CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW CONTROL NUMBER: 31D 5 HALLIDAY

INTERVIEWEE: Hugh Halliday

INTERVIEWER: Mai-yu Chan

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 7 January, 2005

LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Ottawa, ON

TRANSCRIBED BY: A. Fodor

Transcription of Interview Number 31D 5 HALLIDAY

Hugh Halliday

Interviewed 7 January, 2005

By Mai-yu Chan

INTERVIEWER: Canadian War Museum Oral History Program interview with Hugh Halliday. Friday the seventh of January 2005. Ottawa.

We have both signed the legal release form. Is that correct?

HALLIDAY: Yes, that is correct.

INTERVIEWER: Tell us something about your early life and how you got your interest in history and aircraft and so on.

HALLIDAY: Well, you must first remember that or know that in our house in Manitoba, it was practically the lending library of the local community. We had bookshelves floor to ceiling and it long was my ambition to own a house with similar bookshelves, floor to ceiling. My mother was a schoolteacher. My father, though with grade six education, was something of a classical scholar. So bookishness was natural in the house. Beyond that, by chance, when I was ten years old I acquired a book that had extensive articles on a number of subjects, including aviation. And that really sparked an interest that never left me. I had other interests thereafter in engineering and so forth and even, God help us, the ministry but my interest in aviation never left me.

The other thing was that I was raised on a farm and I hated farming. My father could not understand that, why I hated farming. And I spent a good deal of my life, my early life, sitting on a tractor going around fields, plotting how I was going to get out of this place. University was my escape plan.

Ergo, I went to Brandon College at the age of nineteen. I was approached to see if I would like to join the Air Force Reserve. I thought this was a good way to earn my summer without having to work on the farm again. And I joined the Air Force Reserve. Went off to Reserve Officer School in 1959 and was there all of about three days and was told that my father had died. I had to go back to Manitoba and run the farm for another year until my brother could finish some divorce proceedings. He came back to run the farm and I was able to resume, at that point, my university education and my Air Force career.

By a series of happenstances, my first posting was to the Air Force Historical Section in Ottawa. That was in the summer of 1960. I basically thought I'd died and gone to heaven. I engineered that my next posting in the summer of 1961 would be to the same historical section. That year I had graduated from university, got myself a permanent commission in the Air Force and got myself posted into the Air Force Historical Section. I was therefore associated, as a member of the Armed Forces, with the Air Force Historical Section and its successor, the integrated Armed Forces Historical Section until 1968.

Nineteen sixty-eight, for various reasons, I thought that I would have to move on from the Armed Forces. I decided my second choice as a career would be teaching. So in 1968 I resigned my commission and got a job teaching at Niagara College, the community college. That was the second year of community colleges in Ontario. That was an interesting experience, excruciating in some ways. It went on for six years. And at the end of those six years, again for a number of reasons, I wanted to go back to Ottawa. I missed Ottawa. I did not particularly like living in the Niagara Peninsula. My wife had interesting career prospects in Ottawa but not in the Niagara area.

So there was an opening in the Canadian War Museum. I took advantage of that and I moved back to Ottawa in1974. I was going to the Canadian War Museum. Happily, I found that one of the people I was working for – in fact I think it was the main reason I got the job at all – was Ralph Manning. Ralph Manning had been my first commanding officer in the Air Force Historical Section way back in 1960. Manning, quite frankly, was a man whom I hero-worshipped. I continue to revere his memory to this day.

So, I came in to the War Museum in, as I say, 1974, ostensibly to be a curator of collections but Dick Malotte had joined the staff a few months earlier. He had pretty well taken over all the tasks that I had been expected to perform. Lee Murray cast about and said, "All right. We'll put you in charge of exhibit design." And that lasted for about a year. And I was a total misfit as an exhibit designer. So Lee, who had a marvelous talent for finding square pegs and square holes matching up, realized that another member of his staff, Vic Suthren, was pining away as the curator of war art. Lee said in November of 1976, "You two change positions." It was the best thing that ever happened to both of us, although it took me about 15 months, two years to really appreciate what a good thing I had been given as curator of war art. I took me some… quite a bit of time to discover what the collection consisted of and what its importance was and what stories were associated with various paintings and various personalities. I will quite frankly say that for the first couple of months when I went over to 7 Murray Street, which was where the collection was housed at the time, I felt that I had been somehow exiled from the War Museum for incompetence in my previous incarnation.

INTERVIEWER: What was the state of the art collection when you first became curator of war art?

HALLIDAY: The state of the collection was actually very good. It was, of course, divided physically. The oil paintings were stored in a facility on Wellington Street, the works on paper in the offices here at 7 Murray Street. The documentation was good. You must remember that this had been brought over from the National Gallery some years before. They had done a very good job of documenting things.

The facility of 7 Murray Street itself was an absolute catastrophe. The furnace was constantly malfunctioning. There was soot problems. The building itself was performing a number of different functions. It was also the place where the arms were stored. John [indistinct surname] the curator of arms was there. The basement was being used for general storage. The restoration of the Dorchester Coach was conducted there. But it was just a horrible, horrible building in terms of preservation of the collection.

But, as I say, the documentation was very good. The storage I considered quite good. Of course, everything gets better. But it was a legacy from the National Gallery, who had looked after it very well. And Bob Wodehouse had been – well, basically, we stand on -- everybody who was curator of war art thereafter -- stood on the shoulders of Bob Wodehouse.

INTERVIEWER: During your tenure as war art curator, was the collection used a lot? Was it out on loan, that sort of thing?

HALLIDAY: Much of the collection was loaned out routinely to Armed Forces institutions and messes, far more generously than it is today. We did not have a full appreciation – I did not have a full appreciation – of the harm that this might do to the collection. Otherwise, occasional paintings were exhibited as part of general exhibits about D-Day, Dieppe or whatever. I think Lee Murray kept four Sir Alfred Munnings' paintings in his office. He was very proud of them. I quite frankly don't – yes, there was, curiously enough, there were a couple of exhibits after I arrived but before I took over as curator of war art. There had been a very large exhibit of aviation paintings in 1973. There was an exhibit that Vic Suthern curated, 'Through Artists' Eyes', as I recall. That was about the CAFCAP artists. There had been an A.Y. Jackson exhibit before I ever arrived.

The first major loan that I think I was associated with was for, "A Terrible Beauty", which Joan Murray put together. That was an education in itself, to be working with Joan and her staff, to see how real pros handled it in terms of documentation, in terms of preparing an exhibit, touring an exhibit and so on and so forth. So that was, I guess, in 1977-78 that "A Terrible Beauty" was put on the road.

In the meantime, I think the first exhibit that I had a major input in was a Dieppe exhibit, the 'Dieppe Commemorative Exhibit', which would have been 1977, I guess. Yes, 1977. What had happened was that there had been plans to bring a great many artifacts over from Europe for this 'Dieppe Commemorative Exhibit'. The loans fell through because of the intransigence of certain mayors in France. We turned it into an art exhibit, drawing

more heavily on our own resources. It was, I guess, successful – certainly something that I enjoyed doing. I can remember it after all these many years.

INTERVIEWER: Tell us about some of the recollections of artists that you have met.

HALLIDAY: Well, I had occasion to meet a fair number of artists and some of them were extraordinarily ordinary people. Patrick Cowley-Brown would fade into anybody's wallpaper. Bob Hyndman was a marvelously -- is a marvelously colourful individual. The fact he was a former fighter pilot sort of added to his glamour, in my eyes.

A rather interesting artist whom I never met was Millar Gore Brittain. I decided that I was going to do – the first major research project I did with respect to an artist was on Millar Gore Brittain. And he turned out to be a fascinating eccentric, virtually a madman.

But of the artists that I met, Alex Colville stands out very clearly in my mind. I met Colville four, five, six times for interviews. I visited him in his home. His studio was the most incredible studio I have ever seen. In fact, the most incredible room I have ever seen because Colville's room was basically a storage rack over at one side, a table in the middle of the room – sort of a draftsman's table – and the only piece of paper in sight was whatever was on that draftsman's table that he was working on at the moment. Otherwise the room was barren of furniture and spotless. The man was so organized that he was toilet trained while he was still an embryo. [background laughter]

As I say, I interviewed him a few times. I also got to see a number of other interviews that he had done. I heard him interviewed on the radio. I saw him interviewed on TV. I saw interviews of him in various NFB documentaries. And of course, Graham Metson, I think, put together a book of Colville's, based on Colville's diary and paintings. And I finally said this to Alex Colville. I said, "Your ideas about the war, about the art, about the relationship of the art to the war and visa versa and how it affected you, it's all there in your 1944 and 1945 diaries. And throughout all of these interviews, over thirty odd years, you have scarcely changed a comma." And he said, "I guess you're right." And he remarked to his wife, "Did you know that Hugh said that I've never changed my views at all in thirty odd years?" I don't recall her reaction but…. Certainly, as I say, I was stuck by a man, who, having being through what he had had, done what he had done over so many years, that his attitudes as put down in his diaries, scarcely altered in the next three decades. Altered, as I say, not so much as a comma. To hear him interviewed in a 1955 documentary was to be listening to the same interview in 1975.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever meet Charles Comfort?

HALLIDAY: I met him, in effect, twice. And the first time was in 1964. This was while I was still in the Air Force. I was newly married. I didn't know anything about art. I never did ever take a course in it. But I was newly married and my wife and I were looking for a house, a place to live or a good apartment. There was an ad for a vacant apartment at 28 Tache Boulevard in Hull. We went there. And that was where Charles Comfort was living. I didn't know him from Adam. I still didn't know him for years

afterwards. But we were met by this large, formidable, bearded gentleman, who was very cordial and showed us the half of the house that he was going to rent. It was rather dark and not sort of appealing to a 24 year old newlywed couple. So we did not rent from Charles Comfort.

Donkey's years later, when I was curator of war art and curating a Comfort exhibit, I had the opportunity to meet him. And then I realized what I had encountered back then in 1964. He and Louise were an amazing couple. They were just, well, he was a formidable talent – a formidable wit – before he started to get Alzheimer's. And he was in decline. He was starting to manifest signs of Alzheimer's, even when I was meeting him. They subsequently had moved. By the time I was at the War Museum, they had moved from Hull to the Juliana Apartments in Ottawa. And I remember Louise saying to me once, "Our apartment is so cluttered with all of these studies that Charles has done over the years. I think I'm just going to throw them off the balcony." And I said, "If you do that, would you let me know when you're going to do it so I can be underneath there with a large bag?" She said, "If you did come, I think there would be a lot of people there also prepared to catch what was coming."

Comfort was the favourite artist of the Royal 22nd Regiment. They had practically a proprietary interest in his paintings because he had painted in Italy. So I had the opportunity to meet Comfort a number of times. As I say, he was already in decline but just formidable. Formidable.

Paul Goranson, in many ways, was my favourite artist because he covered the Air Force. And we're talking about people who are well traveled. Goranson was, in fact, the most highly traveled war artist. He started painting in Canada. He painted in North Africa. He painted in Italy. He painted in England. He painted all the way through Northwest Europe. And I met Goranson in person twice in his New York apartments; the first time when his wife was alive, the second time after she had died. At that time, he had her ashes in an urn in his apartment. He had a – he chatted a fair amount about what it was like to be a war artist and his travels and some of this actually got on to things…. I wrote a long article about Goranson, which was published in the Canadian Aviation Historical Society. The most amusing thing about – the thing that sticks in my mind – the second visit, his wife – and I believe his wife had been his second wife – in any case, she had been an European refugee. When she died, he discovered that she had never trusted institutions with her money. So that although she had put money into banks, she had put money into something like 80 or 90 different banks, all with small amounts. He had only discovered this after her death. And he turned up these ninety odd bankbooks.

Another interesting man was Patrick Cowley-Brown. As I say, to meet him, and I believe he's still alive – very few war artists are – but I was able to see his Air Force service record. This was a time when service records were not so closely guarded as they are now. He had trained as an air gunner. He had gone overseas in1942. He was immediately found to be unfit. He had, I think, a nervous breakdown even before he got on operations. He was sent back to Canada. And it turned out from the files that he was in an Air Force hospital at Rockcliffe and he was going to be discharged on medical

grounds. He came to the attention of Group Captain K.B. Conn, C o n n. Conn was the Air Force historian in Air Force Headquarters at the time. And he somehow encountered Cowley-Brown. He wrote a memo, which said, "If you release this man from the service, he will be a charge of the public purse within six months. Give him to me and I will make use of him." And he did. And thereafter Cowley-Brown was busy as a war artist in Ottawa and on the West Coast and so on and so forth. What impressed me most about this particular incident was, one, it struck me as almost uncharacteristic of K.B. Conn who was, by reputation and on the one occasion that I met him, a very crusty character. And yet here he had exhibited this incidence of compassion. The other thing was that in the midst of fighting a war, in the midst of one of the largest bureaucratic operations ever inducted, the Air Force could take the time to find a square hole for this particular square peg called Patrick Cowley-Brown. I had enormous respect, ever more respect, for an organization that could do that. And I think did it with a great deal more regularity then people realize.

INTERVIEWER: Tell us about your involvement with the CAFCAP Program.

HALLIDAY: The CAFCAP was, of course, the Canadian Armed Forces Civilian Artist Program. I was associated with it because the regulations said that the Armed Forces would have a CAFCAP coordinator, that the Armed Forces would select one or two or three artists per year and send them to some locale in consultation with the curator of war art. The artists would then be brought back to Canada, execute their work and the paintings to be incorporated into the collection would be chosen, again, by the CAFCAP coordinator and the curator of war art. The program was discontinued for financial reasons somewhere around 1992, I think. I don't recall the date.

But the CAFCAP program was an enormous headache. It was a headache because there was very seldom any continuity at Defense Headquarters. Somebody would be brought in – a young captain or lieutenant would be posted in – and they wouldn't know quite what to do with him so they'd make him the CAFCAP coordinator. And he'd be there for about three or four months and then they'd find something useful for him to do and he'd be posted out. Somebody else would be the CAFCAP coordinator. And some of them did – one man -- stayed long enough to ever complete a tour. I recall that on at least one occasion, one year I dealt with three different CAFCAP coordinators. It was most annoying. It produced a good body of art, fairly realistic art. Of course, my definition of a good painting is one that looks like a photograph. [laughs]

INTERVIEWER: Tell us why you retired in1995 at such a young age.

HALLIDAY: You asked about my retirement. My retirement came in the context of government cuts of a truly massive scale in 1994-1995. These were the first of the budgets that Paul Martin took such pride in, in getting the deficit under control. In the process of getting the deficit under control, all institutions – all government institutions – had to make drastic cuts. And that included the Museum of Civilization and that included the Canadian War Museum.

As of March, early March 1995, we were advised that some of us would be retired as of the first of April but nobody knew exactly who. And some of us would be retained. Nobody knew exactly who. And some, there might be some middle ground.

In this atmosphere of uncertainty, I left on a research expedition to London with my wife, Monique, not knowing what was going to befall me. I telephoned Cameron Pulsifer a couple of times. He in effect hinted, well, it doesn't look good for you. I got back to Ottawa about the twenty-first of March, as I recall. And there were further hints. And what was hinted to me was that I could do one of two things. I could retire on the first of April with a large package, a retirement package full of cash – about forty or forty-two thousand dollars – or I could remain until my fifty-fifth birthday and retire with a much lower cash package but I would have at least have been earning six months salary.

Financially, there wasn't much to choose between the two. If you've heard anything about my office, you'll know that my office was chaotic. It will comfort people to know that at home it still is. And I said I need six months to clean up my office and bury the appropriate bodies, which I did. And I was formally retired on the eighteenth of October 1995. My retirement party was, I believe, the next day. In the general atmosphere -- people like Bernard Pelletier had been retired on the first of April and others had been retired on the first of April. Others simply didn't know if they'd be around after the next round of cuts if there was going to be a next round of cuts. My retirement party had something of the nature of a wake around it.

But for me, I had decided a number of years earlier that I would not stay on much past sixty. I would not stay on past sixty. I might even go around fifty-eight. But it had been to my surprise and shock that I found myself retiring at age fifty-five. But part of my shock and fear was that when I had left the Air Force in 1968, I cashed in my pension. So I didn't have an Air Force pension. I discovered belatedly that I had had the wisdom and foresight in 1974 to carry over my Niagara College Pension to the Federal Government. That one stroke turned the prospect of penury to the prospect of a comfortable retirement. Fortunately, Monique was still working and would continue to work and would keep me in – therefore keep me in the brand of scotch to which I was accustomed. So it was not going to be a hard retirement. So I left and had the famous Halliday retirement party.

When I came back to Ottawa, in '74, I went through something like cultural shock because the Public Service that I had left in 1968 was still a Public Service largely housed in temporary wartime buildings. We used to say that nothing was more permanent than a temporary building. Offices were threadbare. People practically worked like monks and with the dedication of monks. And when I came back to Ottawa in '74, it seemed that everything had changed. Many of the temporary buildings were being torn down. The offices were now becoming more lavish. Rug ranking [?] had a very real meaning. I was shocked and appalled at the luxury of some offices. And, of course, Scotch Presbyterian by origin and therefore would be properly shocked. Bill Taylor at the Museum of Civilization [inaudible] was one of the more noteworthy individuals for having a lavish

office. And by contrast, Lee Murray had an office that looked as though it was furnished with Salvation Army castoffs.

After that, the Public Service went through rounds of lavish spending followed by cutbacks. I remember in particular being sent to Banff by the Museum of Civilization on a course in magazine design. There were about eighteen people from the Museum of Civilization who attended that course. The Government must have spent anywhere between three and five thousand dollars on each of us to go there. The people who were giving the course remarked that the Government must have an awful lot of money to throw away, which they did in those days. And when we came back, I used not one piece of the expertise that I had been taught and neither did most of the other people who were on the course. When I look back at that, I realize the cuts of '94 and '95 were necessary because spending had been a problem. We – I – was part of the problem. I contributed my little bit to solving the problem by walking the plank.

INTERVIEWER: You have done a lot of writing. How did you manage to do so much within a short period of time, like twenty years?

HALLIDAY: Well, I have always written. I impressed my public school teachers with the amount that I wrote. For some reason I was more skilled than most of my contemporaries, which, given the schools I was at, was not particularly difficult. I came to the museum with a background of seven years as a military historian, six years as a teacher. And incidentally, I often say that I have had three careers and I've never trained for any of them. I was trained as a political scientist not as a historian. I never took anything more than a two-week course in unarmed combat before I became a teacher. I never took a course in art history and not in painting. But I did come to the museum with this background in military history – Air Force history particularly – and in teaching. While I was teaching I was also writing as well – a general history. A book that never got into print, was, 'History they never taught you', of course in which I talk about such things as Canadian disasters and criminals and duels and so on and so forth.

When I came in to the War Museum -- when I came specifically in to the war art section -- I mentioned I felt momentarily as though I had been exiled. But Fred Azar, who is a principal now, started showing me what we had. And I decided that I would select one artist and I would find out as much as I could about him. And through that process learn more about the collection. The artist I selected was Millar Gore Brittain. I subsequently wrote an article about him which appeared in the Bulletin of the Organization of Military Museums of Canada. I expanded upon that article for the Journal of the Canadian Aviation Historical Society. And I was still researching Millar Gore Brittain when I was in England in 1995 because there had been documents declassified respecting his wartime career. I was still interested.

And that done, I proceeded to tackle other artists. I wrote an article for the Canadian Aviation Historical Society and Canadian Geographic, as well. It's probably fairly lightweight in terms of academia. I just kept plugging at it.

Now, I had a couple of advantages. One was my background. Two was unfortunately, or fortunately from this point of view, I had no children. So that was not a distraction. Monique had a good career. We had occasion to travel. We had similar interests with respect to research so Monique has very much been a partner with me in research. She was virtually my partner when we were researching the Munnings exhibit material in 1985 and has continued to be over all of these years. So that made life easier.

Another thing is that this is Ottawa. This is the place where is the Directorate of History, which for much of the time…. Because as long as we were at 7 Murray Street, the Directorate of History was literally a ten-minute walk away in what was then the Olgivie furniture store. It no longer exists. And then there's the National Archives. There was an occasion in 1984 when Monique and I were visiting Victoria – beautiful place – and Monique said, "Would you like to retire here?" I said, "Only if they move the National Archives here." So that made life simple, as well.

Another thing was that one was given a free hand. Lee Murray, in particular, gave me my head and said, in effect, "Here's the war art section. Try to be happy." And I was. It was physically away, two blocks away, from the main museum. That gave a certain amount of freedom of action, as well. But one still had access to the War Museum library. And that librarian, Ludwig Kosche. They should put up a statue of Ludwig. He was a historian. He was a librarian. He was a good editor and severe critic. Much of what I wrote was edited by Ludwig. Does that answer your question?

INTERVIEWER: Other than the major publications, like books that you've done, tell us about some of the other journals and magazines that you've written for.

HALLIDAY: Well, I've written for somebody or something virtually from the beginning of my working career. When I was in the Air Force Historical Section, I can still recall the great pride I felt in the first article I had published in the Air Force magazine, the Roundel, which was called, 'The Flying Mailman', about the 168 Transport Squadron flying mail overseas during the war. And I wrote several articles for Roundel magazine and its successor, Sentinel magazine.

Then when I went down to Niagara area, I wrote regularly for the Canadian Geographical Journal on a number of subjects, usually associated with where Monique and I had traveled, like the Magdelin[?] Islands off the gulf shore of the St. Lawrence. But I also wrote a history column for the St. Catharines' Standard, which was published by a couple of other newspapers as well. It was weekly. It was little tidbits of Canadian history. History they never taught you, based on a course that I was teaching at the time. And that ran for about five years. So that was five times fifty-two articles. Quite a body of work there.

I was also something of a political commentator for the St. Catharines' Standard. What I would very often do would be visiting my in-laws in Montreal, go through a couple of months of newspapers that they had been saving for me. Read them through, get a notion, a sense of what the French press was saying, go back and pontificate in the St.

Catharines' Standard, about the state of politics in the province of Quebec. I think that was among the most shallow, the shallowest, of all the writing I ever did.

Coming back to Ottawa, of course, I continued writing for the Canadian Aviation Historical Society Journal, which I had been doing ever since 1964 when the Society was founded. But the War Museum, of course, gave me a few things to write about. After my retirement, of course, when we retire, we're free to write anything you want about anything you want without fear of being censored or disciplined by one's superiors. So I became a frequent letter writer to the Ottawa Citizen, mainly on museum matters but not exclusively. I had acquired an interest in medals in about 1991. I applied that within the War Museum and have since carried on. I'm a major contributor to the Air Force Association website on matters of honours and awards to Canadian Air Force personnel.

INTERVIEWER: Just for my curiosity, what did you teach at Niagara College?

HALLIDAY: I joined Niagara College in the second year of the college, the existence of community colleges in Ontario. At that time, the theory was that if you could sign your name with anything other than an X, you could teach anything. Consequently, in my first year of teaching, I would teach political science, economics and English literature. Political science I was trained for. Economics I remembered a little from Brandon College years ago. English literature was not something I was strong on and pupils were not strong on learning. There was nothing more difficult than teaching the unwanted to the unwilling.

INTERVIEWER: End of side one, tape one.

END OF SIDE ONE

INTERVIEWER: Canadian War Museum Oral History Program interview with Hugh Halliday. Tape one, side two.

HALLIDAY: Yes. I had been mentioning that my first year of community college teaching, I was teaching a variety of things. I thoroughly disliked teaching English literature. I was not particularly good either, for that matter, at teaching economics. But eventually, after about a year and a half, they had enough people who knew something about English literature that they could shuffle me off to my specialty, which was political science. And there were more courses that could use it. So that was great fun for me. But it took me about two years to get rid of the economics course.

Along the way, I was told – I think it was the first of December 1969 – I was told that I was going to teach a course in criminal law to potential police officers, starting fourth of January 1970. I didn't know boo about the law, about criminal law. I had taken a course – I had taken a couple of courses – in general law and constitutional law in university. So I knew how to read a case book. I knew how to read a statute book. I knew some of the

general principals of law. But beyond that, I didn't know, as I say, boo. So I spent my Christmas vacation – quote-unquote – divided between the law library at McGill University – because I was visiting family, Monique's family, there – and the Supreme Court library in Ottawa – because I was visiting friends in Ottawa. And I got back and I walked into the classroom on the fourth of January to deliver my first lecture. And I had just enough material for about one and a half weeks. And the course was going to be about 20 or 18 weeks. For the rest of that semester, I would be often asked a question and I would say, "I don't know, but I'll have the answer for you the next time we meet." So I would go into the classroom. I would deliver my lecture. And then I would rush down to the Welland County law library, look up the answer to the question that had been put to me and prepare for the next lecture down the way. I was never more than one week ahead of my students. It was wonderful. It was a learning experience for me. The law fascinated me. And I continued to teach criminal law to potential police officers for another couple of years until they hired a retired prosecutor, I think, to do this much more professionally than I could.

But I had been competent as a teacher of law and I was therefore tasked to teach the course in municipal law to potential municipal clerks. And that was basically about how do you write by-laws and what sort of bylaws can the county bring in, what are your limitations and what are your opportunities. And then I was asked to teach a course to journalists about journalism and the law. Now, everything builds on something else so that my first lectures to the journalists would be about the criminal law and the procedures in a court so that they would know how to cover a criminal trial. But then I would branch into other things, like the laws of libel, slander, the laws of pornography and the laws of copyright, all of which were very, very interesting. And all of which is experience that you can ultimately build in to any career. Any career, however remote.

And then along the way my natural bent and interest in history had gotten me into obscure history, histories of shipwrecks and railway wrecks and duels. And therefore I started to A) write the column for the St. Catherine Standard but also to teach a course at Niagara College on 'History They Never Taught You', which was, quite frankly, one of the most popular courses the college had, says he, patting himself on the back. And one of the gems I was able to teach for about three or four years at Algonquin College when I came back to Ottawa.

So that's how I came to be very much of a generalist. The community college made me much more of a generalist than any of my previous experiences.

Now, I'm just going to mention a couple of other people that – when it comes to writing – who were, in many ways, my mentors. They were people I dealt with when I was with the Armed Forces Historical Section. And one was Ron Dodds and the other was Donald Goodspeed. And I should add in a third, C.P. Stacey. Ron Dodds was a journalist, turned Air Force officer, turned historian. And he taught me a very great deal about how to write something in an interesting manner. He didn't understand some things. I don't think he ever wrote a footnote in his life. But he certainly knew how to write things in a vivid and colourful style that was still accurate. Don Goodspeed and C.P. Stacey,

together, taught me how to write in an academic fashion, how really to do research. Many people – well, you've heard the definition that if you steal from one book, it's plagiarism, if you steal from many books, it's research. Don Goodspeed and C.P. Stacey taught me that there was more to historical research then simply consulting earlier books, with all of their insights and all of their errors. They are people I should belatedly put, at least, in my personal history, personal hall of fame.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think was your main contribution to your time at the Canadian War Museum?

HALLIDAY: Well, my first couple of years at the War Museum were, in effect, wasted because I was -- some of my anticipated functions had already been assumed by Dick Malotte and because the functions that I was ultimately assigned to, I was, quite frankly, incompetent at. So the big change, of course, was November 1976, when I was appointed curator of war art. Again, it took me about a year, maybe a year and a half, to find my feet with that.

I think I made a fairly valuable contribution to that, not withstanding that I had no art training. I was certainly, by experience, a military historian. And that, quite frankly, is the difference between myself and Laura Brandon. Laura is an art historian, trained in the history of art, who curates a military collection. And I was a military historian, who was curating an art collection. Each of us bring our different insights. It's a matter of which emphasis do you want to put on the syl-lable.

And I think, in effect, the war art collection had had a very competent curator in Bob Wodehouse, who died. It had an interim curator in Bob's assistant and subsequently my assistant, Fred Azar. But Fred was an industrious clerk. He could bring nothing particularly original to the collection.

I think I brought to the collection my particular knowledge and my ability to express that knowledge of the collection in military terms. I couldn't tell cubism from impressionism but I could tell the significance of a particular painting in terms of a particular battle or campaign. So I think that was my contribution from '76-'77, when I really got on my feet, through to about '86, when I took over a more senior position of coordinating other curators and at which I turned out to be an incompetent. And therefore I took a voluntary demotion to become the curator of posters and photographs. And subsequently thereafter I was given a task as, an improved category, of historian. And as a historian, I think I made a fairly good contribution, again, by providing a great deal of formal knowledge with respect to the posters but subsequently with respect to the medals collection. And certainly the passion I picked up for the medals collection in 1991 has lasted with me to this day. I do not collect medals. I collect information. Again, I know how to organize it. That contribution that I made to the War Museum has continued to the general public long afterwards.

I'll tell you an anecdote. This goes beyond the War Museum again. I compiled a great deal of information on awards to the Air Force personnel. It's on a website. A

gentleman telephoned me one day from Montreal. He was French Canadian. He spoke very bad English but my French was even worse. The conversation went on in English. He said that his uncle had been the oldest of eight sons. He had joined the Air Force, gone overseas, won a Distinguished Flying Cross, come home and never spoke of it again. And he subsequently died. And this gentleman on surfing the website, had found the citation to his uncle's Distinguished Flying Cross. And he gathered all of his other uncles around and they read it together. And they had a good cry. And I'm very, very proud that I had given them that opportunity.

The Air Force Association nominated me for and I received the Queen's Jubilee Medal last year. It's the only medal I have until somebody nominates me for the Order of Canada. But it was because of my work on the honours and awards on the website. All of this research began back here at the War Museum. I'm very proud of that medal. I will not let it be buried with me. I shall insist that it be displayed in the War Museum, I suppose, sometime.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you very much for talking to us.

HALLIDAY: My pleasure. My pleasure. Always good to run off at the mouth about my favourite subject -- myself.

INTERVIEWER: End of interview.

TRANSCRIPT ENDS