

INTERVIEW WITH

B.G. J.W. Bishop

by

Dr. Maclyn P. Burg
Oral Historian

on

January 20, 1973

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE
DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER LIBRARY

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of
J. W. Bishop

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44,
United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions
hereinafter set forth, I, J. W. Bishop (hereinafter referred
to as the donor), do hereby give, donate, and convey to the
United States of America all my rights, title, and interest
in the tape recording and transcript of a personal inter-
view conducted on January 20, 1973 and prepared for deposit
in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library. This assignment is
subject to the following terms and conditions:

- (1) The transcript shall be available for use by
researchers as soon as it has been deposited in the
Dwight D. Eisenhower Library.
- (2) The tape recording shall not be available for use
by researchers during the donor's lifetime. After the donor's
death, access to the tape recording is to be for background
use only, and researchers may not cite, paraphrase, or
quote therefrom.
- (3) The donor retains during the donor's lifetime all
literary property rights in the material given to the United

States by the terms of this instrument. Thereafter the aforesaid literary property rights will pass to the United States Government. During the life of the donor, researchers may publish brief "fair use" quotations from the transcript (but not the tape recording) without the donor's express consent in each case.

(4) Copies of the open portions of the interview transcript, but not the tape recording, may be provided by the library upon request to researchers.

(5) At the discretion of the Archivist of the United States, copies of the interview transcript, but not the tape recording, may be deposited in or loaned to other institutions. Upon death of donor, at the discretion of the Archivist of the United States, copies of the tape recording may be deposited in or loaned to other institutions.

[Signature]
Donor

18 Jan 77
Date

[Signature]
Archivist of the United States

February 2, 1977
Date

This interview is being taped on the morning of January 20, 1973, in Vancouver, British Columbia, with Brig. Gen. J. W. Bishop. The interview is taking place in the Sylvia Hotel, the interviewer is Dr. Maclyn Burg of the Eisenhower Library staff.

DR. BURG: Let me start right at the beginning by asking you where and when you were born, and where you were raised?

BRIG. GEN. BISHOP: Well, I was born in British Columbia, as a matter of fact, at Grand Forks, which is a small town up in the interior. Matter of fact, my father was head of the Granby Company, which was a copper producing organization. And at that time, that was the largest copper producer in the British Empire. There are no copper smelters in B.C. at the moment. They're thinking of reinstating one.

DR. BURG: What was the year of your birth, sir?

BRIG. GEN. BISHOP: 1907.

DR. BURG: And were you educated up there then?

BRIG. GEN. BISHOP: Well, I was there until 1919, so I was about the last year of public school, I guess, or second to the last year. Well, I was twelve years old. We went to a

place called Anyox, which was also where there was a copper smelter. It's up near Prince Rupert. And it has also disappeared. They ran out of ore in both those places. And so the smelters in both cases were completely dismantled. And we moved here, in 1920--moved to Vancouver--and I had one year of public school here, three years of high school, and five years university.

BURG: So you're a U.B.C. graduate?

BISHOP: Yes, that's right. I graduated in '29 as a mechanical engineer. And I was in the air force in 1928, in the summer of '28. And I was thinking, perhaps, of making the regular air force a career, though I spent one summer as a provisional pilot officer in training at Camp Borden. And I decided that I would not stay with the regular forces at that time, so I went to work for the Canadian General Electric Company.

BURG: You had completed your pilot training?

BISHOP: No. No. And, well, it was about a three-year program,

summer program. So I did one year of it. I could have gone back in the next year, on a full-time basis after I graduated, which would have accelerated the program, but I decided not to.

BURG: I see.

BISHOP: So I stayed with the--I was with the Canadian General Electric Company and its allied firm, Canadian Allis Chalmers, which was affiliated with Allis Chalmers of Milwaukee at that time. The Canadian Allis Chalmers was owned by Canadian General Electric, strange as it may seem, but we had an engineering agreement with Milwaukee. So I spent about a year with CGE on what they called a test course, which is a course to which they expose all young graduate engineers, and it's damned good stuff.

BURG: What would be the nature of that course?

BISHOP: Of testing equipment at the time it's been manufactured, to make sure that it meets specifications.

BURG: I see.

BISHOP: I mean motors, generators, transformers, switch gear, the whole works. So I went right through that program, although I am a mechanical engineer. And I then went to Milwaukee, and I spent about a year with the engineering department of Allis Chalmers, Milwaukee. The depression caught up with them and they thought that they could no longer afford to carry me on as a student, so I was returned to Canada, oh, it was 1931 I guess it was, and I joined the Canadian Allis Chalmers. And I carried on with them in the heavy equipment field until Canadian General Electric went into the air conditioning business, about 1935, I guess. I was then transferred back to the parent company, to Canadian General Electric Company, on the air conditioning activity and was in charge of that department of the Toronto district, which was pretty well all of Ontario. And remained in that until war broke out. Now, in the meantime, I had joined the militia, I joined the militia about '34 or '35, I guess. So I was already in uniform at the time the war broke out. I was mobilized at the end of August of '39.

BURG: Could you give me an idea of what the Canadian militia would be like, vis-à-vis our National Guard, because I think your system is a little different from ours?

BISHOP: Well, the Canadian militia in those days was meant to be the base of mobilization. I mean, there were units, as there are today, that were scattered right from coast to coast. I mean the Seaforth Highlanders here in Vancouver is a very famous unit, 48th Highlanders in Toronto, the artillery and, in fact, all of the arms of the services were represented in the militia. The object of the militia in those days was to serve as the nucleus of mobilization and it served very well.

BURG: For example, would there have been, say, a battalion of the regular Seaforth as part of the regular army?

BISHOP: No. No. At that time it was not. They were straight militia and had no contact with the, I mean--

BURG: The regular force.

BISHOP:--they were not allied with units in the regular army.

At the present time they are to some extent.

BURG: So they had their own names, titles--

BISHOP: Oh, yes, and were very, very proud of it. Now they actually did have a small, a very small staff; oh, about one or two NCO's of the regular army attached to them to take care of stores and bookkeeping and accounts and records, and that sort of thing. But with no regular officers in it at all. There were training officers of the regular army who were responsible for the training programs of the militia. But the system worked well, as a matter of fact, and, in fact, it worked too well. In August and September of '39, when mobilization came out, they mobilized enough units to form a 1st Canadian Division and the corps units of the 1st Canadian Corps, and some army units. When I speak of army, I don't mean army in the broad generic term but army as an army formation.

BURG: So we might expect that there would be certain small groups of men whose duties would encompass the formations that formed an army. They might be a staff group for an army that didn't yet exist?

BISHOP: Not so much. It was more at the unit level. Now, for instance, I was in the artillery at the outbreak of the war and our battery in Toronto was mobilized. It was a medium battery and it was put together with a medium battery from Winnipeg, a regular medium battery from Kingston, and a militia medium battery from Charlottetown, PEI [Prince Edward Island]. There were four batteries, of which one was a regular. We were put together as 1st Medium Regiment, the Royal Canadian Artillery. Now it was our responsibility to bring our strength up to full war strength, to do that under our own resources. So, each of these militia units then undertook a recruiting campaign, and at the time I was Vice-Adjutant General after the war I protested vigorously about the methods that were used in 1939, because a person would come in and would be interviewed by the unit, and the unit might not like the cut of his jib or something and would say, "No, we have no place for you." This guy, however, had volunteered, you see, and he regarded that he had volunteered and it persisted throughout the war that these guys then said, "If the government wants me to serve, they can bloody well come and get me." You see?

BURG: I see.

BISHOP: Now on top of that, when we got up to full strength --and for our battery in Toronto that was in the order of a hundred and twenty or a hundred and forty people--our militia strength was about thirty, and a good many of these were medically unfit or, perhaps, over age, you see.

BURG: Yes.

BISHOP: But they did serve as a nucleus and they were very valuable for the purposes of training the recruits. But we eventually phased them out in due course on medical grounds, or on age, or we put them into static units, or something of that kind.

BURG: They had drilled with the militia unit over a period of years probably.

BISHOP: Oh, yes, and they were first class.

BURG: Right.

BISHOP: As a matter of fact, the gun sergeants in my battery were all militia people, all of them, and were first class. These chaps were damned good NCOs. But the trouble was, you see, that we probably had two hundred and fifty or three hundred volunteers, and all of the rest of the militia units were in the same way, you see, in the same condition. We didn't keep any record at all of the names of these people, who we threw back in the stream. They were not given any piece of paper to the effect that they had honorably volunteered and had been told that they were not required. And consequently a lot of people said, "Well, why in the hell isn't he serving?" You see?

BURG: Yes.

BISHOP: And the guy said, "Well, I tried to get in and they wouldn't take me," but he didn't have anything to prove this.

BURG: And no system for saying, "Well, our table of organization is full--"

BISHOP: No.

BURG: "--but I know that the East Toronto battery could really use you."

BISHOP: So there was no coordination at that time at all. Each of these militia units was on its own from the standpoint of mobilization. And that was a grave error, and it was one to which I addressed myself very thoroughly. I can tell you, when I was Vice-Adjutant General. And I said that this is completely wrong; that there should be a complete registration system of all of these people who volunteered, and they should also be given a certificate which will indicate that they have indeed volunteered. And that we should be able to get hold of them if we need them at a later date. But that wasn't done.

BURG: Is it fair, General, to say that, in some cases, the militia units were almost like private clubs and a little restrictive as to whom they would admit?

BISHOP: No. They were certainly private clubs in peace time. In fact, a good part of the social activity in Toronto

and Vancouver and Winnipeg, and various other places in those days, did revolve around the militia to a large extent. The militia ball was where the debutantes came out, and that sort of thing, you know.

BURG: I see.

BISHOP: And it still is that way here in Vancouver.

BURG: Were the uniforms of that kind of individual pattern that one finds in the British Army during peacetime?

BISHOP: Oh, yes, right. And we didn't draw any pay, the officers in the militia. There was money allocated to us, but we all signed the acquittance roll and the pay to which we were entitled went straight into regimental funds. So we didn't derive a nickel out of this at all.

BURG: I see. So a weekly drill, which would have paid you, actually just increased the coffers of the regimental fund.

BISHOP: Yes, that's right.

BURG: All right.

BISHOP: And, on top of that, why we bought our own uniforms. We didn't have any uniform allowance; we bought our own. And we also paid carfare, in many cases, to our men, or bought them shoes, etc., if these fellows were hard up. In fact, there weren't any of us, I guess, who were officers in those days, who didn't dip into our pockets very substantially. Now, as a matter of fact, this went by the board at the end of the war, and it was a great mistake. When they reconstituted the militia in '45, '46, why they did away with the colorful uniforms, and with the unit identity, to as great an extent as possible. They dressed everybody up in battle dress; they did away with the mess kit, and with the dress uniforms. And they tried to submerge the unit identities of these organizations and make them all part of the Canadian Army. Well, that was a grave error, and on top of that, they started to pay the people, to pay the officers a significant amount, so that it became a second source of income. It ceased to be a hobby or a patriotic activity and, to some extent, it became, as I say, a second source of income, which I think was wrong. Well, I'm glad to say that--well, the pay situation

is still with them, but the uniforms have returned. And with the Seaforth, for example, they parade complete in their Highland kit and they've got their band and, matter of fact, I'm going to a mess dinner there tonight. And so I'm glad to say that that part has been restored. But I don't feel that the militia of today is nearly the same organization that it was prior to '39. Now, the role of the militia is completely changed, too. At that time, as I say, the purpose of the militia was to serve as a nucleus for mobilization. So you at least had something on which to build and to build very quickly.

BURG: I see.

BISHOP: Now as far as our regiment was concerned, for example, we came to strength very quickly. We were shipped overseas early in January of 1940, and I would say by March or April of 1940, the 1st Medium Regiment had achieved a standard of gunnery that they never exceeded throughout the war. The officers were pretty well trained, the NCOs were good, we had a good caliber of people. And that unit, in

fact, all of these units, came up very quickly to a wartime standard.

BURG: All right, now, let me ask you this then, General, during the pre-war period as a militia unit--you've spoken of the fact that your gunnery sergeants, for example, were of high caliber--I would assume summer exercises gave you a chance to fire--

BISHOP: And courses.

BURG:--and courses.

BISHOP: Oh, we had firing courses annually.

BURG: So you would look at that and say, not only was your battery, for example, a social organization that had traditions but also it was an effective, skilled, professional group.

BISHOP: That's right. As a matter of fact, I became the chief instructor of gunnery, as far as my regiment was concerned. I was technically the survey officer, because I had done a fair amount of survey. So it became my chore to

teach mathematics of gunnery to guys with about a grade five education. I mean to teach them enough trigonometry, and that sort of thing. So that they would recognize a gross error of a hundred and eighty degrees, because with trigonometry, why, you know, you can easily make that mistake.

BURG: The infantry appreciates it when you don't!

BISHOP: Yes, that's right. And a gross error can be made, so instead of shooting this way, why, you can be shooting back this way. And so the practice I made was that they were not permitted to use any of the standard forms of line range and angle of sight, and the various other things, the other 'tools of the trade', until they could do it on a blank piece of paper by drawing a diagram and solve the problem from basic principles.

BURG: I see.

BISHOP: And I think that that was a good thing.

BURG: What kind of guns were you equipped with, may I ask?

BISHOP: Well we had six-inch howitzers in those days.

BURG: Six guns to a battery?

BISHOP: No, four. We had sixteen. And to begin with, they were mounted on steel tires. We eventually got pneumatic; we got pneumatic wheels for these things. And, in due course, why, we got trailers to carry them on, which we got by accident in my regiment. There was a First Medium Recovery Unit, which belongs to Ordnance, and there was a First Medium Regiment of Artillery, and for some reason or other Ordnance made a mistake and they delivered sixteen of these trailers to the artillery instead of to the recovery unit. And they just drove them in and parked them and got a signature and went away, and so the colonel says, "Gee, there's somebody using their brains, because if we put the guns on these trailers, why it will increase our mobility."

BURG: So you weren't actually towed into battle, you were carried, and that would be--

BISHOP: Yes, that's right.

BURG: I see.

BISHOP: For a long time, why, we carried the six-inch howitzers on these trailers, and it was a very dicey operation, I can tell you, because we used to turn them over once in a while because of braking as they went into a turn, and it would throw the weight onto the front corner and over the thing would go. Well, we eventually cured that. I determined what the cause of it was and we published an order that in going into a sharp curve that they would come virtually to a halt before going into the curve and would accelerate as they went around the curve instead of decelerating. With the idea of throwing the weight to the rear. And from that time on, why, we had no further problems.

BURG: These were fairly heavy guns and mounted fairly high on that trailer so--

BISHOP: Oh, you're God-damned right, oh yes! Oh, they were really heavy!!

BURG: Right.

BISHOP: And, well, we got rid of those. I wasn't with the regiment terribly long, as a matter of fact.

BURG: Could I ask this, too, General; in that militia group would there have been World War I non-coms or officers who had the experience on the Western Front of setting up and firing in actual battle conditions, so that your men had that leavening, too?

BISHOP: Oh, yes. I doubt if we had many men in the ranks with World War I experience; we still had quite a few officers. There were still a number around with World War I ribbons on, but they were getting older, in the same way that today, if there were mobilization, that the number of people you would find with World War II ribbons on are very few.

BURG: Yes.

BISHOP: Now at this dinner I'm going to tonight, I'll bet you that there won't be more than about three or four of us there with World War II ribbons on. All these fellows, and

up to the rank of brigadier general, have come in since the end of the war.

BURG: Right, right. Well, I was thinking perhaps summer exercises were an added advantage to you, in that not only were the problems of gunnery in a theoretical sense worked on, and then practical firing, but that you had men who could say, 'Now, in coming into action fast and getting away your fire, and laying it on target, and protecting yourselves, here's the way we did it.'

BISHOP: Well, we had a great deal of advantage, too, because we attended schools of instruction in the U.K. as soon as we got over there. Now we sent a hell of a lot, a high percentage, of our officers and our senior NCOs off on courses with the British at the Royal School of Artillery, which was a very experienced, very capable organization, I can tell you.

BURG: And they were using the same guns that you were.

BISHOP: Oh, yes.

BURG: You used the same drill.

BISHOP: Well, the same drill, I don't think they had any six-inch howitzers, but that didn't matter. But, as a matter of fact, I went out to a course myself at the Royal School of Survey for two or three weeks, I guess. Now the thing I should mention about this mobilization thing--we had a lot of Spanish-Civil War guys, too, as a matter of fact, who came forward.

BURG: Oh, ho.

BISHOP: A lot of soldiers of fortune. There were three kinds of people, actually, who flocked to the colors in '39. And again, I addressed myself to this when I became Vice-Adjutant General; there were those who were intensely patriotic, you know, who thought that it was their duty and responsibility to serve, to serve Canada, to preserve our way of life. The percentage of that, I would hesitate to guess, but I would say, maybe, twenty percent.

BURG: Uh-huh.

BISHOP: There were soldiers of fortune, who had fought in Spain and had fought anywhere that they could fight, you know, and these guys were sort of rolling stones and good soldiers, mind you. But we had to be a little bit careful, because some of these fellows had political views that were not consistent with our own, and we were, perhaps, a little bit choosy about which side they had been fighting on--

BURG: Oh, ho, can you give me an example out of your past experience of this sort?

BISHOP: Oh, yes, I remember we kicked out a guy, as a matter of fact, we kicked out a damned good sound NCO, because we had found that his allegiance was completely different to our own; in other words, that he was a totalitarian and was more allied to the German way of thinking than to ours.

BURG: He had fought on Franco's side in the war?

BISHOP: Yes, that's right. On the other hand, we had a lot of guys who had fought on the other side, too.

BURG: Yes, uh-huh.

BISHOP: And, and these were very competent and capable soldiers. Now there was a relatively small percentage of these, but they were very valuable, because they had a lot of experience, and comparatively recent experience, because the Spanish-Civil War had just been over a very short time. And then we had a broad range of people, a fairly high percentage of people, who were trying to escape their domestic and their financial responsibilities. You know, ordinary guys off the streets--

BURG: Life had become dull or--

BISHOP:--yeah, that they weren't very happy with what they were doing, or problems with their wife, or their creditors were chasing them, or something. I wouldn't want this to be written up as such, but that is, I think that is true that you do get that class of person you see. We had a pretty thorough cross-section of mankind, you know, with these three kinds.

BURG: With about three-quarters of them in this category of not really being moved much by patriotism; more, perhaps, be boredom or--

BISHOP: Yeah, that's right. As a matter of fact, I used to hold highly by the theory that a volunteer was worth four pressed men, you know. That the incentive that went with initiative, and the incentive, and all that sort of thing, that went with a volunteer was a hell of a lot better than with a conscript. And, by God, I changed my mind on that. When I was down in the States, when I was military attache from '52 to '56 and Commander of the Army Staff, Washington, I traveled all over the States, of course, because we had people, we had liaison officers, at Fort Bliss, Fort Bragg, Fort Knox, and what have you, right across all the way from Texas up into Maine. And it was my duty and responsibility to go and visit these guys, and I used to take a look at the conscript training in the American forces, you see, and I changed my views on the relative merits of the conscript as against the volunteer. The conscription system gives you a

better overall cross-section of the population; I mean, from the standpoint of education and motivation, and, I think everything else, really.

BURG: Yes, economic status.

BISHOP: Yeah. And that you don't get so many of the dead-beat types I speak of, who are in it because they want to escape what they were doing before. Now, I had felt that these fellows, who were in it say for a year or something of that kind, that they might not be as ambitious as they might be. And I changed my mind, by Gad, after watching these fellows train, and it became my conclusion--and after talking to our Canadian liaison officers, who were in close touch with them--that these fellows really turned in, by and large, a hell of a good job of work. That they were in it for a year only and they were going to do a good job while they were there. And a lot of them, of course, got NCO promotions out of it while they were assigned there.

BURG: Right.

BISHOP: Some of them were selected as officer candidates, for officers' school, and I suppose quite a few stayed with the regular forces, as far as that goes.

BURG: Yes.

BISHOP: So my whole concept of manning, for which I was responsible when I was VAG, completely changed from the time that I had been in the militia, say, from '35 to '39, and I did my best to bring about certain changes that would improve it. And I think I was, to some measure, successful. Now our problem, our militia problem today is, of course, completely different. I'm still honorary colonel of one of the militia units here, that's why I'm going to this dinner tonight and so, consequently, I do have some contact with the army still. And I have to give talks to these people, occasionally, at dinners and that sort of thing. And it's amazing to me the degree of enthusiasm that persists, in spite of the fact that the possibility of a major mobilization, such as we understood in '39, will never happen again, you see. With the nuclear type of war, why there's just not time.

BURG: Right.

BISHOP: The war will be fought with atomic weapons and that's about the size of it. So the main purpose of the militia today is to serve as a backup for the regular army, and our regular army today in Canada is a hell of a lot bigger than it was in 1939, I can tell you that.

BURG: Can you give me relative figures?

BISHOP: Well, yes, I think that in '39 the regular army was in the order of three thousand--

BURG: I had no idea it was that small!

BISHOP: Oh, yes, that's right. You see, the militia was the strength of the army in those days. Well, now we do have a force in being, I don't know what the current strength is, but I would guess it would be between forty and fifty thousand; it would be somewhere around there. I think the Canadian forces totally, that's including the navy and the air force components of what they now call the Canadian

Forces--and I think erroneously but, nevertheless, that was a political decision--is around a hundred thousand. Now, I don't know exactly what it is but it would be somewhere in that order. Now the main purpose of the militia today is to serve as a backup for the regulars, so that there is a closer contact between the militia and the regular army than there was in the thirties.

[Interruption]

BISHOP: They actually go to practice camps and annual training with the regulars and are thoroughly integrated right into the regular units on an annual basis. On top of that, they attend a lot of schools of instruction, in fact, many more--and also they are given more regular army support in their home armories than they were in the thirties. And I think that this is a good thing.

BURG: Not just a pair of NCO's, but--

BISHOP: No, no. They get and they have better equipment, and more equipment, by far, than we ever had in the thirties.

Now the main purpose of the militia, therefore, as I say, is to back up the regular army in support of its role of the territorial integrity of Canada. The chances of an enemy lodging on Canadian soil is about nil, I would say. You know, it used to be a possibility of a lodgment, say, up in the Arctic. Well, I think that's gone; I think that the introduction of nuclear weapons has completely changed that situation. And the question of aid to the civil power is an important one. I mean, in case of serious labor disruptions, or something of that kind. If the regulars were turned out, why then they have the right to call on the supporting militia to bolster them if the need be. And we have had times here when that could have happened. As a matter of fact, two or three years ago, with my position in the construction industry, I got hold of the military commander on Vancouver Island and I told him that if I were in his position that I would be dusting off my aid to the civil power regulations and I would do it very quickly. Because, I said, "It looks to me as if we could have a real serious disruption here, as far as labor is concerned, you know, with

pretty bad violence." Well, I'm glad to say that we managed to get the strike resolved and it turned out not to be the case, but it could be.

BURG: Would the order of priority in calling out the necessary strength have been first the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] as a federal police, then the regulars?

BISHOP: Yes, that's right. The regulars, and then augment them with the militia.

BURG: If you needed it. Right.

BISHOP: And also, if Canada should become involved in a major peace-keeping activity somewhere which required numbers in excess of the availability of the regular army, why, what they would then do would be to draw on the militia, on a voluntary basis.

BURG: I see.

BISHOP: But there would be no problem in getting them; I mean they'd get lots of people.

BURG: Presumably on a specified time, block of time--

BISHOP: Yes, probably, I would think.

BURG: --our term would be federalizing the National Guard.

BISHOP: Yes, about the same idea. I don't think that the units themselves would be turned out as such. But I think the personnel of the units would be integrated, say, with the RCR and the Vingt deuxieme and the Patricias, and so on and so forth, which would work out fine.

BURG: Now you said RCR?

BISHOP: Is the Royal Canadian Regiment.

BURG: Right.

BISHOP: We had three regular army infantry organizations at the start of the war. The RCR, the Patricias--

BURG: That's the Princess Pats.

BISHOP: Yeah, the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry--
PPCLI.

BURG: Right.

BISHOP: And the Royal 22nd, which is known as the Vingt
deuxieme which is the Quebec unit.

BURG: Could you spell Vingt deuxieme for us?

BISHOP: Well, it's V-i-n-g-t d-e-u-x-i-e-n-e, I guess, it's--

BURG: O.K. Because my transcriber will--

BISHOP: Yeah, well, they're familiarly referred to as the
VanDoos, V-a-n-D-o-o-s, which is quite wrong.

BURG: Yes, yes.

BISHOP: But their proper name is the Royal 22nd [Royal 22e
Régiment].

BURG: All right.

BISHOP: Now, they existed throughout the war. Then after
the war, at the time of the Korean conflict, why, it was
decided that there would be additional battalions formed of

those regiments. So instead of calling up militia battalions, as such, what they did was to form the 2nd and 3rd battalion of the RCR; the 2nd and 3rd battalion of the Patricias; and I think there were the 2nd, 3rd and 4th, as I recall, of the VanDoos, and these were the people who were engaged then in the activities in Korea. I mean, with one battalion there, another battalion at home training, and then with the regular battalion still here, and that was about the way it worked.

BURG: Yes.

BISHOP: Now, they also formed the Canadian Highland Battalion, and that was a composite thing--and I objected strenuously to this at the time--with a company of Seaforth [Highlanders of Canada], a company of Black Watch [Royal Highland Regiment of Canada], and so on and so forth, all with different badges but in one battalion. And I said that this would never work, and it never did. So, in due course, it became a battalion of the Black Watch. Well, it became the 1st battalion in the Black Watch, and I objected to that, too;

with the militia battalion then being known as the 2nd battalion. The Black Watch is a very, very old unit--

BURG: Yes, of course.

BISHOP:--from Montreal, you see. And it was my feeling that they should have been the 1st battalion and that the regular battalion should have been the 2nd battalion. But I don't suppose it mattered a hell of a lot.

BURG: It's numbered in the Canadian Army as the 42nd, as it is in England?

BISHOP: No, I don't know the number.

BURG: I see. They gave it a different number.

BISHOP: No, the Black Watch, it's the--the 48th [Highlanders of Canada] is a Toronto unit; the Black Watch, I don't know what their number was. But, in any case, they formed a battalion of the Black Watch, they formed a battalion of the Queen's Own Rifles, and perhaps one or two others, which became regular force units. As far as the Highland outfit

was concerned, they then ceased to be a composite battalion and they became the 1st battalion of the Black Watch. Well, they subsequently scaled these down and I'll be darned if I know how many battalions--I think they've got two battalions, probably, now of each of the RCR, the Patricias, the VanDoos.

BURG: Let me ask you, when you got overseas with your outfit, got to England, several things come to mind. First of all, the kinds of service that you did and secondly, how you were received by the English officers with whom you came in contact. We'd be interested in knowing their views of you as a force in being, a force ready to assist them. Did they think you were up to standard, and what kind of general treatment were you given by them when you arrived in early 1940?

BISHOP: Oh, we had no problems at all. We were given good barrack accommodations; we had good relationships with them.

BURG: Where did they put you by the way, physically, in England?

BISHOP: Well, I was in St. Lucia barracks, actually, oh, about thirty miles outside of London.

BURG: Could you spell that for us, please?

BISHOP: Yes, S-a-i-n-t L-u-c-i-a, which was an old regular barracks. And, as a matter of fact, all of our Canadian units were put in a proper regular barracks because, by that time, an awful lot of the regular force, the British, had moved elsewhere you know.

BURG: They were on the continent at that time.

BISHOP: Well, yes, a lot of them were or, perhaps, in the Mediterranean, Middle East, that sort of thing.

BURG: France had not fallen yet when you got there?

BISHOP: No, no, no, it hadn't. I was there when that happened.

BURG: Oh, you were on the continent itself?

BISHOP: No, no, I was in England.

BURG: Uh-huh.

BISHOP: And it was our responsibility--it was the responsibility of our unit, actually, to establish a reception area for the people coming back from Dunkirk.

BURG: Oh, you did?

BISHOP: Yes. And I'll never forget that our camp, our reception camp that we established, was on the banks of the Basingstoke Canal with big signs to the effect that in no circumstances will anything be thrown into the Basingstoke Canal. Well, I'll tell you what happened. An awful lot of these fellows came back from the continent and had been carrying their small arms; they got out very little in the way of equipment, really, except small arms.

BURG: None of the heavy stuff, lost their guns.

BISHOP: They lost most of it, yes. I think that there was one regimental commander that got his guns back, because he held a pistol on the skipper of the ship and said, "Look, I'll shoot you if you don't put my guns on." So, as far as that guy was concerned, he got his guns up. But it was

amazing how many of these soldiers--and a lot of them were pretty low standard types, the regular British Tommy--they threw their damned rifles and small arms into the Basingstoke Canal.

BURG: Having brought them back from France?

BISHOP: Yeah, that's right, because they got tired cleaning them and lugging them around, you see. And so there was eventually a recovery activity to fetch this stuff out, but it was very amusing.

BURG: And was much of that done, General; I mean it's, it's an amazing story? How could those men have been so determined to bring the bloody things back from Dunkirk and then toss them away?

BISHOP: I'll be darned if I know, but they did. But I'll never forget, too, the way we were running this reception camp--about the time we got it cleaned up and we got rid of most of the guys; they had been dispatched to their homes, or wherever they were supposed to go. We still had a

standing camp there that was capable of handling say a thousand, two thousand people, and there was a Canadian unit came through that was on its way to Norway, I think it was, or somewhere. But in any case, they came through and, by Gad, if they didn't strip the damned camp. They took anything out of that camp that they wanted to and made off with it.

BURG: In the sense of liberating it.

BISHOP: Yes, that's right.

BURG: Yes.

BISHOP: And there wasn't a damned thing we could do about it. I mean, they were put through there as a staging area on the way to this other place. And we had one hell of a time with the British barrack officers, who were old time regulars, you know. And if you signed for something and couldn't produce it, why somebody was going to have to pay for it. Well we had an awful time with those fellows.

BURG: What kinds of things did they feel that they needed

as surplus equipment for Norway?

BISHOP: Oh, canvas, tables, cooking equipment, anything.

BURG: Soap, towels?

BISHOP: Oh, take anything.

BURG: The whole thing?

BISHOP: Yeah, that's right.

BURG: And your rank, by the way, at that time?

BISHOP: I was a captain then.

BURG: And am I right in the assumption that you Canadians were among the few troops with heavy guns for use in case of an invasion by Germany? That you were among the few now who were equipped?

BISHOP: We were, yes, we were sort of the, the mobile reserve, which was directly under control of the Commander-in-Chief and capable of going anywhere, going anywhere in

England or Scotland, I suppose, to repel invasion. And at that time, we were the only fully equipped medium regiment that there was there.

BURG: I see. In all of England--that is, even among the British regulars--

BISHOP: Yes, that's right, they were all dispersed elsewhere.

BURG: Sixteen guns, sir?

BISHOP: Yes, well, we had a couple of field regiments which had twenty-four guns each; they had twenty-five pounders.

BURG: These were lighter guns than yours?

BISHOP: Yes, that's right, but are very useful. But, as a matter of fact, I, at the time that the German invasion attempt was alleged to have been made--as you may recall, that was, what, in the autumn of 1940, I guess; it was just after the Battle of Britain anyway--and I, at that time, was a troop commander. I was no longer a survey officer, but I

was slated to be the adjutant, I was going to be appointed as adjutant. I was going in back of a fellow named Bud Drury, who is now the Secretary of the Treasury Board, you know, in the federal cabinet, and who is a darned good chap, too. At that time, he was adjutant and I was working closely with him. He was being sent back to Canada for another appointment, so the two of us went over to corps headquarters, and, at that time, it was known as 7 Corps. It was really the nucleus of 1st Canadian Corps, but at that time it still had a British number. We had a complete duplicate staff. We had a British staff at corps headquarters and a Canadian counterpart, and a fellow named Miles Dempsey was the Brigadier General, Staff, of 7 Corps--he was the British fellow.

BURG: Uh-huh.

BISHOP: Well, he eventually became General Sir Miles Dempsey, in due course, and was quite a famous fellow. At that time, he was just Brigadier Dempsey. And we had gone over to corps headquarters in order for Bud to say his farewells to the

corps artillery staff, and to hand over officially to me as the adjutant of 1st Medium, because we were directly under corps headquarters. And the whole corps staff was absent; they were all up in London. They shouldn't have been, but they were, and there was no one. The brigadier wasn't there, nor was the G-2 RA, nor was the Staff Captain, RA, which were the three main staff officers of the corps on the artillery side. And in walks my friend, Brigadier Dempsey, with a cigarette and he said, "Good evening, gentlemen." And we said, "Good evening, sir." And he said, "Have you heard that we have just received code word 'Cromwell'?" And we said, "No, sir, we hadn't heard that." And he said, "Do you know what the code word 'Cromwell' means?" And we said, "Yes, sir, we did." That meant that the Germans were approaching the south coast, you see, and they indeed were, too. And he said, "Are the artillery staff about?" And we said, "No, sir, they don't appear to be, at the moment, but we expect that they will be back before long." And he said, "I wonder if you would be so kind, in their absence, to move the artillery regiments to their concentration areas," so we

said, "Yes, sir, we'd be glad to do that." So Bud and I, got the necessary messages out and the dispatch riders, and by the time the corps staff came back, why, these units were on their way to the concentration areas, including my unit, and were in place by next morning. Now, the attack failed, as you know. I mean it was beaten off. There's never been a hell of a lot written about this thing, but they--

BURG: It was more than a feint then?

BISHOP: Oh, I think probably it was the real thing all right, but they had amassed a lot of barges, and that sort of thing, and were going to take a crack at it. Well, I think bad weather for one thing, and they also hit a fair amount of naval opposition and they got beaten off. And so, in due course, why, we moved the units back to their proper locations again and carried on.

BURG: Had you gone down with the guns, or did your job as adjutant keep you back and away from it?

BISHOP: Oh, no, I'd be at regimental headquarters. The scare didn't last for more than about a day.

BURG: And there was nothing for you to fire at with your guns. Most of it was occurring out in the Channel.

BISHOP: Oh, no. No, we didn't fire a shot in anger at all. Sir Miles was quite a fellow and, as I said, became a very famous soldier later on. I think he became Chief of the Imperial General Staff at the end. Well, it was long after the war.

BURG: Yes. Your picture of him at that moment was of a man who was--

BISHOP: Very cool.

BURG: --very cool and almost offhand--

BISHOP: Yes, that's right.

BURG: --and using, really, rather junior officers. Since the other weren't there, he just adjusted to that situation.

BISHOP: Yes, that's right. Sure, no problem. And there wasn't any problem. After all, we knew exactly where the units were and there was no difficulty.

BURG: It's an amazing story, especially in the light of the fact that you had some of the few weapons of their kind available in the entire United Kingdom.

BISHOP: Well I stayed on as adjutant for a relatively short time and then went on to staff college.

BURG: What duties would you have performed as an adjutant in your military system?

BISHOP: Oh, as the chief assistant to the colonel.

BURG: An executive officer?

BISHOP: Yes, that's right. The fellow who passes down the orders of the colonel to the batteries, and that sort of thing. The second in command is concerned mainly with the administration of the unit. And, and to replace the colonel in the event of casualty.

BURG: I see.

BISHOP: But the adjutant is the guy who works directly with the colonel in conveying orders to the sub-units, as to what they're to do.

BURG: Would it carry a promotion for you?

BISHOP: No, no, no.

BURG: You were still a captain.

BISHOP: Still captain. I went off to staff college at a place called Ford Manor.

BURG: F-o-r-d?

BISHOP: Yes. Which was one of the stately homes, and it was quite a place. And, oh, there were about sixty of us, I guess, and the commandant at that time was--

[Interruption]

BISHOP:--was Guy Simonds, who at that time was a lieutenant colonel.

BURG: Now does he spell his name S-i-m-o-n-d-s?

BISHOP: Yeah, that's right. And he subsequently was chief of general staff. He was also commander of 2nd Canadian Corps at the end of the war and was a very, very strong man.

BURG: The sixty men were a mixed group of Canadians and British?

BISHOP: No, Canadians.

BURG: All Canadians?

BISHOP: Well, we may have had a small scattering of British. I guess we did, maybe three or four.

BURG: And was it a British school, a British staff school--

BISHOP: No, no, it was entirely Canadian.

BURG: I see. All right.

BISHOP: And the directing staff was composed entirely of Canadian officers who had attended Camberly, which was the

British staff course. And I might just say, by way of tribute to the peacetime army, prior to '39--although it was very small in number, it was very high in caliber. The number of officers who achieved senior rank was out of all proportion to the number of people that there were in it, at that time, in '39. And that all of these people, like Des Smith and a number of the others of the directing staff, were very, very competent officers as was, of course, General Simonds himself --or colonel, as he then was. And these fellows ran a very, very good staff college, of that there was no doubt. Now, I think it moved to Canada; in fact, I'm sure it did. We only had one serial, that was Canadian Staff College Number One, at Ford Manor and then, in the spring of '41, it moved to Canada to Kingston.

BURG: I see.

BISHOP: And has been in Kingston ever since.

BURG: The second staff college course was at Kingston?

BISHOP: Yes. And, as a matter of fact, I went back to

Canada myself after staff college. I came back to join the staff of 5 Canadian Armored Division, that was just then being formed. And the appointment that I was given was Staff Captain Q, which is the administrative side; equipment, supply, all that sort of thing on the staff side, as opposed to ordnance, who are the people who physically issue it, if you know what I mean. There's quite a distinction. I was Staff Captain Q, which I held very, very briefly. I then became deputy assistant quartermaster general with the rank of major, and I held that for a relatively short time. I went back overseas with the division.

BURG: Let me ask you, General, before that; can you tell me what kind of a syllabus was offered at Ford Manor? That whole experience you had would be very interesting to me.

BISHOP: Well, it was a straight tactical course.

BURG: All tactical?

BISHOP: Uh-huh. About the same as the course at Leavenworth.

BURG: I see, I see. And were all of you at about the same rank?

BISHOP: Oh, yes. Captains and majors.

BURG: And the way in which you studied--did you form groups to work on problems given to your group?

BISHOP: Yes.

BURG: You then presented your solutions and there was an official solution, which was then presented to you by the staff? Or how did this work?

BISHOP: Well, we would discuss it--on many of these things, of course, why, there is no--there's always a directing staff solution but that isn't necessarily the right one.

BURG: Right.

BISHOP: You know, it's just another opinion. But what they try to do is teach us the way to think militarily and to approach problems.

BURG: Yes.

BISHOP: The art of writing military appreciations, and I can assure you that this has stood me in good stead throughout my entire lifetime. And I still use it all the time.

BURG: Because it has a particular logic about it that--

BISHOP: Oh, yes, in solving any problem in the construction industry. The first thing I try to do is determine what is the object of the exercise--what are we trying to do? And then I go through the various factors that have got to be taken into consideration. Then I take a look at the alternative methods by which this may be achieved and, eventually, I come to a conclusion that maybe that alternative B is better than A or C, for the following reasons. And I use that technique all the time, and I don't write it as a military appreciation, of course, because that would make my civilian masters a little bit annoyed. But the method of doing it is precisely the same as the military method of doing it.

BURG: Did you have, as companions in the staff course, RCAF

types, and Royal Canadian Navy types?

BISHOP: I think that there may have been one or two. It was general that in their courses, they would have one or two army officers, and by the same token, we would have one or two of their people. But it was primarily a military course to study tactics. That there was an objective over there and the enemy dispositions are so and so, how are you going to take it? I mean what method are you going to use?

BURG: All right.

BISHOP: The idea, first of all, is to write an appreciation then, having done that, why then you write an operation order to tell the units involved exactly how they are to go about this, and that is really what the staff college is all about.

BURG: And how a long period, now, did this run?

BISHOP: Well, it was comparatively short; I think it was about four months. It was extended. Subsequent courses were longer and I think the staff college today is probably about a year, or maybe even longer.

BURG: Now, how about pressure on you, General, at that time?

Was that four months a--

BISHOP: Very hard working.

BURG:--period of hard work and strain and long hours?

BISHOP: Yes.

BURG: Of course, you would have had one unique difference, had that staff course been given to you as ours was at Leavenworth. You might have had wife and family with you for the period of time, but here you had four months, all of you--

BISHOP: Well, we didn't have our wives with us.

BURG: No families whatsoever?

BISHOP: Well, there were a few fellows who had married English girls, or whose wives had gone over and had secured employment in the United Kingdom, so there were a few of them had wives kicking around, but there were very few.

BURG: By and large four very hard months of concentrated effort.

BISHOP: Yes, that's right. No, at the end of that, I came back to Canada and to join 5 Armored at Camp Borden. It was just then being formed under General Sansom.

BURG: B-o-r-d-e-n?

BISHOP: Yes, Camp Borden, which is north of Toronto and I was living at Toronto at that time, so this was fine.

Although I was living at Borden, I was able to commute back and forth, get home on weekends, and that sort of thing; and, occasionally, the odd evening. Oh, it was about a two-hour drive, an hour and a half, two hours each way. And that was fine. Well, I should say that on my way back, coming back to Canada, we staged in Liverpool and we arrived in Liverpool the night that the Liverpool blitz started and we left the night that it finished.

BURG: Oh, this very terrible--

BISHOP: Oh, Jesus, that, that--

BURG: --night that Liverpool had.

BISHOP: --was, that was quite an experience.

BURG: I'll bet it was!

BISHOP: Well, there was one redeeming feature about Liverpool and that is that the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company was playing in Liverpool at the time and because of the blackout, why, they started every afternoon about, oh, five o'clock, or something, so that the performance would be finished before the blitz started. So, we all got back to the staging camp by the time the blitz started and then we spent most of the night out on the parade ground. It was quite a place, I can tell you, there was pretty heavy bombing. And the thing I can never understand, we had the 'all clear' one night, so I went to bed, and I used a sleeping bag instead of the bedding that had been given, and it was one of these zipper things, you know. Well, so help me, the God-damnedest crash that I ever did hear, and a land mine had

come down by parachute about a block or two away, and it just blew hell of out everything around there and it blew the windows in in my place. I was sound asleep by this time because, as I say, the 'all clear' had gone and I thought that the whole thing was secure. And I got home to Canada and I took the bedroll down to Toronto to get aired, and that sort of thing, and my wife opened it up and the damned thing was full of broken glass. Now, as to how the broken glass got in my bedroll without me being cut, I'll be darned if I know. I didn't get a scratch.

BURG: And that stuff had been blown right through the outer covering of the bag and inside it.

BISHOP: Yes, I guess it was, yeah. Which I thought was amazing. Well, we went up to Glasgow--

BURG: This is on your way back?

BISHOP: Yes, that's right. And then the blitz started in Glasgow, the night we got to Glasgow, and it stopped the night we left!

BURG: Uh-huh. It was your personal charm; there was something about you that the Luftwaffe didn't care for!

BISHOP: I guess so.

[Interruption]

BISHOP: Well--

BURG: There we go.

BISHOP: --we eventually embarked at Glasgow.

BURG: With your tanks issued--

BISHOP: No, no, I was coming back to Canada as an individual to join 5 Armored.

BURG: Oh, I thought 5 Armored--

BISHOP: No, no. That was after staff college, on my way back to Camp Borden, and that was when I stayed in Liverpool and later on, in Glasgow.

BURG: So 5 Armored was in the U.K.?

BISHOP: In Canada, at Camp Borden at the time I joined them.

BURG: Did they have their vehicles at Camp Borden? Did they--

BISHOP: Oh, yes, well we had pretty obsolete tanks.

BURG: What mark, may I ask?

BISHOP: Oh, hell, we had all World War I American tanks.

And for--

BURG: These would be--

BISHOP: --for training purposes only.

BURG: --Lees, Grants?

BISHOP: Oh, no! Oh, hell, no! No, no.

BURG: Not even--

BISHOP: Oh, no, no. This was Old World War I stuff.

BURG: Oh, World War One!

BISHOP: Yeah, that's right.

BURG: Holy cow! Not the Renaults and--

BISHOP: Oh, the little bitty ones, you know. They--don't sneer now. They were perfectly good for tactical training; perfectly good. I mean, they served their purpose.

BURG: Because now, you see, you're right back with the tanks that Eisenhower was training American tankers on in 1917, 1918.

BISHOP: Well it would be about the same stuff, I guess. So, we were put into a very slow convoy to come back to Canada, and it was slow because there were a couple of gate vessels in this thing, you know, the kind that lay submarine nets across harbor mouths--

BURG: Yes, so g-a-t-e, the net-laying vessels, this kind of thing.

BISHOP: Yeah. They were seven-knot ships, and so that meant that the whole convoy was seven knots, you see.

BURG: Did you come out from Halifax, General?

BISHOP: No, this was on the way back to Canada, on the way from Glasgow, from the U.K.

BURG: After staff college?

BISHOP: Yes, that's right, on the way back.

BURG: Oh, so you've a slow convoy out.

BISHOP: And the reason that I mention this, is that we found out subsequently that our convoy was being used as a decoy to get the Bismarck out.

BURG: Great! How did it feel to be a piece of cheese?

BISHOP: And, with very little in the way of escort, because the Royal Navy just didn't have the escorts, you know.

BURG: Of course, of course.

BISHOP: Well, it worked, and the Bismarck did come out, because this was a pretty juicy convoy; it was, what? Fifty odd vessels, I guess. And we were within sound of gunfire of the battle between the Bismarck and the Hood off Iceland--

now, we didn't see the action, but we could hear the gunfire.

BURG: I see.

BISHOP: That's the time that the Hood was sunk, remember--

BURG: Uh-huh, sure do.

BISHOP:--they dropped one down the spout; they dropped one right down the funnel. There was nothing but a lucky shot, that's all.

BURG: Yeah, and she went.

BISHOP: Oh, yeah, it just blew up. Well, the Bismarck, of course, in due course was knocked out. But that was sometime later.

BURG: I see.

BISHOP: But they broke our convoy up and we proceeded at our individual best speed to Canada, to Quebec, or wherever they were supposed to be. We had on board, the Hungarian legation that was being kicked out of the U.K. as enemy

aliens, and instead of letting these fellows go straight to Lisbon, from which they could get to Hungary, why, they made them cross the Atlantic on this convoy and then they would go down to New York, and then they would cross the Atlantic again in order to get to Lisbon. And from Lisbon, why then they would go on their way to Hungary. Well, we played bridge with these fellows--they were very good bridge players, as a matter of fact--and I got to know them reasonably well. They were quite decent kind of guys. But it was a long trip, I guess we were at sea for three weeks, or perhaps longer, but we eventually docked at Montreal.

BURG: No losses?

BISHOP: No, no. But we were awfully damned lucky, I can tell you, because there were a lot of submarines in the offing. And also the Focke-Wulf Condors used to come out, you know, from Europe.

BURG: Yes.

BISHOP: And they had enough range to get out to Iceland and

then get back again, you know.

BURG: Four-engine--

BISHOP: Yeah, that's right. Well, we were just damned lucky that we didn't catch it.

BURG: Well if Bismarck had gotten into that convoy, it would have been a slaughter.

BISHOP: Oh, well, they would have picked us off in detail.

BURG: Yes, uh-huh.

BISHOP: Well, I was in Borden then, as I say, Staff Captain Q, later on, DAQMG, and then went back to the U.K. in December of '41. And that was just about the time of Pearl Harbor and on the way back, on my second crossing over to Europe, why, we had an impressive array of escort, of American escort, halfway across the ocean. Once they got halfway across, why they turned around and went home.

BURG: This was a part of the Neutrality Patrol?

BISHOP: Yes, that's right, that's right. We were picked up, I think, by a destroyer and a couple of frigates of the Royal Navy. And we were sure sorry to see a battleship, I think, two carriers, about four cruisers, and a destroyer screen of, I don't know, maybe eight or ten, that we had had halfway across the ocean leave us. They turned around and shoved off back.

BURG: So the American effort, at least as you saw it at that point--we were involved in it a great deal more, perhaps, than most of us realized.

BISHOP: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, sure. And it was very good.

BURG: It was pre-Pearl Harbor, too?

BISHOP: Yes, oh, yes. Well, it was a pretty rich convoy. We had a lot of very famous vessels of world renown, passenger vessels, in this thing as troopers, and it would have been a damned nice target, I can tell you, for the enemy and, of course, we were chock-a-block with troops, just completely filled. But the fact remains; we got to our destination.

BURG: All the Fifth Armored was being transported over?

BISHOP: Yes, that's right, without equipment. And we picked up our equipment when we got over there. We got Lees and Grants, I guess to start with, and we then got Ram tanks which was the Canadian equivalent, the Canadian forerunner, really, of the Sherman. At that time I was still an artillery guy, with artillery badges on, but I played an awful lot of bridge with the divisional commander, General Sansom; got to know him extremely well.

BURG: I better get the spelling of his name.

BISHOP: S-a-n-s-o-m.

BURG: All right.

BISHOP: And he's still alive, as a matter of fact, and is living in New Brunswick, and an extremely nice fellow. Well, he said to me, "Joe," he said, "I'd like to transfer you to the engineering side of ordnance." And I said, "Well, sir,"

I said, "if you feel that I can be of greater use to the war effort by doing this, I will, but I'm not very enthusiastic about it, because I enjoy being an artilleryman and I think, maybe, after I get finished with this staff job that I can get back to a regiment again." And he said, "No," he said, "I want you to do this." So I was voluntarily, compulsorily, transferred from being a major in the artillery to being a lieutenant colonel in the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps, which later became the Royal Canadian Corps of Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. But at that time it was the engineering side of ordnance. And in an armored division, the boss guy was a lieutenant colonel and his deputy was a major, on the boots and battle dress side, whereas in an infantry division, the lieutenant colonel was the boots and battle dress fellow and the assistant was the engineering type, you see. In the armored division, it was mainly a technical responsibility.

BURG: I see.

BISHOP: So I stayed with that for some considerable time.

And I was eventually sent off to the Military College of Science to take a field army equipment course, to which I objected strenuously, because it was about like sending the boss doctor to a course to take out tonsils, you know? Hell, I wasn't personally concerned in measuring guns, or personally involved with fixing engines. The job I had to do was the policy of doing this and the organization to achieve it. And the corps commander agreed, and he said, "Well, the fact remains that the senior people in the engineering--the people at Headquarters, First Canadian Army and 2 Canadian Corps feel that you should attend and it will be detrimental to your progress if you don't." Well, to be quite honest about it, the object of that exercise was to get rid of me, as far as corps was concerned, because the fellow who was the full colonel at the corps level, and I, didn't get on worth a damn. I didn't like the way he did things and I didn't hesitate to say so.

BURG: I see.

BISHOP: So it was his way of sidetracking me, getting me

moved out of 5 Armored Div., and he had hoped that I would fail the course. Well, I fooled him, I got the highest mark of any guy that ever went through the damned thing. And, furthermore, I got a letter from the commandant, afterwards, that as a result of the example which I had shown--I was a lieutenant colonel and the rest of these guys were mostly captains, the odd major, but there were two of us, two lieutenant colonels from the Canadian Army--and he said that as a result of the example that we had set, as two lieutenant colonels, that the whole course had achieved the highest standard of any course that they'd ever had through the place. So it worked out pretty well.

BURG: I see. When did that happen to you, General? Do you remember the date that they sent you to that?

BISHOP: I guess it was, let's see, I went to--that would be '43. Yes, '43.

BURG: You had come back to the United Kingdom in '42?

BISHOP: No--just before Pearl Harbor.

BURG: Actually '41.

BISHOP: The end of '41.

BURG: That's right.

BISHOP: And so I, I was "Creamy" [C.R.E.M.E: Canadian Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers] 5 Armored for some considerable time as a lieutenant colonel. And then I was shipped out to this course and, in the meantime, my division, got shipped down to the central Med, down to Sicily and I was left behind, you see. This happened while I was off on this bloody course, which, I guess was part of the object of the exercise.

BURG: Yes. How long was that course set up to run?

BISHOP: Oh, I don't know, about three or four months, I guess.

BURG: Uh-huh.

BISHOP: So, I came off that, and they didn't know what the

hell to do with me for a while, so I was shipped off to a British corps up in the northern part of England; I served there as a sort of as a reserve deputy director of mechanical engineering with 8th Corps, British. And I served there for, I don't know, two or three months, I guess. And then I became the Assistant Quartermaster General, Waterproofing, of 1st Canadian Army and was stationed at Headquarters, 1st Canadian Army at Leatherhead, L-e-a-t-h-e-r-h-e-a-d. My job was to develop the techniques of applying waterproofing to all classes of military equipment, didn't matter a damn whether it was tanks, or guns, or small arms, or radios, or anything, wireless equipment, anything. The waterproofing kits had been developed and it was my job to expedite delivery, to make sure that we got this material, but more importantly, to train the force in the method of applying it. Which we did. And that was for the Normandy show, you see. Well, I finished my part of the work, oh, about the latter part of '43, or very early in '44, and I didn't know where the beaches were, nor could I care less; in fact, I didn't want to know where they were, you know.

BURG: Uh-huh.

BISHOP: That wasn't my job. My job was to make sure that the waterproofing was, in fact, carried out.

BURG: The idea being that at all unit levels they could carry out the waterproofing of any piece of equipment.

BISHOP: It had to be done by the crews themselves, there was nobody else to do it.

BURG: And the minute you came off the tank landing ships, or whatever--

BISHOP: Yeah, why then you would jettison the waterproofing kit.

BURG: Yeah, you could strip off this stuff.

BISHOP: Yes. Well, as a matter of fact, it worked like a charm. In fact, there were no drownings, as far as I know, of equipment in the Normandy invasion, as far as Canada was concerned. Oh, some mechanical failure, but nothing serious. But, in any case, I was long gone by the

time that happened. I was shipped off down to the central Med--

BURG: Sometime in early '44?

BISHOP: Yes, that's right. Oh, January, February, something of that kind. I was moved down there as a full colonel, as the chief R.C.E.M.E. guy of the 1st Canadian Corps. I joined them when they were down around, oh, the general vicinity of Naples. I was with them throughout the fight up the--on the Mediterranean side--up through Rome. Then we crossed over what they call the Foligno Gap to the Adriatic side, and then we fought all the way up, right up to the Po Valley, and it was just one river crossing after another. It was classic warfare, because you would cross one obstacle, you'd get a buildup, then you put a bridgehead across the next one, and then you'd build that up; just river after river, all the way up to the Adriatic coast.

BURG: My understanding is that those rivers cut down into

the land surface, so that each one--

BISHOP: Yes, that's right.

BURG: --was difficult.

BISHOP: Yeah. Oh, you're damned right.

BURG: Were you director of mechanical engineering for 5th Armored?

BISHOP: No, no, for the 1st Corps. And my job was to develop techniques for the repair and recovery at the corps level. Probably the most important thing was to keep the routes open, keep the main supply routes open. I actually wrote a manual on this thing called Repair and Recovery in the Field, which was put out as an operational instruction to all the formations of 1st Corps, and any time a new formation would join us, why, then I would give their boss guy a copy of this and explain it to him.

BURG: And this was repair and recovery, now, of armored vehicles in the armored divisions but, also, the kinds of

vehicles, the light thin-skinned vehicles that the infantry were using?

BISHOP: Oh, yeah, everything; guns, and the whole works. And the principle I worked on was that the most important thing to do was to keep the supply routes open, because, generally, we had about one lane going up, and about one lane coming back, you know. And if anything broke down, why, then it could impede the whole damned thing.

BURG: And you were using these recovery vehicles that could winch anything on board; they were trailers in effect?

BISHOP: Well, we did, sometimes. As a result of sad experience, I learned some valuable lessons and at the time I took over, why, the practice was that you always put the recovery vehicle at the downstream end of the defile, whether it's a cut, or whether it's a bridge. I mean, if the traffic is moving this way and the bridge is here, that you put the recovery vehicle at this end, you see. Well, hell, this was stupid, because if anything broke down, you couldn't get at

them, you see. So I changed the policy; we put it up at the other end, so you could. We changed that. And I think, more importantly, we established what we called repair patrols, and we used those throughout the Italian campaign and, later on, in northwest Europe to excellent advantage. That consisted of a jeep with a couple of fitters and hand tools, and fast-moving spares, I mean, the ignition and the carburetion spares, that's about all.

BURG: Yes.

BISHOP: And if anything broke down, why, the repair patrol would catch them inside half an hour, and he would either fix the damned thing, or we would get a recovery vehicle and we would haul them clear of the surface. But the idea was to keep the supplies going, you see, because the entire military effort was dependent on getting the ammunition and the supplies, food and everything else, up.

BURG: So your repair patrols actually just worked the roads; they didn't need radio communication?

BISHOP: Oh, they had radio, too.

BURG: Oh, they did.

BISHOP: Yes, they went up the up route, and then down the down route, and then up the up route, and they just kept going like this all the time.

BURG: Anything they saw broken down they took care of.

BISHOP: That's right. And anything that was seriously blocking the traffic and we couldn't fix, why, we'd throw it in the ditch.

BURG: Just clear that road.

BISHOP: Yeah, that's right. Throw it in the ditch and recover it later.

BURG: Right.

BISHOP: But keep the stuff going. So there were a number of techniques of that kind that we developed.

BURG: How about the armor then being used? Were these still our Shermans, or were you using British--

BISHOP: No, we had Shermans.

BURG: You had Shermans.

BISHOP: Uh-huh, by that time.

BURG: And what state of general repair were they in when you were doing this work? That is, were they--

BISHOP: Oh, first class.

BURG: They were not old, aging vehicles, but rather--

BISHOP: Oh, no, they were brand new.

BURG: I see.

BISHOP: And it was complicated by virtue of the fact that we had--there were about four different types of Shermans. There was the one with the Chrysler multi-bank engine, you know, that really--it had thirty cylinders, and it really had five, I guess they were Dodge, blocks, which fed on to

a common base with a take-off.

BURG: Uh-huh.

BISHOP: And it was a pretty good engine, had thirty cylinders. But we had these mammoth Ford V-8s. It was a big overgrown Ford, that's about the size of it, that developed four hundred, five hundred horsepower and were pretty good. We had GM two-stroke diesel; there were two of these engines which worked in tandem. We had problems with those because the fuel injection system of one didn't necessarily conform with the fuel injection rate of its mate. And so these damned things used to work against each other and we had quite a problem. But we solved that, we solved that locally, because with any new tank that we received, why, we took the injectors out, all of them, and we had a bank of injectors that were matched. See, we calibrated them and we would put in a whole new set of calibrated injectors, and then we would take the ones that we had removed and calibrate those and put them in banks, so that we always had these things matched. And from that time on we had no problem.

BURG: Right.

BISHOP: Now, on top of that, there was another brand which had a radial engine in it, so there were four kinds of these things.

BURG: Of an aviation type?

BISHOP: Yes, that's right. And which were very good but they weren't nearly as heavy duty, or as good for heavy duty, as the other ones I mentioned.

BURG: And still you got the spare parts that you needed in a sufficient flow?

BISHOP: Oh, yes. Well, we also established a procedure-- what we called "advanced workshop detachments", and an advance workshop detachment could be of any size that was required to meet the operational need, and we would form these and, in the case of battle casualties, what we would try to do is to fix the damned thing where it was, you see. I mean if the suspension was blown, or the engine was shot

up, or something, why, we would put in a new engine, or we would put on a new suspension right there. Because it was a hell of a lot easier to drive the tank out on its own tracks than it was to get a recovery vehicle up, a transporter, and move it, because that blocked the bloody roads. Well, a big problem that we always had with formations that came under command--1st Canadian Corps at that time had 1st Infantry Div. and 5 Armored; these were the two Canadian formations, but we generally had about, oh, five or six divisions, and maybe two or three independent brigades of allies, you know, maybe the Poles, or it could be the New Zealanders, or the South Africans, or what have you. And to get these fellows to obey the rules was quite a problem. I was completely adamant that we must observe the bridge ratings. I mean, if a bridge was rated class forty, you didn't put a class seventy load on it, you see.

BURG: Sure.

BISHOP: Because if you did, I mean, if you put a transporter with a tank on it, which is class seventy load, why it could

well break the bloody bridge, you see. And it would take days to fix.

BURG: And your engineers had rated the bridges as to their load capacity?

BISHOP: Sure. I used to find these other fellows, regularly, putting class seventy loads on class forty bridges, so I would report this to the corps commander, who would get hold of the divisional commander of the offending outfit and raise hell about it. Because it was just stupid, you see, because if they broke that bailey bridge down, as I say, it would knock out the entire supply line.

BURG: Yes.

BISHOP: And it would take the engineers maybe a couple of days to fix it. Well, we had problems with them but, by and large, it worked out pretty well.

BURG: Did you also have to pick up shot-up vehicles, that is, tanks that had been battle damaged?

BISHOP: Yes. I remember in the Liri Valley, that's down south of Rome--that was when I was very new at this business; I mean, as far as the actual war operations side of it--I was bound and determined that we were going to be very neat about this, so I recovered all these derelict tanks that had been shot-up, you know, brewed, or shot-up. In other words, they were finished, there was no way of putting them back in service again.

BURG: Now I better tell my transcriber that brewed, b-r-e-w-e-d,--

BISHOP: Yes.

BURG: --is "to brew up", like a cup of tea.

BISHOP: Yes, that's right. It meant that they had been burnt out.

BURG: Burnt out, uh-huh.

BISHOP: And very often with the casualties still inside, too.

BURG: Oh, yes.

BISHOP: Well, we actually recovered all these things and I established a dead tank park in one location, with all of these things lined up, and to look at the thing, say from a quarter of a mile away, why you would say, "What a magnificent bunch of tanks", you see.

BURG: Uh-huh.

BISHOP: And not one of them would ever run again. But, as I say, neatness got the best of me and I just decided that this was going to be a very neat thing. And the main reason I did it was to get them out of sight, for one thing, because it's not good for the morale of the forces to see a bunch of dead tanks lying around. And, of equal importance, was to have the opportunity of stripping these tanks, or cannibalizing, in order to get the good bits and pieces off.

BURG: Yes.

BISHOP: I mean, we depended almost exclusively on suspensions

that we recovered off derelict tanks, and tracks also.

Well, we used battle-weary guys to do this. I mean, there were some of these fellows who didn't want to fight any more, and it was quite a problem. Because if you sent them back to the base, what the hell good are they, except to be a load on the machine, you see?

BURG: Uh-huh.

BISHOP: And, also, it encourages other people to follow the same route. So what we did was to put these guys together as a salvage unit and we made them do all the stripping of these derelict tanks. And they didn't like it worth a damn, because it was generally pretty far forward but, nevertheless, that's what we did anyway.

BURG: That's going to include getting bodies of the men out?

BISHOP: No, as a matter of fact, the units themselves always did that.

BURG: Oh, they did?

BISHOP: Yes, the unit that owned the tanks would; they were very fussy about that.

BURG: Taking care of their own men, I see. But these men who had enough, at least for the time being, were still kept up forward and doing pretty dirty work.

BISHOP: Well, we used to get tanks blown up on mine fields, as you can well imagine. But the Boche, at that time, had developed what he called a ratchet mine. It was a box-type mine that was non-magnetic, so you couldn't detect with the mine detector of the usual type. And it was triggered to go off if you drove over it, say, thirty times, on the thirty-first time, why, the bloody thing would blow up. And so we had lost a D-8 or two, and crew, in recovering these things off mine fields. And so I said, "To hell with this game! This isn't very good", you know, because recovery crews and D-8s were awfully damned scarce, and we didn't want to lose them.

BURG: Now a D-8 is--

BISHOP: Is a Caterpillar D-8.

BURG: I see, uh-huh.

BISHOP: Which is a very valuable recovery tool, I can tell you. It's far better than a recovery tank; I mean, it's got more tractive effort and--but, I went to the general staff side of the house and I said, "I want a tank for purposes of recovery, so that I can establish a lane, a recovery lane, into a mine field and run this tank back forty or fifty times on the same track to see if it's going to blow up, and if it does blow up, the worse that will happen is that it will blow the track or suspension.

[Interruption]

BISHOP: --it won't kill the crew.

BURG: I see.

BISHOP: And they said, "No, we're too short of tanks. We can't give you one." Well, about that time, the commander of my heavy recovery company, came into see me one day and

said, "You know up near Rome there, why we happened to come across a U.S. Army Sherman tank that was upside down in a ditch," and he said, "as far as we can make out, it's a perfectly fit tank, except that it's upside down and the battery acid has leaked out but, apart from that, why it's fully fit." He said, "What should I do with it?" And I said, "Ah," I said, "I've got the answer," I said, "take it to the nearest workshop, get them to paint out the American serial numbers"--I shouldn't tell you this--"but paint out the serial numbers and any unit markings there are on it. Paint on a Canadian identification flash and any number that looks reasonably valid as a Canadian number, and we'll use it as my recovery tank." You see?

BURG: Sure.

BISHOP: And we did. And we used that thing very successfully for the balance of the Italian campaign, as long as we were there. Well, at the time we went up to northwest Europe, somehow or other my staff forgot to put it on the landing tables of the landing craft that was going to take

us from Leghorn across to Marseilles, and so there was no room for the damned thing, you see, there was no allocation of space made for it.

BURG: Yes.

BISHOP: I wasn't supposed to even have this thing. So they said, "What shall we do with the tank?" And I said, "Well, I tell you what you do now. You take it down in the workshop here, paint out all the Canadian markings, paint on any number that looks reasonably valid as an American serial number and markings, drive it to the nearest American tank unit, drive it into the tank park, park it, and walk away." I'll bet you that some American colonel is still wondering where the hell the spare tank came from!

BURG: His pay and allowances are probably still held up while he accounts for how his tanks calved and produced a new one!

BISHOP: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

BURG: There are two American officers, actually, that are in trouble; the one that lost it in the first place, and the one you gave it to!

BISHOP: Well, it was a battle casualty as far as he was concerned.

BURG: So they had written it off you think?

BISHOP: Oh, yeah, sure!

BURG: Uh-huh. Oh, boy! Now, the whole corps, the whole 1st Canadian Corps, came over to Marseilles.

BISHOP: That's right. We drove up, we drove from Marseilles up to Paris into Belgium.

BURG: That would have been 1944?

BISHOP: No, '45. Spring of '45.

BURG: I see.

BISHOP: And we actually finished the war in western Holland.

BURG: You became part of 21 Army Group?

BISHOP: That's right.

BURG: And you were director of mechanical engineering for--

BISHOP: For 1st Corps.

BURG:--for 1st Corps?

BISHOP: Yeah.

BURG: Right. Who commanded the corps at that time?

BISHOP: We came back under--Charles Foulkes was corps commander at that time.

BURG: With one f or two f's in his name?

BISHOP: F-o-u-l-k-e-s.

BURG: O.K.

BISHOP: He died, unfortunately, a relatively short time ago.

BURG: Uh-huh.

BISHOP: Was a very good corps commander. And the army commander at that time was [Lieutenant General Henry Duncan Graham] Crerar, 1st Canadian Army.

BURG: Is he still alive, General?

BISHOP: I don't think so. Now, I'm not sure about this, but I don't think so. I haven't seen him for a long time. [Ed. note: General Crerar died April 1, 1965.]

BURG: Right.

BISHOP: I used to play golf with him, once in a while, when I lived in Ottawa after the war; he was a very fine golfer. Well, we came under 1st Canadian Army and this was quite an experience, because we had been under 8th Army, you see, for a hell of a long time. And the way 8th Army did things was the way I liked to see it done, and they were good. Boy, they were a competent outfit!

BURG: This is the outfit that Montgomery had schooled.

BISHOP: Yeah, that's right. And oh, there was General Sir Oliver Leese, L-e-e-s-e, who later on went out to Burma and

achieved great fame out there, was commander, 8th Army, and he was succeeded by General Sir Richard L. McCreery. But, in any case, the staff of 8th Army was about half the size of the staff of 1st Canadian Army, believe it or not. And 8th Army had as many formations under command, in fact, probably more, than the entire 21 Army Group. You know, the 8th Army generally ran around eighteen, twenty divisions, it was a big outfit. But they were competent, let me tell you, and I used to get a hold of my opposite number at army, a fellow named Gerald Taylor, Brigadier Gerald Taylor, because we used to have to move our recovery boundaries, our areas of responsibility, as we moved forward.

BURG: Yes.

BISHOP: Why, we'd move them up, and then we would hand over the part that we relinquished to the line of communication troops, you see.

BURG: So, General, rather than thinking of the boundaries that separate divisions as they advance forward, the boundaries for you were boundaries to the right and left, but

they were also boundaries that went to the rear.

BISHOP: Yes, that's right.

BURG: I see, uh-huh.

BISHOP: So that the question of technical installations within that area didn't matter a damn if they were Canadian or British or anything else, they came under my control, you see.

BURG: Yes. Yes.

BISHOP: And the entire responsibility for repair and recovery within this area of responsibility was the responsibility of 1st Canadian Corps. I mean, complete with repair posts and repair patrols and the whole works. So I'd call Gerald on the telephone and get through with great difficulty, through about four exchanges, and get hold of him and he'd say, "Oh, Joe, how nice to hear you." And he'd say, "Could you come over and have tea this afternoon?" And I'd say, "Well, sir," I said, "I'm a little bit pressed today, but I'll try to get over tomorrow." And he says, "Oh, do,"

he said, "and stay for dinner, please." And so I'd say, "Well, sir," I said, "what I want to do right now is to talk about boundaries, about areas of responsibility." And I said, "I would like to adjust the rear boundary, and also the forward boundary, and also some side responsibilities with 13th Corps", let us say, or whoever it was on the other side. And he'd say, "My friend, there is no problem," he said, "well, will you just get hold of the commander of the L of C people and get hold of 13 Corps and say that I've discussed it with you and you make your own arrangements." And he said, "Let me know what it is." You know.

BURG: Uh-huh.

BISHOP: Which I thought was a good way of running things, and it worked like a charm.

BURG: But Taylor was an officer of great experience dating back to North Africa and Sicily and Italy.

BISHOP: Oh, yes, the whole works. And was a regular officer,

anyway, and a thoroughly charming, charming gentlemen. And well, the entire army staff I found, 8th Army, were first class. We used to treat things kind of informally in 8th Army. We didn't necessarily wear what is a conventional military uniform, for example. The 8th Army tradition, which I suppose sprang up in the desert, I don't know; but they used to wear corduroy pants, let us say, if they happened to feel like it, and always wore a fancy scarf instead of the conventional tie. And oh, there were many things. They always carried a fly switch. This was part of the badge of an officer, a fly switch. Again, from the North African days.

BURG: Yes, rather than a swagger stick.

BISHOP: Yeah, that's right. And also, no holds barred on liberating vehicles. Well, hell. I arrived in northwest Europe with a Ford staff car that belonged to me--I mean, that was the one that was allocated to me, which I never used--a jeep, a caravan that was really surplus to the establishment, but it was a damned good one. It was probably

one of the best ones in the entire theater because my people made it, and it was made to my design: carpet to the wall, oil paintings, the whole works. And also a Humber Super Snipe that had been given to me by Gerald Taylor.

BURG: What kind of a vehicle is that?

BISHOP: Well, it is a very expensive British staff car.

BURG: I see.

BISHOP: And they had retrieved this thing, somewhere, I don't know where they got it from, but it had been completely beat up. It had jeep wheels on it, for example, and a whole bunch of things. And he had this thing rebuilt for me down in the base workshop in Naples and presented this to me as his opposite number in the Canadian Army, which was damned decent of him. Well, I took this thing--of course, I got that on the landing table, I can tell you! I got it up to northwest Europe in due course, and in 1st Canadian Army under Crerar, who was very austere, we were entitled to have

only things that were on the table of organization, you know.

BURG: Yes.

BISHOP: No surplus stuff, also no corduroy pants, and no scarves. None of this stuff, you see, and the rule on vehicles was so damned severe that if I got caught outside the corps area in a car that was surplus to establishment, it would be impounded.

BURG: I see.

BISHOP: Yes, sir. And, in fact, that happened to one of our brigadiers; they took his car away and made him walk, and he was madder than hell about this, and I don't blame him!

BURG: Yes. So your caravan and your Humber--

BISHOP: Well, I kept them in the corps area. I was damned careful. If I was going up to army, I'd take my staff car.

BURG: The Ford?

BISHOP: Yeah, that's right.

BURG: Uh-huh.

BISHOP: And I eventually acquired also a Lincoln Zephyr, twelve cylinder, that was given to me. So, as I say, at the end of the war I wound up with a Lincoln, that was given to me by a friend of mine, with whom I had served in the U.K. with 5 Armored, who was a great practical joker. Well, somehow or other, he had liberated this Lincoln, and it was really shot. It didn't have any windshield, and it didn't have any headlights, it was full of bullet holes, the upholstery was all shot, the engine was completely shot; in fact, the car was just about gone, you know. He knew that I had one in Canada, you see, which was in storage, and so he says to me, "Joe," he said, "I've got just the car for you." He said, "We found a Lincoln Zephyr and," he said, "I want to give it to you." Well, I knew what was coming, of course. So I said, "Well, Spike, that's awful damned decent of you." And I said, "When would you like to hand it over?" So it was agreed that I would have a recovery vehicle at such and such a place on the following day, so I did. And I went and looked at this

thing and, of course, I knew it would be completely shot up because, otherwise, Spike wouldn't be giving it to me. But I knew something that he didn't, and that was that I had a third line workshop, an armored troops workshop which had about three hundred fifty guys in it, that was sitting completely idle in a place called Hertogenbosch [Netherlands], which is about, oh, thirty, forty miles away, and had come up from Italy. It didn't have a job in the shop; it was completely idle, you see.

BURG: Uh-huh.

BISHOP: So I got hold of a CREME Corps troops who was a professor of mechanical engineering at Queens, really, and is now retired--retired as dean there a year or two ago--and I told him the problem, and I said, "Now look, I've got this damned car that was given to me as a joke, but," I said, "I want to just turn this the other way around." So I said, "I want you to put this into the armored troops workshop and fix it." And I said, "I don't give a damn if you have to go to Brussels, or Paris, or where you go, or how you get the

parts, but fix the car." You see? And he said, "Yes, sir," he said, "but how much time can we have?" I said, "Well," I said, "I think two weeks ought to be enough." Well, you know, they completely rebuilt this damned thing, and they managed to acquire a few parts here and there but the most difficult, the headlight lenses they made out of plexiglass, and they did a beautiful job on it. They fixed the body, they filled all the bullet holes and they had the thing reupholstered, and they put in an eight-cylinder engine. They got an eight-cylinder engine out of some other vehicle, instead of the twelve; it didn't matter. They put a shaft extension on it so that the fan would be up close enough to the radiator, and I drove that thing for the balance of the time I was in northwest Europe but, again, keeping it within the corps area.

BURG: Yes.

BISHOP: And that was a beautiful automobile, really. Well, when I got the thing all finished, complete with the corps flash of seventeen on it, and the Canadian Army flash, and all this kind of stuff, and a reasonably official-looking

serial number on it, why, I took it over to show Spike, you see. And I said, "Spike, I can never thank you enough, you know--"

BURG: Just what I'd always wanted!

BISHOP: Yeah!

BURG: A perfect vehicle.

BISHOP: Oh, yeah! Well, I had a hell of a time hanging onto it, you see, because there were a lot of generals who felt that they should have it. And it was only the corps commander that protected me. And I explained to the corps commander how I got it. And also the Humber; there were a number of people who had been sniping at it, trying to get it. And he said, "O.K." he said, "now you have my word that these are yours and they are not to be taken from you, except on my personal authority. And anybody that tries to take it, refer them to me." So, I kept them until I came home. Which I did in August, got home just prior to V-J day.

BURG: Let me ask you, you spoke of the informality in 8th Army and that things were a bit more austere when you joined 1st Canadian Army.

BISHOP: Oh, yes!

BURG: How about general operations? Was it your impression that things were done better, more efficiently and competently with 8th Army, and did that continue to be your impression--

BISHOP: Well, I wouldn't want to say that.

BURG: --or did 1st Canadian learn?

BISHOP: I would say that they did it with a hell of a lot smaller staff. I think from the standpoint of the end results, the competence, that they were about equal.

BURG: Oh, you do?

BISHOP: Yes.

BURG: O.K. How about operating conditions for you between Italy and northwest Europe? Were things radically different

in northwest Europe? Did you face new sets of problems there?

BISHOP: Well, we always seemed to be in what you might call an administrative desert, because at the time that we were in central Med, at that time northwest Europe was building up, you see.

BURG: Yes.

BISHOP: And so, if we wanted new equipment, or certain spares, and that sort of thing, why, the general answer that we would get through ordnance was, "Well, sorry, they're not available because of the buildup in northwest Europe for the Second Front." Well, then we got up to northwest Europe, where we thought we would be in a land of plenty, and the answer then was, "Sorry, we can't let you have this because of the buildup in the Pacific", you see.

BURG: I see, I see.

BISHOP: Well, we always got enough to get by on.

BURG: But the horn of plenty never was flowing for you.

BISHOP: No, no, we never did get it.

BURG: And your vehicles remained the same? Armored divisions were still using our Shermans--

BISHOP: Yes, yes.

BURG: --so you never had the--

BISHOP: We never had the British tanks, no.

BURG: --"Valentine" or "Churchill", or anything like this. And did you operate in the same way in your recovery techniques?

BISHOP: Well we still stuck to ours; we stuck to our 1st Canadian Corps techniques with no regard to what 2nd Corps wanted to do, or anybody else. Why, we still used the same techniques of repair patrols, repair posts, and all that sort of stuff.

BURG: Did the Americans, by the way--were you near them? Did your unit adjoin any American units?

BISHOP: No, no.

BURG: Never did.

BISHOP: No.

BURG: So you never really watched their techniques of handling recoveries?

BISHOP: I got the Legion of Merit, believe it or not.

BURG: From us?

BISHOP: Yeah. As to why the hell I got it, I don't know, but it was rather amusing. I was in--by this time, I was in Ottawa. It was after the war, and I was either Director of Mechanical Engineering of Canadian Army, as I was after the war for the entire Canadian force, or was vice-adjutant general, I've forgotten which. But, in any case, I was invited to the U.S. Embassy to an investiture to receive the Legion of Merit, and there were, oh, I don't know, two or three others, I guess, and so the second secretary, or military attache, or somebody, reads off this citation, you see, about this guy who practically won the war single-handed. I whispered in

my wife's ear, I said, "Gee, quite a guy; he's really pretty hot stuff!" And then he reads out, "We accordingly award to Colonel Bishop the Legion of Merit in the degree of Officer." Well, I was never more amazed, because I had never served directly with the Americans at all. Oh, I suppose it's one of these things that there were so many offered to the Canadian forces and they were asked to make nominations and my name was put in.

BURG: Or it could have been because of your work with the Lincoln Zephyr, you never can tell!

BISHOP: Yeah. The modification of it to eight cylinders!

BURG: Yes, yes! Aided us in our own mechanical development.

BISHOP: That's right, uh-huh.

BURG: Now in the course of your work, did you ever come in contact with some of these high-ranking American officers and British officers? For example, did you ever have a chance to converse with Bernard Montgomery?

BISHOP: Oh, yeah, I met him several times. And the last time I saw him was here in Vancouver, as a matter of fact, when I was still area commander, I guess. He came out on a tour.

BURG: You had met him though at the front?

BISHOP: Oh, yeah. Oh, I had met him in England, and I met him central Med and, later on, I guess, in northwest Europe. I didn't know him well, but I had met him.

BURG: And these conversations that you had were with regard to your military duties?

BISHOP: No, not really. He would come and address a whole group of officers, of which I would happen to be one. But I got talking to him when he was out here and he had just been--I've forgotten where the hell he had been--he had been to some foreign country and was discussing their problems and--by God, I think he had been in China--and he says, "You know," he said, "I think I'll go down to Cuba," he said, "I think Castro needs straightening out."

BURG: That fits the picture that I have of him!

BISHOP: Oh, yeah, he was the most supreme egotist of any guy I ever came across, bar none, let me tell you! Now, he was a very capable fellow, however, and he was a great leader of men, of that there is no doubt.

BURG: Uh-huh.

BISHOP: A certain amount of legerdemain, I think, was attached to this but, nevertheless, it was pretty effective. I think [Field Marshal Harold Rupert Leofric] Alexander really was the hero, you know, as far as North Africa was concerned, because the North African plan was pretty well complete by the time that Montgomery came along. But the additional troops that were required happened to coincide with Montgomery's arrival.

BURG: I see.

BISHOP: And so it was merely a matter of putting into effect the plan which Alexander had already made, and [General Sir

Henry Maitland] Wilson. And so--and I suppose Eisenhower had had a lot to do with it, too. But, no doubt about it, that Montgomery got the credit for the success in North Africa, and also in Sicily, and about that time, why, he went back up to northwest Europe, up to 21 Army Group.

BURG: But you saw him in action when he was addressing officers and--

BISHOP: And troops--

BURG:--and troops.

BISHOP: Oh, yeah.

BURG: So you saw at first hand the kind of effect he had on the men and officers.

BISHOP: That's right. Uh-huh. Boy, what a guy! I remember attending a meeting down in the theater in Brighton, with all officers of the rank of lieutenant colonel and above, I guess, in the Canadian Army, and the damned theater was full. And he said, "There will be no smoking, of course," says he. And

he said, "Furthermore, there will be no coughing," he said, "I shall interrupt my address periodically for one minute, during which you may cough if you wish to."

BURG: And this he said to a roomful of Canadians?

BISHOP: Yeah, that's right. Oh, quite a guy! Oh, he was a powerful, dynamic fellow.

BURG: So far as you were concerned, serving under him was pleasurable; that is, he was a man who knew what he was doing?

BISHOP: Oh, he knew what he was doing. Yeah, yeah.

BURG: Uh-huh.

BISHOP: Damned right. And the people under him did, too. In fact, I didn't come across any bad generals in the course of the war. We had General--oh, hell, I'll think of it in a minute--but, in any case, he had been corps commander in Italy at one time. And was transferred to another appointment at the request of General Sir Oliver Leese, who was a very, very pleasant kind of a guy and he liked jokes, and he liked--oh,

he just couldn't stand having somebody around that was dour all the time, you see. And he couldn't stand this fellow, so he had him moved. This fellow was out here a short time ago, talking to the Canadian Club, and I was asked to introduce him, which I did. Oh, hell, well, I'll think of it. [Lt. Gen. E.L.M. Burns] But, in any case, I included in those remarks the fact that the Canadian Army had been very fortunate to have people like him and people like Crerar and Guy Simonds and Chris Vokes, and so on and so forth, and that there were very few of these pre-war, regular army officers who didn't achieve a very considerably higher rank than they had in '39; I can tell you, very few, indeed. And the majority of the senior officers in 1st Canadian Army were, indeed, regular officers. Now there was the odd exception, Bruce Matthews, for example, became a major-general, and there are a few others, but not very damned many.

BURG: Uh-huh.

BISHOP: Most of them were people who had come up through the regular army. And so it really speaks very well for the

standard of the pre-war army and the training that they had.

BURG: Yes. The same remark has been made about ours.

BISHOP: Yeah.

BURG: That there was a surprising amount of talent there that was efficiently able to create the millions of troops and divisions and handle them fairly well in combat.

BISHOP: It was General Burns I was thinking of, General Tommy Burns. Well, he eventually achieved very considerable fame after the war on peace-keeping activities in the Middle East, and more latterly, on the disarmament activities in Geneva. He was the Canadian representative for a number of years and was a first class brain, first class officer. But, as I say, he was not what I would call a jovial type.

BURG: Yes, yes. In the latter days of the war, do you recollect hearing of the--well, for example, the Montgomery-Eisenhower disputes, if we can attach that name to it--the differences of opinion about how the war should be conducted?

BISHOP: Oh, we heard rumbles, but not much. You know, at the corps level, why, we would get our directions from army, of course. As to what went on at army group or theater level, that would not really concern us a great deal.

BURG: Right. Were you concerned at all with the operations, the drop of parachutists at Arnhem and Nijmegen? Were you part of the force trying to connect up with those men?

BISHOP: Well, we never did cross the Rhine.

BURG: Oh, I see.

BISHOP: No, we swung west into Western Holland, and our job was to clean out [Generaloberst Johannes] Blaskowitz and his guys, of the 5th German Army, I think it was. And they had a pretty sizeable force there. They had about three or four corps, I guess, and it was our job to clean them up, which we did. As a matter of fact, Blaskowitz capitulated about four or five days before V-E day, which is something that is not normally known. And we actually had a food truce with the Germans and actually we supplied the Dutch, supplied

the Dutch right through the German lines, actually. That was, I'd say, several days before V-E day.

BURG: I wasn't aware of that.

BISHOP: But that was done by agreement with the Germans, who knew that they'd had it, you know, and they felt, well, there was no reason why the Dutch ought to continue to starve if we had the means to feed them. Because, matter of fact, they didn't; they just didn't have the food themselves.

BURG: Uh-huh.

BISHOP: So we ran food convoys through the German lines, and the only rule was that we had to get them out; that they couldn't start before a certain hour, and they must be out of the German territory by a certain hour in the afternoon, five o'clock or four o'clock, whatever it was.

BURG: Right.

BISHOP: And so the responsibility I had there was to make sure that there were enough recovery vehicles with the convoys

that if anybody broke down that we could get them out, you know.

BURG: Uh-huh.

BISHOP: Get them out in the required time.

BURG: Right. So, actually, 1st Canadian Corps peels off to the coast at that stage.

BISHOP: Yes, I finished the war up in Apeldoorn--which is--no, in Hilversum, I should say, which is quite a nice place.

BRIGADIER GENERAL J. W. BISHOP (Retired)
4613 Bellevue Drive
Vancouver, B.C. V6R 1E7

January 18th 1977

Dear Mr. Burg:

Thank you for your good wishes for 1977. Let me reciprocate! Sorry for the delay in replying. The holiday season plus the wedding of our son Jim rather interfered.

I've gone over the transcript and must admit that if I were doing it over again, I would be more careful of the composition of my sentences. Be that as it may, I think it's an accurate transcript so have made relatively few changes.

There is certainly some confusion as to which way I was headed across the Atlantic during '41 and I should clear that up. After Staff College which finished early in '41, I returned to Canada via Liverpool, Glasgow, and a 7 knot convoy to join HQ 5 Armoured Div, I returned to the UK very late that year. I stayed there until posted to HQ 1 Cdn Corps as DDME with the rank of Col, arriving in Italy early in '44. We moved up to NW Europe early in '45 and finished the war in western Holland. I got back to Canada just before VJ day and was posted to Ottawa as Director of my service until '48. Then National Defence College and Vice AG as Brig. before going to Washington in Jan. '52

The three copies of the agreement are enclosed, duly signed. Let me know if your staff encounter any questions.

It was a pleasure to meet you and I do hope that our paths cross again.

Sincerely,

