

Arkinstall, Cy: my Queen's Own Rifles of Canada recollections

[Caroline Duncan interviewing Cy Arkinstall on April 19, 2010.]

00:00 Cy Arkinstall: But then, when we were in Hanover, had two weeks leave with my, I phoned my aunt and uncle and asked if I could come over and visit them, and they said yes, they would love to have me. So I got my dress uniform and away we went and my cousin, she asked me, "Will you take me dancing?", and I said "Certainly." Got there, and I got all dressed up, and she was all dressed up, pretty as hell. Got to the dance hall - [it was?] all ballroom dancing and I just froze. ...

Caroline Duncan: Oh! ... Did you know how to do any of it? ...

CA: Not well, I struggled through my ...

CD: You struggled through.

CA: Yeah. I guess I didn't do too bad, 'cause she was still talking to me after the dance.

CD: Yeah. Would you have been in your uniform?

CA: Yes. Yes.

CD: So you, you would've looked good anyway.

CA: I think most people were curious about my uniform, ... so they didn't notice all my errors and goof-ups. ...

CD: But you were, you were proud to wear the uniform then.

CA: I certainly was. Yeah.

CD: What do you think makes ... The Queen's Own [The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada] [The QOR of C] ... a unique regiment?

CA: Well, it's the oldest. ... Actually, I imagine it's the oldest, and it's a rifle regiment, and we did them a fast pace and everything. Ah, during the war, like when I was overseas during the war, I was with the Regina Rifles [Royal Regina Rifles]. And then came back to Patricia's [Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry] [PPCLI], and it was nice to get back to a rifle regiment again. The fast pace and everything. And we did the "Double Past" - what they call a "Double Past". We doubled past [inaudible] [the salute?] rather than march.

CD: Oh, okay.

CA: So ... it's a, it's different and ...

CD: Now you, and you said you were an instructor. What kinds of things would you be ... would you be teaching?

CA: Everything. Drills. And, I was sent to ... One other [very unique?] thing I enjoyed about The Queen's Own [The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada] [The QOR of C] was I was picked to go to ... the guard school [Home Guard?] in England, to take the guard's course, and I'd become a guard's instructor, and ... I enjoyed that very much. And then ... being fortunate, and being an instructor, they sent me on the first. When they ... changed the trade for Infantry at ... Group Four, I was on the first course that took that, so I was very proud and pleased to be selected to go to those two places.

CD: Very nice.

CA: [the next time?]

CD: Yeah. And did you give training in, in weapons as well?

CA: Well, yes. ... Heavy weapons.

CD: Heavy weapons.

CA: [Mm-hmm [yes]

CD: What type of weapons? ...

CA: Mortars, anti-tanks, various things ... It was enjoyable. One thing about the Infantry, like, I was a, what they call a, say a 'Anti-Tank Group Three'. [In other areas?], they had to, you still had to go to Camp Borden [Canadian Forces Base Borden] [CFB Borden] and take the course over again. Even though you instruct the darn course, you had to go to Borden [Canadian Forces Base Borden] [CFB Borden] and you take the course over again, so, well, then you [inaudible] Group Three. ... It was, it was interesting. I enjoyed it, and. I really didn't want to get out of the army, but ... I did. Which was ... I got a job with the ... provincial government [Government of British Columbia] the day after I got out, so ...

CD: Okay. In British Columbia?

CA: Yup.

CD: Yeah. And do you live in Victoria now?

CA: Yeah.

CD: I'm writing this. So you going to attend all of the events over the next three days?

CA: No, I don't believe so. ... I unfortunately, I'm not, I'm not driving anymore. I have to depend on my wife to take me everywhere, or, the bus.

CD: Yes.

CA: Or a taxi.

CD: Right.

CA: So I don't ... really get out too often.

CD: Right.

CA: Mm-hmm [yes]. But it is nice to see some of our old friends. But most of these people I don't recognize. 'Cause that's the 2nd Battalion [The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada] [The QOR of C].

CD: Okay.

CA: Mm-hmm [yes].

CD: And then, over, probably over the course of the evening, ... tonight, even, and tomorrow ... there'll be other people that you'll, that you'll recognize.

CA: Oh yes, yes, I'm sure there is. ...

CD: Well, thank you so much for speaking with me.

CA: Oh, you're most welcome.

CD: Thank you.