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INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

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INTERVIEWEE: K.R.T. Terry Seeley

INTERVIEWER: J.R. Digger MacDougall

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K.R.T Terry Seeley

Interviewed 15 July 2004

By JR Digger MacDougall

INTERVIEWER: Canadian War Museum Oral History Program Interview with Terry Seeley, recorded on the 15th July 2004 in Ottawa. Interviewed by J.R. Digger MacDougall, Tape 1, Side 1.

Terry, how would you like to start off by just giving me some general background on yourself, how you got into the army and the Canadian Forces and we'll go from there.

SEELEY: I think probably the first significant point about my whole past is that I was an army brat. I was born March 25th, 1937, in Belleville, Ontario and then my father went to war. When he came back after the war, about 1946-47, he rejoined the military and we were then on the move. From there we went out west to Regina, Saskatchewan, and then back from Regina, Saskatchewan, to Shilo, Manitoba, back into Ontario. That would be in the '50's, '49-50, period. As an army brat, obviously, the military sparked my interest. I applied for and was accepted at CMR and I spent '57 to '59 in CMR. I did not go to RMC. I unfortunately failed my junior year so I transferred direct to the army and was sent to the Armoured Corps school. That's where my career really began in 1960. From there to regimental duty after I graduated. Periods of time at Camp Borden at the armoured corps school, '63 to '65. I was trained as an advanced tank gunnery instructor. Then I went on to recruiting, '65 to '67. Back to the regiment, '67 to '69. During the period of time at the regiment I was the Battle Captain of C Squadron and the adjutant. Then I went from the regiment in '69 to the staff college in Kingston for my psc. Then down to Halifax, of all places, as staff officer administration '69 to 1970. That was until 1970.

INTERVIEWER: Now you said psc. That's 'passed staff college.'

SEELEY: Passed staff college, yeah. This was the last year of the old army staff college.

INTERVIEWER: Which was the two-year program?

SEELEY: Well, it was the two years compressed into one.

INTERVIEWER: I see.

SEELEY: They did a phase-out before they turned it into the new Armed Forces College. In militia area headquarters, '70 to '72. Then, sheer luck, I was posted to Germany, '72 to '74 which I commanded A Squadron for those two full years. Back in to Canada '74 to '77 at the Combat Arms School in Gagetown as chief instructor for armour. Then in '77 back to Germany as Regimental 2IC. Home in '79 to NDHQ, Ottawa. From that period of time on until I retired, I was a staff officer at various appointments at National Defence Headquarters. And that was my career.

INTERVIEWER: When you were in Europe ’72 to ’74 with A Squadron, where were you and what exactly were you doing?

SEELEY: We were based in Lahr because the regiment had moved down from the north -- north Germany under the Brits -- and we were based in Lahr. Our primary responsibility in Lahr was to do training and preparation for the annual REFORGER exercises, the NATO exercises. We would move from Lahr every fall to REFORGER using tank trains out to the training area. Most of our training area was in the area of Nuremberg and Nuremberg north. That was under VII US Corps.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned you were stationed in Lahr. What other units were there and what would you say were the -- describe that part of Germany for us, basically.

SEELEY: Lahr south -- to answer the last part of your question, Lahr was in the Schwartzwald, the Black Forest, in south Germany, just south [*north:ed*] of Switzerland. Beautiful area, absolutely beautiful. Other units -- 4 Brigade was there, of course. 1 CAG, 1 Canadian Air Group. Up north -- or just north of us -- the Royal 22nd Regiment, 2nd Battalion I believe, was stationed just north of us. Other units in 4 Brigade would be -- the units I worked with, particularly A Squadron, was RCR. I was affiliated with the RCR as a sort of a parent squadron. So every time we went on exercise I usually came under command of the RCR. Other units that we would work with would be 4 Field Squadron, the engineer squadron. That would be about it in terms of the combat arms units. Of course, we had our affiliated artillery battery which was 4 RCHA, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery.

INTERVIEWER: How would you describe the organization of your squadron? Let’s look at organization, establishment, vehicles and equipment.

SEELEY: Okay, the organization was 4 troops, 4 tanks each, total of 16 tanks. A headquarters group based on 113 carriers and that was the Battle Captain and myself. Then I had a maintenance troop integrated. Within that maintenance troop was the vehicle maintenance people, plus I had a field kitchen and I had an MA -- medical assistant -- with ambulance. That’s the sort of structure of the squadron during that particular period.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of equipment would you find in a tank squadron in Lahr in those days?

SEELEY: In addition to the tanks, we had 113s. These were the American version of the light carrier and they were used for maintenance, plus they were the command and control vehicle for the squadron. Communications equipment, ANGRC radio sets, the American radio sets. In the command carrier we had a long-range radio capability and air-to-ground radio capability so we were capable of calling upon air support.

INTERVIEWER: What about weapons?

SEELEY: Weapons. The principle weapon was the 105mm tank gun on the tank itself, a very superb piece of equipment. The standard rifle, and the [indistinct] sub-machine-gun was the personal weapon. Plus the 9mm pistol that all officers carried.

INTERVIEWER: How would you describe the actual barracks in which your unit was stationed? The buildings, the amenities, that sort of thing, what were you…?

SEELEY: Probably beginning with the families, lived in Lahr in rented accommodation. It was controlled by the military so that it was quite nice, the place. The men themselves lived on base quarters -- single men, individual rooms. There was no doubling up. They were fairly modern ‘cause bear in mind we had just moved down from the north into almost brand new accommodation. Now a lot of the accommodation there was, of course, held by the French who occupied Lahr prior to our arrival. So, in effect, the French lived in the lap of luxury in many of the private accommodation that was turned over to us.

As I mentioned, the married quarters were on the economy and they were the old French married quarters so they had maid’s rooms and everything else. As I say, it was the lap of luxury in these particular buildings. The garrison buildings were, again, the old French garrison headquarters and so on. Now the Canadians put a fair amount of money into it at that particular period of time.

INTERVIEWER: You did renovations?

SEELEY: They did major renovations to the hospital and so on. But basically when we moved down from the north, down south, all that accommodation was under French control previously occupied by the French military. So, in effect, we just took it over and upgraded it as necessary.

INTERVIEWER: Terry, would you give us some idea of what your daily routine was? Your duties, your responsibilities, both in garrison and in the field.

SEELEY: In garrison every day involved physical fitness training. That was sort of normal. Then carried on into individual training such as tank gun drills and this sort of thing, the standard administration that you would expect when in garrison. And, of course, in garrison I had an office. Troop leaders, all four of them, were in an office of their own. When we headed into the field, my office, in effect, became my command carrier. In addition to my command carrier, I had a jeep which was my liaison vehicle. So when we moved into the field, we moved either as an entire squadron or an entire regiment taking all our kit and equipment with us. We lived on that kit and equipment.

INTERVIEWER: Did you always stay with the squadron when you were in the field?

SEELEY: I personally? With the squadron? I would often send troops off to do individual training but I was always with the squadron in the field. We would have attachments but these attachments would take place in terms of training -- for example, a company/squadron. And as I mentioned I had an affiliation with the Royal 22nd. Quite often when they’d go out -- the battalion would go out and exercise -- I would take the entire squadron out and deploy with them and train with them. So that was the kind of attachments that took place, this affiliation. I quite

often objected to the CO about the affiliation because in my opinion we should not designate a squadron to a specific infantry unit. What the designation should be when the chips hit the fan -- that whatever unit is deployed -- infantry unit, they get whatever is available. Whatever is capable of being placed under command. But we had this standard affiliation.

INTERVIEWER: Take us through a standard, routine day. You get up in the morning. You have breakfast in your PMQ -- your private married quarter -- and you head down to the garrison.

SEELEY: Normally I would have my breakfast, grab my bicycle because that's what I used as a means of transportation and ride about 10 kilometres to the base to my office in the garrison. That's when things began. The first thing, as I mentioned, the physical fitness training, which I always attended with the troops. That was expected of the officers. They would be with them. Then, when the physical fitness training was over, my business was back into my office to catch up on whatever paper work was necessary. Also to go and visit the squadron maintenance troops as the tanks were being repaired and fixed which was a continual problem with the Centurion. Then out to visit the troops who would be doing either individual training. But you have to bear in mind, this was a tank regiment that was parked on an airfield. And because the Centurion, in fact, couldn't be deployed outside of garrison, because of the tracks situation -- these were tracks that would dig the hell out of roads -- we couldn't do any formal training with the vehicles other than static. So these would be gun drills and so on. The first time we would have an opportunity to [be] actually moving the vehicles, in terms of tactical training, was when we got out into the field. We did not have a local training area where we could drive the tanks.

INTERVIEWER: So that was a limitation that the brigade up north didn't experience?

SEELEY: The brigade up north could trundle out and right into the back forty and do tank training. But our problem down in Lahr, as I say, we were parked on an airfield. Of course, the big joke on the airfield was we were continuously being accused of leaving FOD, foreign objects, on the runway. So we weren't allowed to do anything around or near the runways. We were physically parked in hardened shelters. That's where a lot of our tanks and storage went, in hardened shelters that were there when the Americans relocated, theoretically, in times of war with their air squadrons. That posed a problem for us. The other problem, of course, with the Centurion at the time, while we were in garrison we had what we called the dead track. The dead track, you can't deploy that, a tank with dead track out onto roads and so on because it would chew the heck out of the roads. When we went on exercise, one of the disadvantages we had to take off the dead track, put the live track on which was composed of steel plus rubber pads, so that we could deploy on the German highways. This was another problem with the Centurion tank itself.

In terms of sharing of information and passing information on down, I would normally have a formal O Group once a week. Usually on a Friday. That would be following the CO's O Group which he had once a week as well. I would pass on his details given to me but at the same time I would pass on my own particular details and things I needed to be done. Bear in mind we had a lot of tasks, administrative tasks, that would take place from time to time. For example, we had dog and pony shows -- visiting politicians. So a lot of those arrangements had to be made and discussed. These are kind of the administrative things that took place throughout the week.

Community efforts, just as an aside here, during that period of time,'72 to '74, I was the mayor of the Canadian community in Lahr. And by being mayor, of course, I had relationships and associates with the Germans, the German community at large, and the Burgermeister. Primarily as mayor of the Canadian community, my requirements then were to administer and keep close contact on the expenditure of funds by the various organizations that supported the Canadian community. These were non public funds, of course.

INTERVIEWER: Terry, what different sort of routine would you be going through daily in the field as opposed to what you've just described in garrison?

SEELEY: Normally when you deployed out to the field, you were given a specific requirement. You would carry out your unit training, your sub-unit training -- that's at the squadron level -- and unit training at the regimental level. Your routine during the day was, in fact, planning for that. You'd normally have a daily Orders Group as to what you were going to do the next day, what would be involved, where the areas that you were allowed to work in because you were parcelling areas out. For example, in the springtime, when we deployed to a place called Munsingen, that's where we did the sub-unit and unit training. That was a French training area north of us in Germany. If we were at Hohenfelds in REFORGER, a daily routine was again, a standard O Group in the morning for the next day's exercise or training. Moving out to participate in the various exercises. These would go on. Sometimes we'd have two or three days of continuous movement, in and out of harbours, hides, doing attack formations, withdrawals, that sort of thing -- the standard training that you would expect of a regiment or a squadron in preparation for, God forbid, war if it were ever to come.

Now at the same time, while all this was taking place, you have to bear in mind that maintenance was a very heavy requirement on the regiment. Tanks kept breaking down so your days were spent -- your maintenance organization -- fixing the darn tanks and your other vehicles. Because at that particular period of time in the '70s, as I said before, our equipment was quite old. We were, in effect, the laughing stock of the Americans because we had a vehicle called the ¾ ton truck. They hadn't seen that since World War II and it was kind of humourous.

INTERVIEWER: Terry, you mentioned your routines in Munsingen, Hohne and Grafenwehr, what specifically were you doing there?

SEELEY: In Grafenwehr, this was the American live fire ranges. We would deploy once a year to do troop firing and squadron firing at Grafenwehr. That was in 1972 and '73. But we started to have problems at Grafenwehr because the Americans were very restrictive on ranges. For example, they would only allow one tank to go down range firing. Of course we were trained to put an entire four tanks down a battle run at once. But for safety reasons the Americans would not tolerate this. So we switched from Grafenwehr to Bergen Hohne which was the old British ranges and far more adaptable to us because we could put all our tanks down the range. In fact, we could fire an entire squadron statically. So our routine at the firing ranges would be basically that. Roll onto the firing point in the morning, carry out your live ammunition firing drills. At the end of all the firing you'd critique. Prepare for the next day's firing. Because normally you spent about a week on the ranges. That happened, of course, when we were in Grafenwehr and when

we were in Bergen Hohne. The weapons fired at that stage would be the main gun and the various types of service ammunition -- AP, armour-piercing, high explosive and smoke. And the machine-guns, the co-ax and the top-mount. So that was the sort of activity there. No other form of training took place on those ranges other than live firing.

Now personal live firing, personal qualification in weapons, was normally structured at that same time where you do your pistol and you go through the gas chamber and so on. So that was that aspect of those two ranges at Grafenwehr and Bergen Hohne when they were used.

INTERVIEWER: Describe the weapons on the tank that you would be firing.

SEELEY: In the '70s we had the 50-calibre ranging machine-gun for the 105, the tank gun itself. We had the co-axial 7.62mm. The crew commander's top-mount was a 7.62. The type of ammunition, as I mentioned, was armour-piercing service -- in training -- smoke and HE.

INTERVIEWER: The routines you went through at Munsingen, Bergen Hohne and Grafenwehr were preparatory to further training that you did. Describe that training.

SEELEY: The training in these particular areas was designed to train the regiment to be capable of fighting. So the regiment has been trained tactically, live fire and so on, is ready then for deployment under, and to work within, the brigade. The brigade would deploy and the regiment would work within the brigade doing its tasks that would normally be assigned -- working with infantry battalions and so on. That was done on the major exercises such as REFORGER. So you are working within a brigade, division, corps context on the REFORGER series. The regiment then, in fact, it was a unit. You weren't doing any more individual training. You weren't doing unit training. You were now part of a greater combat organization which was, in fact, 4 Brigade at that time.

INTERVIEWER: And where did that training take place?

SEELEY: That training took place in and around … Nuremberg. The area around Nuremberg was astride Route 14, German highway 14. Generally up in there was our true area if everything hit the fan and we had to go for real. So we trained in that general area. Not specifically on the spots because obviously you didn't want the other side to know your exact battle positions and so on. That was the idea of that training in the Nuremberg area.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever uncover or see any Soviet activity while you were there?

SEELEY: Absolutely. I remember one occasion, not in the '70 period of time, although we knew the Soviet embassy was on the loose with people out spying on us, and so on. We knew that. We were always looking for their special cars. It wasn't until I became Regimental 2IC that I was involved with, in fact, detaining one of these gentlemen using my MP. I never knew what happened to him after that but apparently he was an East German, had come under some form of passport into Germany and was low grade collecting information on our particular unit.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned that your main tank was the Centurion. Was not a change in store, or did it not take place at this time?

SEELEY: What transpired was that in 1973 we had been apprised to the fact that the Centurion would be phased out and that we would acquire the British Scorpion. I remember walking with General Dextraze, Chief of the Defence Staff, who had just come from England, walking up to visit my squadron hide and he asked me what I thought about the Scorpion. Well, unfortunately, I wasn't very impressed. As I told him frankly the Scorpion would no where replace the Centurion. We were very concerned, many of us, that the Scorpion would start to be used as a tank because everyone declared -- every professional -- that the Scorpion was not, in fact, a tank.

INTERVIEWER: What was the Scorpion?

SEELEY: The Scorpion was really a reconnaissance vehicle. A light tank was really the best description. But it didn't have the firepower. A very small gun on it. I can't recall the particular size of that. But JADex told me to get off my high horse, which is kind of interesting because the man had a sense of humour. He said "You'll be happy to know, major, that you are not getting the Scorpion. I've just come from England and we've cancelled the contract. You are to say nothing about this." And he said, "You'll have to hang on to the Centurions a little longer." Which I gulped, because they were starting to fall apart. He said, "We will be looking at other types." At that stage we didn't know for sure if it would be German or American, whoever.

INTERVIEWER: So General Dextraze, or JADex as you said, was actually on your side in respect to staying with the tank?

SEELEY: Absolutely. It was a good point because you could see a change in morale of people because we knew, OK, we'll hang onto the Centurion a little longer. And we were having a lot of problems with it. Engine rebuilds were taking up to 48 hours to do. Every time you moved a tank out -- on one occasion I had every one of my tanks down with major problems, several of them with engines. As soon as the engine was replaced, drive it down the road for about 5 or 10 kilometres, it would blow that engine and another engine. It was very disheartening for the maintenance and the crews. So there was a reason we wanted to see a replacement for the Centurion. But there was also another reason. We knew that if the Scorpion was cancelled we could make the Centurion last a little longer, which we did. But it was frustrating.

INTERVIEWER: The Centurion tank was used at your gun camps and I understood you went to your gun camps by tank train. How did that happen from the southern part of Germany? How did you get to the north part where you were going to your gun camp and what were your experiences as a squadron commander with your own squadron?

SEELEY: The tank trains were transported by the Bundes Rail who were very expert at transporting tanks all over Germany. We had loading bays right in Lahr itself, on the base, and when the time came we would marshal the Centurions and the light tracked vehicles at the railhead. These would be loaded on under German expertise or oversight, on to the tank train, chained down. Also attached, when the trains were put together -- the various ones with the tanks on them, when they were put together --then a car for personnel would be attached to the train

itself. About a third to two thirds of, in my particular case, of a squadron would go by rail with the tanks. Bearing in mind that all the wheeled vehicles weren't loaded on the train. They were in fact driven up to north Germany. So you had to have crews back to do that.

INTERVIEWER: How long a trip was it by train and how long a trip was it by road?

SEELEY: By road you could do it in about half a day, three quarters of a day. By rail, because of the various switch backings that had to take place -- because the tank was basically too big, overhung both sides of the tank rail car, they had to do switchbacks from various areas when they started going up through the high mountainous areas of Germany. It would take in the vicinity of almost 24 to 36 hours. That would also be predicated on -- because we didn't necessarily have a priority on the German rail. If another priority requirement came along we would be put off on a siding until the system was clear again to take us.

INTERVIEWER: So your whole squadron went. How were you fed? What facilities did you have?

SEELEY: Very crude. The German tank didn't come with anything, so my squadron kitchen would be deployed on the tank train. They would actually use the Bunsen burners right in the rail car to prepare the food using the squadron cook. The trains were reasonably crude. They had comfortable enough seats but it was a pain.

INTERVIEWER: You've done a lot of training for war here, Terry. What sort of activities did the squadron personnel participate in while they were under your command? What would they have done for sports, related activities, recreation, leave?

SEELEY: We had regimental sports meets once a year. The troops trained for that because there were various regimental trophies at stake. But the one thing I did encourage them to do in my period as a squadron commander was to have troop leaders submit a plan for adventure training. Now this could be wide open. They could do anything within reason. For example, one young troop leader came to me and said he wanted to go down to Austria and do mountain climbing. Now, bear in mind not the kind of mountain climbing we're talking about with all the risks. We're just simply climbing high up on a mountain and look out over the Bodensee. I would encourage this and have him give me a plan. The idea was to get him to write a plan and issue orders and so on. All part of the training of the troop leader. But also to give him the chance to get away from Lahr, get to know his troop better. Get to understand his people better. And then, for me, it was to see how he, in fact, performed as a troop leader. Because I had to, obviously, write confidential reports once a year. Then I would go down, and that was the other excuse, I would pack my driver up and away we would go with my little tent trailer on the back and spend a couple of days with him in these various spots. That way we got to know a lot of the German countryside. We got to meet Germans from all walks of life. Communicate with them. I think because of that our relationships with the Germans were much better, I found in my tours, than say the Americans or the British were with the Germans. I think much of that is because we encouraged our people to communicate with the Germans and to live with them.

INTERVIEWER: Could you actually participate in any activities with German nationals, socially, sports, anything like that?

SEELEY: We had an affiliation with a German tank battalion. Every year the Germans would have various -- well they have their normal Oktoberfest and we would be invited to that. A bunch of people would go down and visit them. We had an affiliation with a British regiment, the Royal Dragoons. We would pack the officers up and some of the men and go visit our affiliated and allied regiment. We also had an American allied regiment. What we would do is we would exchange tank crews. I would exchange one of my crews with my affiliated company in this American battalion. We would take that crew and put them on our tanks and let them do firing at Bergen Hohne. The Americans would take my crew on that tank battalion and let them fire the American tank. That's the other kind of activities that took place with our affiliated units.

INTERVIEWER: How about when you were mayor of the Canadian community? What sort of interaction would you have had with German nationals at that time?

SEELEY: The only relationship then would be with, in fact, the German Lahr mayor, the Burgermeister, and his staff. Because it was kind of a limited relationship. We didn't contribute anything to the German community in terms of finances or anything else. It was just a fact that as the mayor of Lahr I had to control a fairly large budget of money that was allocated for Canadians' family recreational support. For example, the centre that ran the buses, the community centre -- in other words the movie house that ran the community buses and did all that planning -- that came under my control as well. My relationship was more with the Canadian community as opposed to the Germans. We did have a German-Canadian club and I would normally attend their meetings as the chairman of the Lahr Canadian community. But that Canadian club had its own German-Canadian president and so on. That was really to foster better relationships with the town of Lahr and the German population. So that was the only sort of relationship that I had with them.

INTERVIEWER: I understand that with what you've described as your participation with your squadron in adventure training. The fact you were with them in the field, you were very close would be my appreciation with the officers and men. How would you rate the officers and men of your squadron in relation to, let's say, what you saw back in Canada, with other units that you participated with in Germany? What were your NCOs and officers like?

SEELEY: I would say that they were the cream of the crop. Particularly the NCOs. I never had a bad NCO. My officers were just first class. But you have to bear in mind that we really ate together, slept together, trained together, moved together and we were not influenced by external tasking. In other words, our specific task in Germany was to be ready to go to war. People didn't come along and, say, take two or three or four of our people and send them to the Combat Arms School for training. So I always had a full squadron. And the troops were always full. They knew their task. They knew the daily routine and so on. There were no extraneous things to detract from that. That made a heck of a lot of difference. The real challenge for a squadron commander and his officers was morale. To maintain morale of course was the training and the participation of your troops and your presence, encouraging their feedback. I did a number of things to do that. I would sit my troops down and say, "OK, guys, we're gonna attack that hill out in the middle of

the field." I would ask a little corporal or a little trooper, I'd say, "You know, how would you do this?" They felt they had a stake in it. I think that was why the relationships were very good.

INTERVIEWER: What was the state of discipline among your soldiers, your NCOs, your officers, both in garrison and in the field?

SEELEY: We never had very many problems. There were no drug problems to the very best of my knowledge. Although booze was a kind of a free element and there was a hell of a lot of it in the field. We never had problems with people misusing it which was, again I suppose, in retrospect, we should have experienced more. But we didn't. I say that in light of what's transpired in Somalia. Again, we would come down hard on anybody who stepped out of line anyway.

INTERVIEWER: What does that mean?

SEELEY: That would mean that I had disciplinary powers and if he was guilty then fine, he was going to get the book thrown at him. But normally what we tried to use which, again, was technically illegal, we had sergeant-major's punishment. So that if there was something, misdemeanor took place -- a guy was late for work or he had one too many and was a bit insubordinate -- I normally would allow the sergeant-major to deal with it as opposed to formal charge. My philosophy was if it's serious, and really serious, and the sergeant-major recommends that this guy needs to have his knuckles rapped, then that's what would happen. In the case of the CO, I would only parade a man if it was something severe. In other words, if I had no choice such as impaired driving because that was a formal charge. So those charges were dealt with in the traditional sense of the Canadian criminal code and the guy would get the same as a guy would get back here.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have any deaths or serious illness in your squadron when you were there?

SEELEY: No, not that I recall.

INTERVIEWER: How about touching on the ratio of single personnel to married personnel and relationships with dependents? How did they get on in Germany and what can you tell me about their adjustment to being outside of Canada?

SEELEY: There were those that adjusted when they arrived very, very quickly because I think there were excellent support services to look after them. Because as soon as a chap arrived on the ground posting in, he was usually on his way and he would spend two and three months out in the field during that year. So the families coped quite well. I think the reason the families coped quite well, as I've indicated, because all the support services were there. We had good doctors, who looked after our dependants in the military hospital. We had the Canex which was very, very well equipped in providing all the foods and all the normal things that folks would want back home. Accommodation was good. So, all in all, I think the families kind of enjoyed it. But, I say, there will always be some who arrived and really couldn't hack it. These would be young brides, new brides. But from areas in Canada, the married people from small communities that

didn't have that kind of thing, so they might find it a bit difficult. It was very rare when a family had to be sent back and normally the whole family was sent back. But that was very rare and I don't think it ever happened in the regiment. I had heard of it happening in a couple of other battalions.

INTERVIEWER: What was the ratio of singles and married personnel in your squadron?

SEELEY: I think at that stage I had about 25 per cent of my squadron strength -- about 25 per cent were single. But most of the folks going over there were married. Bear in mind that the guys put into the troops, put into the regiment, had to be fully trained. Well, by the time you've gone through all the training back home and you're thoroughly qualified, then you've got some time in and usually you're married.

INTERVIEWER: What impact would having that large a number of married people in your squadron have on squadron discipline and morale?

SEELEY: If the family was there, I think it goes without saying, is better. Because the guy comes home at the end of his training day, his family is there and he doesn't get into trouble. So the more married it is -- the single people, unfortunately, can get into trouble because Germany is quite open. There are a lot of pubs, a lot of drinking is possible and so on. So the single guy has very little to do. Married people were preferred in my estimation. But the one problem that always concerned me was with respect to the married people was, what to do if we had to go for real. What's going to happen to the families?

INTERVIEWER: Did you not have any sort of escape plan? Did you not have a repatriation plan for dependants?

SEELEY: There was one called Operation MAYFLOWER but in reality most of us knew and realized it would never work. Because bear in mind that if you start whipping the family out under those conditions that could quicken the pace of leading towards a war. So in fact, we all realized -- at least the officers realized -- that MAYFLOWER was probably not a go. What we had thought about was, individually, alternate plans. So the alternate plan was to advise the wife that if something happened and we knew it was for real. They were to pack up, grab their passports and head for Switzerland. Or a neutral country. Sad to say, that was a reality. A political reality or this thing wouldn't work. I knew even more so about that because I became responsible for that plan when I came back to Canada.

INTERVIEWER: Operation MAYFLOWER was designed to evacuate dependants. There was another operation I recall. It was Operation PENDANT. What was that all about?

SEELEY: Operation PENDANT was the reinforcement operation. You have to bear in mind that the brigade, and the regiment in particular, was not at full strength. The expectation was, with sufficient warning, reinforcements would be flown over from Canada. What that meant was that one squadron was a dormant squadron. One tank squadron was a dormant squadron. So, in effect, the regiment only had two tank squadrons and a reconnaissance squadron and the third squadron personnel was back here in Canada. If the proverbial hit the fan then they would be

flown over onto the tanks. Again, another interesting plan, but one that in my opinion was ridiculous because I don't think it would have worked. Again, because it would have quickened the pace of events leading up to the war which politically never would have been acceptable.

INTERVIEWER: Well, did you in fact have crews fly over?

SEELEY: We did do on those exercises, yeah. We would fly the crews over for the REFORGER series. So crews would be brought over to deploy on those tanks, when it could be afforded. I think it only happened once while I was squadron commander as I recall that we actually flew them over and then, again, they couldn't deploy the complete squadron so it may have only been three troops, maybe. There was a problem with that.

INTERVIEWER: Interview with Terry Seeley. End of Side 1.

END OF SIDE ONE

INTERVIEWER: Canadian War Museum Oral History program interview with Terry Seeley. Tape 1, Side 2.

Terry, before we proceed with the interview I would like to just confirm that we have both signed the legal release, is that correct?

SEELEY: That is correct.

INTERVIEWER: And for the benefit of the transcriber would you just state your name and spell it please?

SEELEY: My name is Kenneth Raymond Terry Seeley.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you. What did you know of the operational plan of your unit or brigade?

SEELEY: As a squadron commander I would be aware of the training plan -- the annual training plan -- and any of the operational plans that would be put out by the brigade. As well as having the regimental training plan, which was annual, and any of the brigade operational plans. That sort of worked it all the way down because at each level there was an op plan and a training plan.

INTERVIEWER: Did you know where you were going to go to if war broke out?

SEELEY: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: And did you do a reconnaissance of that area?

SEELEY: Oh yes. On reconnaissance, we're down into real areas. We tried to do them under the disguise of a training exercise. Obviously not to betray where the real areas were and that each year this was done. This was done prior to or during REFORGER, that the officers would go and check their areas out. Refresh in their mind as to how they would deploy then. But we would keep no record or information on that.

INTERVIEWER: You did a lot of training, then, for war while you were in Germany. What tactics did you use? Were you sort of involved with defence, withdrawal, attack -- or how does that work?

SEELEY: We had to train for everything. We had to train for all phases of war. Advance, advance to contact, defence, withdrawal and attack. So all of this was trained and you begin that training, in fact, at the unit/sub-unit level -- in other words the troop level -- working all the way up. Then you practiced these various phases of war when you went into your unit training and when you went into brigade training and the corps and divisional exercises. There were also TEWTs, by the way -- tactical exercises without troops -- conducted by the brigade. Usually the brigade had a tactical exercise without troops once a year. Invariably I got nailed to write these damned things. I would write one for 4 Brigade, all aspects of it, and conduct it. The same thing. The TEWTs would be conducted by the division that you would be supporting and within the corps. There would be these kind of exercises taking place in addition to the actual deploying where you just go out with your command vehicles.

INTERVIEWER: Was there nuclear, biological and chemical warfare training that you participated in?

SEELEY: That whole aspect was very important and, yes, we did it. The individual drills were done in garrison. The gas chamber was used. Everybody had to pass that once a year. We had particular suits, NBCW suits, on exercise. They would have periods where you would have to wear the full suit. They would call that an NBCW attack had taken place. Yes, this was an important aspect. We knew that the Soviets were very capable and well structured to use those systems.

INTERVIEWER: Just on the whole matter of nuclear, biological, chemical drills -- NBC drills, do you think there was more emphasis placed in Germany than what we saw in Canada?

SEELEY: Yes, because it was a given that we knew who the enemy was and what he was capable of doing and using. And therefore the training in preparation for that had to take place. Quite often people forget that nuclear was also fairly high on it because we had nuclear exercise up to the point of actually saying that the weapon had been deployed. But it would never get deployed because politically there were problems. Exercise deployed, there were problems dealing with that. It was not a popular subject.

INTERVIEWER: You've provided an excellent description of training and NBC training and you've given a lot of background on REFORGER. What units were you attached to beyond 4 CMBG?

SEELEY: The brigade itself would be attached, or placed under operational command or control either to II German or VII US Corps. But within the brigade we weren't attached to any other units, although we would often receive under command or under control specified American or German units, such as tank bridgelayers [tape skip and fade] or American mine clearing units, this sort of thing. They would come under 4 Brigade control and then, for planning purposes, they might be given to the tank regiment who would, in fact, say where they wanted them to be employed. But we were never attached. I was never, nor the regiment to the best of my knowledge, placed under command directly of another foreign unit. The brigade remained as a structured, total entity.

INTERVIEWER: Following your first tour in Germany you returned home and, I understand, worked at the Armoured Corps School. You went into Gunnery Squadron and then you did a lot of work that led up to the procurement of the Centurion replacement. How would you describe all of that work that you did?

SEELEY: First of all, it wasn't Gunnery Squadron, I was appointed to the Combat Arms School as chief instructor of the armoured section. At that stage -- this was in 1976 -- and about that period of time the determination was made to buy the Leopard -- to buy a Canadian Leopard. Have it made, in effect. In the interim, to borrow German Leopards. Based upon that, it was decided that I would be sent back to the regiment as Regimental 2IC, primarily to bring that tank into the regiment and do the conversion, arrange for the conversion programs and so on, of the regimental personnel to handle that new tank. And to get rid of the German loaned Leopards. That my period of Regimental 2IC which was actually involved in that whole process was '77 to '79. And still doing the Regimental 2IC's job and still going out on exercises, REFORGER and so on. Because there is only one 2IC and there's only one guy who can replace the CO when he goes down.

INTERVIEWER: Let's go back to the time you were at the school and were involved in attending trials on the tank. What was it? What type of work were you actually doing that led to the procurement of the Leopard in Germany?

SEELEY: The procurement decision had already been made. The determinant as to what the turret would look like, had already been made. So a Leopard training working group was formed involving Belgium, Germany, Australia, the Netherlands, Denmark, Canada, and the Italians, because all these countries had bought the Leopard or were acquiring the new Leopard. This working group was designed to begin to look at problems with conversion training, with mechanical/technical problems with the new tank as it was being developed. Because bear in mind the Leopard C2 was much different than the old Leopard 1. Each of these nations had their own style of turret.

We didn't go and buy a German Leopard 2. What we did is, each country said, "We want to buy the German Leopard but we want the following in the case of the turret. We're happy with your automotives and so on." The idea was that we had to look at how we were going to do this conversion, who would write the manuals. For example, the Australians translated the manuals from German to English. Canada then got them from the Australians. Probably had to pay some price. Then, of course, we had to translate them into French. That was another issue. So that was

the purpose of this Leopard working group. You would attend the meeting, say, "OK, we discovered in dealing with lasers, the laser power, control system, we have discovered this problem. Have you? Who has discovered this problem? And have you discovered it, how did you deal with it?" Individually we'd come back to our own countries and say, "OK, here's the fix or whatever." That's what that training working group was about. Then, after that, it was just to go over there, live on the ground. By then the tank was in its final stages, our tank the C2 was in its final stages of development. Then my problem was to liaise with Krause Mafi in Munich as the tank was being fitted, and particularly the turret. Also, then Wagman designed the turret and then to visit Wagman and watch the firings take place, the test firings. Then the last time I went to Wagman up in Bergen Hohne was to accept the first tank turret and say, it's a go.

INTERVIEWER: And were you actually posted in Germany at that time?

SEELEY: I arrived in Germany at that time.

INTERVIEWER: So this takes us into your second tour in Germany. You're posted, I believe as second-in-command of the regiment?

SEELEY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Tell us about that.

SEELEY: Second-in-command, as I think everyone understand, really means what it means. It means it's the alter ego of the CO. But he is also responsible for the finances of the regiment. He is responsible for the training of the regiment and the training of the CO. In other words, the Regimental 2IC writes the training plan and so on. Then in training and in battle when the CO has to rest, he takes it over. When the CO is fighting the regiment, the Regimental 2IC is back receiving orders from brigade or higher as required. That's basically the functions I performed and practised on the exercises in those days. Then, in addition, to ensure that the training plan for the conversion of our crews on to the new Leopard took place. To ensure that the firings were programmed into the ranges, live firing and so on. That's what I did as Regimental 2IC.

INTERVIEWER: What did that conversion training look like? What was involved?

SEELEY: Well, you started off, really, with the driver mech courses -- teaching the people in Lahr how to drive the Leopard, which is quite simple. There would be the gunnery courses at the various levels. And the new dimension to the gunnery courses now is the introduction of the laser ranging system. We had to train people how to use that system.

One of the problems, as I mentioned previously, we were on an airfield and we had no range that we could use the laser ranging systems. I approached the base safety officer and the base commander personally and said I would like to do laser drills into the hardened shelters. These are the ones for the F-104s that were normally empty. I was given that permission. Then the next thing I know after we started to do the drills, we had a Herc coming in and I was told when you start to do laser drills you must advise the air tower that you're doing this. A Herc was coming in. It was interesting because I watched this Herc one day coming in, low level getting ready to

land. We'd notified the tower we were lasing. The tower notified the pilot. The pilot veered off like a scared rabbit, took this damned Herc and went away. Next thing I get an order there will be no more lasing, which was stupid because there's no damage lasing into this bunker. Furthermore, it's so small that it's impossible to get damage to the eye. But the fear of laser in the '70's, the late '70's, really was amazing. That's what we normally did on the training. And then there were loader drills, obviously, using the turret and so on. We had to do all these dry drills back in Lahr. And we couldn't do any laser drills until we got to the open ranges because it had been cancelled by the base safety officer.

INTERVIEWER: Now, when you say 'drills', what specifically are we talking about?

SEELEY: Engaging targets, the various type drills to engage. In other words, you lase. You set the sight first of all on the target. You lase. That fixes the range into the computer chip. Then you press the tit and a round goes down range. You program in, you set in, to your fire control system the type of ammunition. If it's a tank engagement, wap, wap, wap. The laser is so good -- in fact, the range is so capable, that you really only need to fire one round as opposed to the old three round technique we used to use for AP. This was the idea behind the laser. That maintained phenomenal accuracy.

Then we had, of course, the new ammunition. Now we no longer use high explosive anti-tank. But they had HESH and smoke and AP. We had cut down on the types of ammunition. There was no longer the ranging machine-gun because the laser had replaced that. Then we had the two machine-guns which were German-made, 7.62s, on the turret ring and on the co-ax. Plus they had smoke for the dischargers.

INTERVIEWER: Just for clarification of individuals listening to this tape in the future, HESH is 'high explosive squash head' and AP is…?

SEELEY: Armour Piercing.

INTERVIEWER: Good, thank you.

SEELEY: Armour Piercing, Fin Discarding. APFSDS. Armour piercing sabot fin discarding. [*actually, armour-piercing fin stabilized discarding sabot -- APFSDS: ed*] So that's another type AP round but, basically, it's a solid shot round.

INTERVIEWER: And that was used against other tanks.

SEELEY: Yes, it was used to kill other tanks.

INTERVIEWER: With the arrival of the Leopard, what did that change within the regiment? Within the Royal Canadian Dragoons?

SEELEY: It was a phenomenal change because, bear in mind, that the Centurion was clapped-out and it was very slow in terms of speed, breaking down all the time. All of a sudden, we get a new tank that we could swing it all over the battlefield. That fast. It was extremely fast. And you

could manouevre it. For example a limitation was placed upon the new Leopard, 1200 kilometres per vehicle. Jimmy Fox, brigade commander in the first year, and he used to drive me just absolutely insane. On one or two exercises, by the time REFORGER was over we were well in excess of 1200 to 2000 kilometres on the vehicle. Not with the Centurion. You were lucky on an exercise using the Centurion to get any more than about maybe 100 kilometres, 150, 200 kilometres out of it. It was the capability of swinging this thing all over and use it in the traditional sense, role, where you could disperse it and bring it together rapidly and use the entire regiment as a hammer.

INTERVIEWER: And you could probably use it on German roads as well.

SEELEY: And you can drive it on German roads with no damage to the roads because it had a live track. You could then use the German tank transporters. And we used to use with the Centurion a thing called the Antar. It was run by a Polish tank regiment. The Antar was a monster. It couldn't drive on the autobahns. Nor could it, in fact, get off the autobahns on the various exits and entrances to the autobahn. [*not technically correct; BAOR units moved on autobahns regularly: ed*] Whereas the Germans had a tank transporter called the FAUN, and the Leopards fitted that beautifully. You could take it anywhere. You could also load an entire regiment on a German FAUN tank transporter in about a quarter of the time it took the Antars to load the Centurion on. [*loading time depended upon the expertise of the units involved: ed*] You had a whole different… you were given speed. And there was a kind of elan that generated into the regiment with that. Because we also knew then we had a gun that was absolutely superb. It was the same tube as the Centurion but we had a fire control system that was deadly. And we also introduced then -- we had a powerful searchlight. We had the latest version of image intensification and IR. We had all these capabilities. Plus a brand new tank. A tank that was extremely reliable. The maintenance people loved it because you could do an engine change in 14 minutes with a good crew. As I mentioned, the Centurion would take up to maybe 48 hours or longer to do a change. But the Leopard is all based on quick disconnect couplings and the engine and the transmission are an integral unit. You just whip it out and put a new one in and away you go.

INTERVIEWER: This must have had quite an impact on morale?

SEELEY: Absolutely. Where I really saw it was, in fact, we went up to… When I received the new Leopards, I had to put them through their checklist, to verify acceptance. One of them was deep fording -- shallow fording and deep fording. That's where you ford the tank totally under water. You'd see the kids, love to get in that damned thing and take it under water. It was just absolutely amazing. The only problem was, on one occasion, I was watching from the far side of the deep pond and I explained to everybody when you deep ford, as soon as you come out, this thing has a very powerful pump on it. You purged the water because the water gets in the engine compartment. You purged the tank. I said, if you don't it's going to be sucked right back into the engine intakes. Don't turn it off. Leave the engine running until the pumps complete. And I saw this… oh, oh. The steam just came bellowing out of the tank. I raced into the jeep, raced around there. Finally saw the sergeant had caught it fast enough and turned it back on. But I figured that the engine was damaged. I went to my parent 294 Panzer Battalion CO, a very good individual, and I said, "I really have a problem because I don't trust that engine." He said, "I'll tell you

what," he says, "I'll take your engine. I'll put it through our rebuild system. Nobody's going to know about it and we'll take my engine. I've got a brand new one here. Put it in your tank." And somewhere in the Canadian system to this day there's mismatched serial numbers and I'm absolutely convinced that we never said anything. That shows the cooperation with the Germans.

INTERVIEWER: I was just going to say that that shows the excellent relationship that you had with the Germans, now that you had their tank.

SEELEY: Then we took it to the next dimension when we fired the CAT competition -- Canadian Army Trophy competition. We were having problems with the system and I didn't know what it was. We had all our bore sighting would tell you the gun was on. The drills tell you the gun was on. As soon as we hit the firing point, we were missing. All over the place. And this is a brand new ….We'd just won, two years prior, the Leopard 2 CAT. We were feeling very embarrassed. We didn't know what the problem was. I remember saying, "OK, well, check it with the boresight." I personally boresighted every one of those damn tanks just before they fired. Fine. Soon as they fired. First round, way off. I said, "The only possibility," -- and I talked with NATO experts who were the turret experts. And they said, "Look, got to be computer chip maybe." So I went to my German friend. I said, "We're firing your ammunition in competition. Can I make a little deal? I'll give you my ammunition for competition tomorrow, if I can have some of yours to fire. That would put my mind at ease about that computer chip, 'cause it's a German chip." He said, "By all means." The next morning, up on the firing point all wrapped in blankets from my German 294 Panzer Battalion CO comes all the ammunition to fire that day. Same damn problem. That was the German cooperation. He told me, "Terry," he said, "the Germans are on view here today. The Leopard is on view. You got a Leopard." He said, "It's up to me to do as much as I can help." And that was the kind of cooperation with them. But also because we were part of this Leopard training working group. We had something in common.

INTERVIEWER: Terry, you just told me an interesting story concerning the receipt of the new Leopard, would you just repeat it for the tape?

SEELEY: It's kind of humourous. The first Leopard came in. It was off-loaded from the tank transporter in Lahr. A young trooper got in to drive it up to the unit and he was nailed by the military police with a radar for speeding. Speeding in a 30 kilometre zone. He must have been doing round about 55 – 60 kilometres an hour. That speeding ticket is now, or was, affixed to the wall in Lahr. But that shows you the kind of speed the thing had. But also, what would really turn the young troopers on was a Cadillac of a tank.

INTERVIEWER: Terry, just describe the Leopard for us now so the listener has an opportunity to really understand this new piece of equipment that the Canadian Army had just received.

SEELEY: From the back end up, it was a Daimler Benz super-charged diesel engine with an integrated automatic transmission. In the turret, had the British 105 [mm] L5 A1, as I recall the number 2. In other words the business end, of the gun. It had a Belgique fire control system which was fully automated. Feeding that fire control system, a fire control computer, was a wind sensor, a cross-wind sensor on the back at the top of the turret, a temperature sensor. And any variations in the gun laying was all fed to the computer. The computer would then determine

where that round should go. The machine-guns were German because we bought with us the same Germans we had on the Leopard A2. Brought them in and that was the top mount and the side mount. Smoke grenade dischargers standard on the tank. Powerful search light, American Zenon -- extremely powerful. Infrared and image intensification. These were all fitted on to the vehicles. It was a pretty well-balanced vehicle and at that time very capable of taking on whatever the Soviets had.

Armament-wise, it was the best in terms of armament that was available at that time, in terms of protection. Mind you that has changed since but so has the technology. Can't think of much else about it. Radios were all upgraded to American radios. We left the British radios, the old C42 set, after we gave up the Centurion. We went to all American radios and just kept up with the improved type radios which in the new Leopard were just dial the frequency and it was that fast.

INTERVIEWER: In your experiences as a squadron commander in the previous tour, you were not able to move the tanks on the airfield. Did the Leopard give you that capability?

SEELEY: No. We still had the same problem because the air force doesn't understand. They have one concept in mind called FOD. The Leopards, of course, they were all concerned that if you drove down a runway, or a side runway, in between the cement pads there is a caulking substance of a tar nature and the tank, in fact, would rip some of that out. That would become FOD. So we could not manouevre the Leopards now, which could move on the German roads, couldn't manouevre them on the roads.

Now as an interesting aside with the Leopard, I got wind of the fact when I was acting CO one Remembrance Day, that the Guns weren't available. They were off on exercise, and couldn't fire the ceremonial salute for the Last Post. I approached the brigade commander and I said, "Ah, that's easy. The regiment can do it using the tanks." Well, you know, you hear the pooh, pooh. That's not possible. You guys can't do that sort of thing. The brigade commander, Pat Greives, said, "You do it." We got permission to drive the tanks up and down Lahr and we parked them and we did the firing. This was another thing that the troops said, "Hey, we can do these things. We don't need the Guns anymore." That was another interesting aside.

INTERVIEWER: Terry, I'd like to go back to the Canadian Army tank gunnery competition. Tell us about the CAT trophy and the impact that it had on the unit and what actually happened.

SEELEY: Well, if you can look at, say, when we took over the Leopard [C?] 2 , the transformation from Centurion to Leopard [C?] 2 was a matter of months, a very few months. And then to walk into the Canada Cup and win against the Americans and the Brits and the Germans and whoever else was firing at the time, was a phenomenal feather in the cap of the regiment. But it also pointed out very starkly that the common training -- tank training and gunnery drills and so on -- if you have those drills you can move very quicky into a new vehicle. If you are well grounded in those. So it did that.

The unfortunate part of the whole CAT concept is it became a political problem. Because the Americans could not be seen to have lost to some of their NATO nations so there was a lot of really bad blood generated through CAT. For example, there was specific training that you were

allowed to do. We knew the Americans cheated and gave loads of information to their tank crews, selected tank crews. They packed their crews to try and win. The other nations did that. Canada had always been very limited because they were cheap in terms of the ammunition they were given to train and the amount of firing time we could get. The American units came out of Grafenwehr to do the firing on CAT and they had all year long. We had no open range. We had nothing, as I've already indicated, to do it in Lahr. So we had strikes against us.

I had also attended in my career -- this would be the third or fourth CAT over that period of time. And I saw the kind of thing that was hard on the troops. Again, I'm not bad-mouthing the Americans but pointing out the difference in training. I watched American crews, as soon as they started to lose at the last CAT competition, prior to that helicopters would fly in. All the damned senior generals in Europe would come in and talk to their crews. As soon as a crew started to lose they disappeared. I watched crews being sick beside -- American crews, being sick. Not the Brits. The Brits were, you know, devil-may-care. Nor the Germans. The Germans were very, very professional. But the idea with our troops --as I say, it's not if you win, it's you do your damned best. And our crews did. They worked their butt off. Our guys went and the generals would go talk to them and say, "Look, guys, you've done a good job. You've lost this time. That's fine."

So this started to become a competition. CAT in the Leopard [C?] 2 when it was reinstituted became a competition in terms of tank design, tank systems and then, coincidentally, crew training. It changed from the original concept. Then they started to manufacture the rules -- to change the rules because Canada then lost control of it. We couldn't really, technically, compete in the new CAT after the Leopard 2 because Ottawa would not provide the ammunition for training. Or give you the time and space to be able to do it. That then became, for most of us, we just said, "Hey, get out of it." I guess that's one of the reasons why Canada finally pulled out of the whole thing. It was costing too much. There was not too much faith politically back here in what the troops were capable of doing. But had we had the kind of support in the second CAT II, the technical support, which came from a distance through messages. Had we had that kind of support on the ground we probably could have identified the problem with respect to the last CAT that cost us the competition and rectified it right then and there. Because our guys were pretty good. And the thing that would have rectified it, had we known it at the time, was wrapping the sight linkage with a heating device.

INTERVIEWER: You would have been in a position to see what happened. What impact all of this had on the morale of the unit?

SEELEY: It didn't affect the morale of the soldiers. They knew it was a damned fine tank that we had. We went into it prematurely. That was their opinion. Because we hadn't ironed all the bugs out so we went in with one hand behind our back. That was that. But it didn't really affect the Canadian troops. I think it affected more guys back here in Ottawa on the buy program. But it certainly didn't affect our troops.

INTERVIEWER: When you returned to Germany -- you were a squadron commander on the previous tour -- you now return to Germany as second-in-command. What differences did you

see in the regiment, the equipment -- outside of the tank which now has been replaced -- the officers, the men, discipline, morale, that sort of thing?

SEELEY: The regiment then, at that stage we still had the Leopard loans, the Leopard 2[*German Leopard 1s ?: ed*] on loan. I was the one who was supposed to design a program to turn them back as we phased in the new one. The regiment was on a very high. Now a lot of this was attributable to we had won the CAT, won the competition. One or two of the squadrons had won competitions at brigade sports meets. So the regiment was on very much a high. And, of course, the other thing, too. One can't forget the influence of a commanding officer. This was at the time was Clive Milner who was an effective communicator with the troops and they loved him. And all the squadron commanders were good. The combinations were right. You had a good CO. You had good squadron commanders. So that made the difference. And the regiment, as I say, was really on a high. That permeated all the way down into even the mechanic who now was not spending 48 hours fixing a damned Centurion. When in a matter of a few minutes he can identify a problem with a Leopard because it tells him. It diagnoses it and he can repair it. There's a whole different change. What made it very difficult, because the next year a new CO has to come in and take over a regiment that is very much on a high. And what's a new CO going to do? How's he going to take over from this unit now and take it another notch up? So that's some of the problems for the future.

INTERVIEWER: What would you say was involved in adaptation and learning here with the new main battle tank, the Leopard?

SEELEY: What had really taken place, the new technology introduced something that was different was the laser and laser rangefinder. That was a new technology. But teaching how to use it, as I found out from the Israelis, the best gunners are the one that they go and hire from the arcades, the video arcades. That, in effect, they picked up there very quickly. Because the gun system -- the gun itself is exactly the same. The main tube was on the Centurion, so nothing was new. Your gun drills don't really change. Your loader drills don't really change. Your communication drills don't really change. Tactics don't really change. So really in terms of the work within the turret, you have a searchlight, the Centurion had a searchlight. The only difference was, in fact, the laser. We had to devise a system so that people could do laser training. You may recall -- the old gunnery hands will recall -- when we used a .22 small calibre to do indoor range training. Well, what we designed -- and it was an idea of mine -- to do laser training using Polaroid camera film. We gave the design back to Ottawa and that was adopted. Then you could take and flip this Polaroid thing out at a measured distance out front and use it in a sub-calibre sense that we used to use the .22. But do laser training drills using that. What you're looking for in the laser training drills is the consistency of lay. If you had all the little dots burned into the piece of film you knew you had a good lay on it. So nothing much else changed in terms of the turret. All the drills were basically the same. You learn some new fire control orders because you had the different type ammunition but that's …..

INTERVIEWER: Terry would you describe now any difficulties you had with the Leopard -- other difficulties?

SEELEY: The only other difficulty we had was the fact that the Leopard had a mileage limit of 1200 kilometres per year. And it wasn't fleet mileage. Each individual tank was not supposed to exceed that. And that 1200 was imposed by National Defence Headquarters. That brought to mind a requirement. Since we were on Lahr we had an extensive, 600, 700, 800 kilometre move to get to exercise areas. As you can see the impact that would have on tank mileage.

When we used rail it wasn't a problem because the Leopard was designed to travel on the German rail. It was a beautiful way to move them. But moving [by] rail is expensive. Well, that's fine. But when you're in the field and you have to move 200 to 300 – an administrative march using the tank, again that's wasted mileage. What the brigade staff had done for us, they had contracted with the German FAUN tank battalion and they would move us. They were very good at it. But, again, there is an expense there. Jim Fox, the first year that we had the Leopards, well exceeded that mileage. I explained to him that he couldn't do this. Of course, being that he's a brigade commander I was told, apparently, where I was to get off. So I said, "OK, I'll tell you what general. Why don't we see if we can acquire our own tank transporter?" The brigade -- and Charlie Belzile was the commander of CFE at the time -- the brigade went to him and said there's a suggestion that we acquire tank transporter. They liaised with the Dutch. The FAUN was being built by a Dutch firm for the Germans. We could tuck into the back of the delivery line. Commander CFE said, "I've got enough money. It's within my purview. I can allocate for three." Brigade commander said, "OK, start negotiating. We'll buy three." And what that meant was we would have integral to the brigade as a tank transporter capability. And three of these things, we could move a regiment very, very quickly. In a matter of a few hours and save a hell of a lot of money.

Came back to Ottawa -- very disheartening -- and they said initially, go ahead. Then the next thing we hear Fruehauf trailers in Calgary, Alberta, gets wind of this and says, "Hey, Canadians should supply this. We can build one of those things. We can build a tank transporter based on our technology." Well, as it transpired, they fooled around and fooled around and a couple of years went by. We couldn't get in on, because the assembly line closed. Fruehauf couldn't produce a tank transporter that would fit the dimensions of the German roads nor would be capable of doing the job. It fell through. So here was another aspect that made me very bitter at the time, of political interference. When we had the money and the commander CFE could do it, and had the authority to do and yet he was overridden. But there was that requirement to move the tanks and you would save that mileage. Coincidentally, 1200 kilometres was probably reasonable because it's based on their usage rate and your main propulsion systems.

INTERVIEWER: Fruehauf, how do you spell that?

SEELEY: Fruehauf trailers. They build logging trucks. Big transporters. The problem is, they're massive and you can't get them on the cloverleaf going onto the autobahn. Nor can you drive them on the autobahn. They're too wide. But they were saying, "We'll sell you one of these standard things which will carry your tank."

INTERVIEWER: So how was the problem eventually solved?

SEELEY: It wasn't. What they did is they continued on hiring the German tank transporter unit whenever it was required. That was fine whenever you were working with II German Corps because II German Corps would say, "OK, you're working with us. This is a resource we'll give you." Working with the Americans, their tank transporters are a little different and I don't know whether or not -- not during my time because we always worked with the Germans.

INTERVIEWER: What other changes did we, and or, the Americans have to adapt to because of the change from the Centurion to the Leopard?

SEELEY: The Centurion was a Rolls Royce Merlin engine and it burned nothing but a fine grade of gasoline which meant when we were attached to German units or working with Americans, they could not supply gas. Because all their major equipment is diesel driven. Only their small vehicles were gas. It meant we had to transport and provide our own gasoline support. Once we took on the Leopard, it was just amazing because now we have common diesel and it's used by everyone. We now met the NATO standard. Even working with the Brits, the Brits were using multi-fueled engine in their tank so they could burn diesel or carry diesel for us. Mind you, when we got the new Leopard we were with either the Germans or Americans and never with the Brits again. That was one essential aspect that was a cost savings, not having to cart all that gasoline.

INTERVIEWER: So that solved a major logistical problem?

SEELEY: That solved a major problem, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Were there any other logistics or administrative problems that you ran into during your tenure as second-in-command of the regiment?

SEELEY: Probably the ammunition supplies. I believe the American was a rimfire. I can't recall. Of course, the Centurion was electrical fire. So when we worked with the Brits, we electrically fired the main round and there was no problem providing it. The Americans had a different round so we had to stockpile and carry our own round. So that was probably another logistical disadvantage. But that was kind of minor because it's best if you had your own ammunition anyway. You should never have ammunition stored for very long. It should be burned off and new replacement taking place. You shouldn't have to be dependent, really, on someone else providing you that critical requirement.

INTERVIEWER: So those were major logistical and administrative problems that you ran into. How about operational adjustments?

SEELEY: The operational adjustments, really, with the new Leopard was, on the Centurion we had 16 gun tanks and the squadron commander and the battle captain, the CO of the regiment and the Ops officer of the regiment were all in light tracks or wheeled vehicles. When we purchased the Leopard C2 we added, not only the 16 gun tanks, but we added a gun tank which in fact had additional radios for the squadron commander, a battle captain's tank which was an alternate command tank, which meant just really radios, and a thing called a dozer tank. Now all the tanks were the same in terms of basic design but only different fittings internally. For example, the minelayer tank was in fact the basic level with the Israeli minelaying device on the

front and the dozer tank was the basic tank with a dozer blade on the front. That's how adaptable the Leopard was.

INTERVIEWER: And they all had guns?

SEELEY: And they all had the main armament. And the main reason for that was, it makes a lot of sense, because the first thing you're going to go after is a command and control vehicle. And if the guy looks down at you, the enemy, and says, "Aha, got a command and control vehicle because he doesn't have a tube on it." Now remember from World War II they put wooden things on to try and simulate that. But if they look down range and see, they'll let at it. But if it's a tank gun, it's there and it's real, they're not going to differentiate between the others. Now the other aspect is, of course, you have a reserve capability of firepower. Three additional tanks. So you'd be dealing with 19 as opposed to 16.

INTERVIEWER: Terry, what one message would you like to leave to anyone listening to this tape in the future about your experiences in Germany?

SEELEY: I think the one thing that probably comes to mind that soldiering is fun. And you're doing something for your country. And the importance -- and I really would stress to people -- the importance of the military in terms of the defence of the country, the security of the country. If you have not the capability to participate in world security, which means a contribution of military forces, on the other hand you're going to pay economically. You're going to pay, your political voice is going to pay, and so on. And that's what is disturbing me most about Canada today.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you Terry for your participation in this project. Interview with Terry Seeley on 15 July 2004. Interview ends.

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