ILEY: Well, you certainly knew your soldiers. And you really got to know them, the soldiers who lived in your particular tank crew. I mean, you lived with them 24 hours a day, seven days a week when you're on exercise. You still had to maintain the officer/senior NCO and trooper disciplinary rules and regulations. You certainly didn't call your soldiers or your NCO s by their first name. It was always Sergeant Smith or Sergeant Jones or Corporal Smith or Corporal Jones. Although you knew their first names, you never called them by that. Even in garrison under social situations, you still didn't call them by their first name. It was a hierarchy that was maintained day to day. And they respected it by calling me, "Sir" or "Lieutenant Iley". I respected them by calling them by their rank and their name. I didn't just say "Sergeant". I would say "Sergeant Smith" or "Corporal Jones." it wasn't just, "corporal", or "sergeant," or using their last names. I would respect their position and their rank.

I was very fortunate. I had no disciplinary problems in my troop. Again, I was dealing with

sixteen soldiers and you got to know them fairly well. I worked with them and made sure that they got the training that they needed because when they were in garrison there were always requirements to upgrade their individual tank crew skills. If you got a young soldier, young trooper, straight out of recruit school, he would come to you with one crew trade. He would be a crewman driver. But for him to get promoted and to get a higher pay he had to be cross trained as a crewman gunner or crewman radio operator/loader. These courses were often run in the regiment and the unit had to do the training. In garrison, you would lose a number of your NCOs to courses. They would either be instructing on the courses or taking courses.

Now for the crewmen, we would instruct in the unit. But for a senior NCO, a sergeant, to get qualified as a sergeant or a warrant officer, he would have to be sent back to Canada for training at the Armoured Corps School. In many cases, you didn't want to lose that soldier by sending him on course but you had to adjust because you couldn't hold that soldier back or senior NCO back. You had to send him back to Canada for his courses. In many cases you got a replacement from headquarters squadron in the regiment or from administrative troop within the squadron because you certainly had to go to the field with your full complement of men. That was not always the case because, again, people were back in Canada or on course somewhere.

In order to be promoted to corporal you had to go on a junior NCO course and we would lose soldiers to a common junior NCO course, normally up in Werl where the Junior NCO School was. But in garrison you had that time frame, from basically the 1st of November to sometime in February, when we started gearing up and doing unit and troop tactics again. So there was that winter garrison.

INTERVIEWER: So that was part of the training cycle. What went on, let's say you were getting into .....?

ILEY: My cycle changed because in February. By that time I'd gone to reconnaissance squadron and the training cycle was different for me. But my recollection, in that garrison time frame, say from November to February, you were upgrading your individual crewman skills. As I said, you went from being a crewman driver to crewman gunner. Those are individual skills. Then you started working on your tank troop skills. You taught blind corner drills. You taught defile drills. You taught gap drills. All these drills as a troop you had to know. You had to know long defile drills where you worked with the infantry.

Up until now, we're just doing tank troop drills. In that time frame -- February, March, April -- you would get together with your infantry component and do combined operations, tank troop and infantry platoon drills. You very rarely worked in isolation as a tank troop. You worked as a combat team but, in order to get to the combat team level, you had to do your tank/infantry cooperation drills. You worked as a tank troop with an infantry platoon.

You had to understand what the infantry could do for you and what you could do for the infantry. At the same time, the gunners, the artillery, came and worked with you and you had to learn how to fire indirect, call down indirect fire. You would not always have an artillery forward observation officer or FOO with you at your tank troop. There may have been a FOO at the squadron level with the OC because the FOO and the tank squadron commander, or major,

would work closely together. And a FOO would be closely situated to the squadron commander. You as a tank troop had to be able to call down artillery fire, direct it, adjust it, and call it off or cease fire when required. You were working in this time frame from January through to March on your tank/infantry cooperation skills.

Somewhere in the spring you would then go out on a regimental exercise and you would go to gun camp because in garrison you did not have facilities for gun camp. Obviously, there was no tank firing range nearby. You had to go to places like Soltau or Sennelager, and there was another that was close to Haltern, where you did squadron individual tank gunnery skills. Again you mentioned that the other one was Hohne. I think that Hohne was the biggest tank gunnery range. Soltau and Sennelager were more tactical ranges. Hohne was your big gunnery range. I seem to recall going to Hohne in January or February for an exercise and practising your gunnery skills.

I don't recall, again, at the regimental level and the tank squadron level what happened in the summer time. I know that when I went to recce squadron I seemed to have a fair amount of time off in the summer where the troops were able to take family vacations. You certainly couldn't take 100 per cent stand down. You had to spread out your holidays throughout that time frame so that the regiment and the squadron maintained a 75 per cent readiness level because we were in an operational theatre. So we couldn't just do a blank, 100 per cent stand down. We had to work in holidays into that time frame. And you normally gave your holiday time frame in the summer to those who were married with families so that when the kids were out of school the family could go off on summer vacation together as a family. Single people ended up on the side ends of the prime holiday time frame. For example, I took my holidays in October/November, after I finished my exercise up at Treble Chance and got back to garrison. I managed to go on holidays for two weeks. And fortunately I was with another officer who liked to travel. We went from Germany to England and we did two weeks in England, Ireland and Scotland in October/November, the rainy season. Not the prime tourist time.

INTERVIEWER: Well, David, what were the circumstances under....?

ILEY: Squadron, the reconnaissance squadron in this case, was affiliated with the regiment. I was in the Fort Garry Horse tank regiment but it had a reconnaissance squadron and a reconnaissance squadron was tasked to support the brigade. It was an independent recce squadron is how it's described, although it was manned by personnel from the Fort Garry Horse. As a member of the Fort Garry Horse, I got transferred to recce squadron primarily because two officers in recce squadron were being posted back to Canada in continuation of their officer training. The regiment had been in Germany for a year and a half. Some of these officers had to go back to Canada for their officer training and I was sent to recce squadron. I think I was sent to recce squadron because of my map using ability. Also, I think it was my own personality. I was a little more independent. I didn't run with the herd. When you are in an independent recce squadron, there are only three reconnaissance troops and those reconnaissance troops are always out on independent, isolated missions. You had to be able to work on your own. I think the other reason I was sent there, not only for my map using skills, I also spoke some German. I took German in high school and I found German very easy to learn and to speak. I had a smattering of German communication skills and, as an independent recce troop, you needed

those skills to be able to talk with the local Germans because I worked right up to the German border.

INTERVIEWER: Okay Dave, that gives us a.....?

ILEY: Independent recce squadron -- we had three reconnaissance troops of seven vehicles each. The vehicles we used were the Mark I Ferret scout cars. It was a British vehicle, four-wheel drive. It ran five speed forwards and five speeds backwards. Obviously, you didn't run it in high gear going backwards because you had to navigate going backwards. It was the Mark I. The British had a Mark II Ferret scout car that had a turret on it. This is a two man crew and in my reconnaissance troop there was seven vehicles. There was three patrols, always operated in two vehicles per patrol. Those two vehicles would be tasked with setting up static observation posts. They would be used as traffic control points. They would be used as route marking. They always worked in pairs, so there was three pairs, and I was the odd man out as a troop leader. When it came to setting up an observation post or a troop position, I would always go and live with one of the patrols because I certainly could not live by myself. There was only two of us, a driver and myself, and we couldn't run 24 by 7 operations.

It was a Ferret scout car. My armament was a 30 calibre machine gun. It was a bit of a peashooter. It was on a loosely mounted pintle. When you fired the machine gun it sprayed bullets down range but there was no accurate fire. Sometimes I thought I was more accurate with my 9mm pistol than with the 30 calibre machine gun and it's the pintle mount. However, we were in a sneak and peek type operation. Not like the tanks where you had heavy firepower and good armour protection. In our case, our ability to manoeuvre on the battlefield was stealth. The scout car was a very quiet running vehicle, and it was very small. We would use sneak and peek tactics. We would try and sneak into locations. Many times you would dismount from your vehicle before you went around the corner and you took a visual look around the corner of a building or behind a cliff before you moved out in your vehicle. Because the only way you were going to survive was through your eyes and sort of hunter..... (gap on tape)

Because you certainly couldn't fight for information. You couldn't. And you had no defensive firepower if you got into a fire fight. Basically, you ducked down into your vehicle and backed up out of the situation. When you came up against an obstacle, you could not run over a tank mine, you couldn't get into a tank ditch, you couldn't get involved into a wire entanglement because you were stuck. You had to survey the ground in front of you and, if you couldn't see what was going on in front of you from your vehicle, you did a lot of dismounting.

When you set up an observation post, you hid your vehicle and ran a landline up to your observation post where you could survey the battlefield. I had observation posts in bushes, in tree trunks, in third or fourth story locations in German houses or barns. When I set up an OP overlooking a river, many times I would use a local house. I would get permission from the owners and use their barn or even their second or third floor. And many cases the Germans were very amenable to you being there and we would have good relationships with the Germans. I spoke German. My driver spoke a little German, and sometimes they would feed us. But as I mentioned earlier, many times you were operating on your own and I would have to go back and work with my patrols. You lived with the patrol.

INTERVIEWER: Did you do a lot of living out in the field....?

ILEY: Reconnaissance squadron, we were wheeled. Not like the tanks, so our responsibility was from Soest/ Paderborn, area all the way up to the German border. Now, I'm not sure if this was all part of the overall brigade scheme of operations, whether we were training in our designated training area or training area of responsibility for brigade, but I certainly would travel everywhere in this corridor from Iserlohn/Soest up to the German border. I got to know it very well because we did a lot of exercises on the German terrain. With the wheeled vehicles we had a lot of freedom of movement. We were not restricted to training areas because we certainly didn't damage the land when we drove off a road, onto a side road, or a German forest road. We did not damage the land so we could travel a lot. Because we were using a gasoline engine, we didn't use up a lot of resources so that the independent recce squadron had a lot more freedom of movement to train on the German terrain. As a result, we worked closely with the Germans and lived closely with the Germans. I knew my way -- I was with the recce squadron for a year before the squadron rotated back to Canada -- I knew my way around Germany and our area of responsibility intimately. I could take back roads, side roads, hidden routes to get from the forward area on the East German border back to Paderborn and Soest because, based on the threat, the Germans and the Russians coming at us with tanks and in strength. We had, as our tasking was to report where the enemy was, what they were doing and where they were going.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, you mentioned the threat. What was your knowledge of the threat from the Warsaw Pact?

ILEY: It was quite limited. Because when I went over to Germany, I came over in mid-posting. The regiment had been there for a year and a half. Back in Canada before the regiment came over to Germany the soldiers were briefed on their tasking in Germany. Very detailed briefings on what the regiment was tasked to do in Germany, what the recce squadron was tasked to do in Germany. The soldiers, and particularly the officers, knew their roles. When I came over to Germany in mid-posting, I did not get detailed briefings of what was going on and why we were there. I think even at the end of my time in Germany I did not clearly understand the whole concept of brigade, division and the British Army on the Rhine tactics.

I mean, I was there as a young troop leader. I knew my troop leader jobs and how to run a good troop but I certainly didn't know the overall scheme of things. Obviously, as time passed, I knew more and in recce squadron I knew a lot more, too. But I still felt I didn't have enough information.

I was recce squadron, and I worked with helicopters because we had not only just the seven Ferret scout cars, we had a helicopter troop with us. And that consisted of six Hiller helicopters. They were not armed. They were basically a big glass bubble out in front, a two man crew. The pilot and the observer were, for the most part, armoured officers as pilots and the observers were crewmen who had been trained as observers. That was another crewman skill as observers and so it was a whole armoured team. It wasn't as if we had air force pilots and air force navigators or observers. These were armoured corps soldiers and officers who'd been trained in the armoured corps skills and were now off on secondary taskings such as the pilot of the helicopter

or the crewman observer. They knew what we were doing on the ground. They knew why I was doing the tactics I was doing.

Whenever we went on patrol as a recce troop we would normally assign two or four helicopters per troop, again depending on the role. But, as a minimum, we had two helicopters working with us because the helicopters were unarmed and were unarmoured. They did not go forward of our reconnaissance group. They were a secondary set of eye and ears for us. If we were patrolling a road or going cross country, they would watch our flanks. They would over watch our movement from a different position. They could get into locations where we could not get as a wheeled vehicle type of operation. They could go to the flanks and watch. But they stayed closely to us as a reconnaissance troop because they weren't armed either and they wanted us as a package. The reconnaissance troop and the helicopters worked very closely together to provide the eyes and ears for the brigade. Whether it was and advance operation or a withdrawal and in many cases many of our exercises were withdrawal operations because that was what was going to happen to us in Germany. We were going to withdraw. The Russians and the Warsaw Pact were going to come at us and we had to maintain contact with the enemy but not get killed. It was a fine line of surviving. We used our sneak and peek skills in our wheeled vehicles and we used our helicopters as our supplementary eyes and ears.

How long we would have survived against the Warsaw Pact I don't know. I suspect the helicopters would have gone very quickly in the battle. Our wheeled vehicles, our Ferrets, would have survived because of our knowledge of the terrain and the back routes. But I'm sure we would have been bypassed by the Warsaw Pact and we would have had to make our way back to friendly lines, wherever they were. Our limitation was our river crossing capability. We had to get across on a bridge somewhere. We could not swim our vehicles. If we got back to a major river, such as the Weser River, and all our bridges were blown or had been captured by the Warsaw Pact we pretty well had to abandon our vehicles and swim across the river. Or go into a flanking hide/observation post operation and keep reporting on the enemy until we were either captured or killed.

INTERVIEWER: Do you recall at this time was there any emphasis on....?

ILEY: In the tanks, all of us had our masks, but we did not have suits, chemical suits or our NBC suits. We always carried our protective masks with us but that was it. I seem to recall doing an exercise where we lived in our tanks for 24 hours but it was a very difficult and arduous task to do. Our main skill in the NBC world was dispersal. So that one squadron would not be wiped out completely under a small tactical nuke. But our capabilities were limited. In recce squadron, again, well, we just had the mask and we had no NBC suits. I really don't recall carrying Geiger counters or NBC radiological equipment. If we had it, it may have been kept in squadron stores but I don't recall being trained on it. I learned more about NBC warfare in my later life as a nuclear emergency response team commander.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, you were....?

ILEY: Because we were the brigade reconnaissance squadron, not the division reconnaissance squadron. We were worked for the brigade commander, of 4 Brigade, as his independent recce

squadron. So we didn't really work with other allied formations.

INTERVIEWER: How did.....?

ILEY: Recce squadron area, we were pretty well kept to ourselves. When we socialized with other forces it was primary down in Iserlohn with the regiment because again, as you'll recall, I was a member of the Fort Garry Horse Regiment down in Iserlohn. We were invited down to many of the social functions that were run by the regiment and there were some British units in Iserlohn. Obviously there was the British military hospital in Iserlohn and we socialized, the single guys, with the British nurses. Occasionally we would meet up with the Germans but I can't recall doing it very often. If it was, it was maybe once a year where we socialized with a local German unit but I don't remember the name of the unit and where it was located.

INTERVIEWER: Just getting back to the squadron now....?

ILEY: We had to work independently. Most of the soldiers had spent time with the tanks because that was the primary armoured corps crewman skill -- was to be a crewman driver or crewman gunner. And a secondary tasking was to be reconnaissance driver or a crew commander. Soldiers in recce squadron were well trained. Exceptionally well trained. They knew where they fit into the overall scheme of things. They were highly independent and capable of multi-tasking. I thoroughly enjoyed working with reconnaissance troop and reconnaissance squadron because we were so independent. The soldiers had an esprit de corps that showed they were better than most and they always felt that they were better than the tank squadrons. And I felt they were very capable individuals.

INTERVIEWER: Dave, how would you describe the difference between training operations and exercises in Germany compared with what you would later experience in Canada?

ILEY: Well, before I answer that question, let me just say that the training I had in Canada as an officer at the Armoured Corps School was excellent. I learned in the Armoured Corps School my skills as a driver. I learned driver maintenance and how the tank operated. I learned communications skills at Borden. I learned gunnery skills. Obviously, those were the individual crew skills. I learned the crew commander skills and eventually in phase 3, just before going to Germany, I learned my troop leader skills -- how to run a tank troop, how to run a tank troop in conjunction with an infantry platoon.

When I got to Germany, I found that those skills I'd learned in the phase training was excellent and it translated very easily into the jobs I had to do as a troop leader in Germany. What I didn't learn, as I mentioned this earlier, was the political situation, where I fit into, and where the tank troop fit into the large scheme of things. From a training viewpoint in Canada the skills were excellent and I used them in Germany.

When I returned from Germany to Canada, and I went to our reconnaissance squadron in Germany [Canada?], I found the skills were pretty well the same because I was with a recce squadron in Germany and our recce squadron rotated back in its entirety back to Canada, to Calgary. I went to recce squadron in Canada, so we didn't lose a lot of the skills because the

same soldiers were there. As a matter of fact, we did not receive any new crewmen soldiers for a number of years when we were back in Calgary, in garrison in Calgary. We lived off of the experienced soldiers and troopers that we had from Germany. Most of the new crewmen always went to Germany. It was very rare that we'd get a new crewman in the regiment and when we did get a new crewman it was a big ceremony. Our skill level in Canada was very good.

Later on in my career I found that our soldiers, I think, were better trained in Canada than in Germany because we spent more time training in Canada. We didn't have as many restrictions as in Germany. I'm talking about now the 1977 to '79 time frame. By that time, the troops in Germany in the brigade had moved from the north down to the south and their budgetary constraints were high. Their training opportunities were not as good as in Canada. I thought in Canada that we spent a lot more time in the field than in Germany and the skill levels were better.

INTERVIEWER: Would you attribute this to your mobility in reconnaissance?

ILEY: Well, not so much in the reconnaissance. Well perhaps. In Germany we were in the tanks, the Centurions and in Ferret scout cars. Later on in that '77 - '79 time frame we didn't have tanks anymore. We had the Cougars and we had Lynx reconnaissance vehicles and we still had the Ferret scout cars. We were able to get out onto the local terrain and into our Wainwright training area a lot more often than I thought we did in Germany. I had a reconnaissance squadron and we trained a lot. We were always out of garrison or out of the brigade training area, out on the local economies. I think the fact that we weren't in tanks, we were in wheeled vehicles, gave us a lot more opportunities to train.

INTERVIEWER: Dave, you started off by saying where you went on leave a while back. What other amenities were available to you? What sort of cultural points of interest were there -- theatres, the local gastofs, shopping out on the German economy -- what did you and other soldiers do on their off duty time?

ILEY: Well, I was a single officer and we used to work Saturday mornings so I found it very frustrating and very limited dealing with the German economy. Especially if you wanted to do shopping because you never finished work when the stores were open and on Saturdays the German economy closed down either at 12:00 or 1:00 in the afternoon and then it was closed until Monday. The Germans didn't shop on Sunday and stores were not open on Sunday and, as a result, I had very little to do with shopping. As a single officer I didn't really have to shop for groceries and clothing for kids or any of those amenities. I just looked after myself. Because I was a single officer living at the officers' mess, my daily meals, breakfast, lunch and dinner were provided. I used the officers' mess as my hub for social entertainment. Occasionally we would go out to a German pub or gasthof for a beer or three, but for the most part we spent our free time at the officers' mess.

INTERVIEWER: What sort of activities did you engage in, say, as a group of single officers living in the mess?

ILEY: Well there was the normal TGIF. Friday night was happy hour and we certainly made use

of those facilities because the alcohol and beer was inexpensive. And if you ate and drank at the officers' mess and overdid it, you could go back to your room and there was no problem drinking and driving. We always had the standard Friday night TGIFs. But once a month there always seemed to be some officers' mess mixed function, either at our mess or at one of the other officers' messes in the area. Occasionally, I'd say once every three months to four months, there was a mess dinner dining in, in which we were all required to participate. There was no opting out. There was always a reason for the mess dinner. You had a colonel of the regiment who would visit or you would have some other dignitary coming to the unit for the social function. Whether it be the brigade commander or the divisional commander or our affiliated regimental commander. There was always a reason for having the mess dinner and we would participate. From a family viewpoint there was always a mixed function of some sort, whether it be Halloween, or Christmas party or the Christmas party with kids. Obviously, there was the New Year's Eve function which was heavily subscribed to. So we didn't go out on the local economy for these functions. There was a brigade officers' club up in Soest. I went to it once or twice. It seemed primarily to cater to the brigade officers, staff and the officers who were married or the senior officers, the majors and the senior captains. As a young single lieutenant, there seemed to be about twenty of us living in at the officers' mess. Our hive of activity, our centre of activity was the officer's mess.

INTERVIEWER: Whereabouts did you go on vacation, Dave, and what sort of activities did you participate in at those events?

ILEY: Well, I think I had two weeks annual vacation. When I first got to Germany, as I mentioned before, I had two weeks accumulated from my previous summer training and I did two weeks visiting England, Ireland and Scotland and visiting my aunts from England. But the following summer, I had two weeks as well and I took my girlfriend and myself. We went on a two week trip to southern Germany, northern Italy, southern France, northern Spain and back. I must admit, at the end of that two weeks period I was very happy to get back into Germany because by that time I was used to the German lifestyle, the orderliness of the German lifestyle. The routines and the cleanliness, and the good roads, the good traffic signs, the discipline on the highways and I knew what I was going to get when I went for a meal. But when I was in southern France and in Spain and northern Italy, obviously it was big culture shock for me, a Canadian from Ontario, and it took me a while to get used to it. But I was quite happy to get back to Germany and the regular lifestyle in Germany. So that was it, I only had two vacations.

INTERVIEWER: Dave, what did your tour in Germany, the sixteen months in Germany, how did it contribute to your career as an officer in the armoured corps and, let's say, your further development as an officer in the forces?

ILEY: Well, from all the tactics and exercises that I did, I became very adept at using the radio, doing troop drills, doing troop tank/infantry cooperation, and working with other units. I certainly had the skill levels. So when I went to the Combat Arms School after I finished my first three years in regiment, and that meant in Germany, in Calgary and in Cyprus, I then got posted to the Armoured Corps School and I taught tactics in the Armoured Corps School. And I could do that very well because I had the good cross-section of knowledge -- the infantry, the tank and reconnaissance skills, how to use it. And I could train, and I thoroughly enjoyed

training young officers up in Meaford.

INTERVIEWER: What wrap-up word would you like to say in the last ten seconds.

ILEY: I enjoyed my time in Germany. It was a great experience but I didn't have any great desire to go back. I found Germany depressing, the weather, the conditions.

TRANSCRIPT ENDS