CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

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INTERVIEWEE: Hilary Jaeger

INTERVIEWER: David W. Edgecombe

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Transcription of Interview Number 31D 8 JAEGER

BGen Hilary Jaeger

Interviewed March 13, 2007

By Amber Lloydlangston

INTERVIEWER: Canadian War Museum Oral History Program interview with Brigadier General Hilary Jaeger recorded on 13 March 2007 at Ottawa. Interviewed by Amber Lloydlangston. Tape one, side.

JAEGER: My name is Hilary Jaeger, last name spelled J-A-E-G-E-R.

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

JAEGER: That is correct.

INTERVIEWER: Could you please provide some basic biographical data?

JAEGER: Of course. I was born 1 August 1959 in Cambridge, England. I moved around a bit through my childhood. People ask if I was a military brat. The answer is no. I was an academic brat, one university town to the other. I first joined the Canadian Forces in the Reserves in 1976: West Nova Scotia Regiment. Served with the Reserves until the point I entered medical school. Transferred to the Regular Force in 1983.

Jobs, once I qualified as a physician, started in Calgary with 1 Field Ambulance, 1 Service Battalion. Posted to Germany to 4 Service Battalion in 1989. Company commander with 4 Field Ambulance from 1991 until I left Europe—interspersed in there my first tour with Operation HARMONY in the former Yugoslavia in 1992. Returned to 1 Field Ambulance in Calgary in 1993. Attended Canadian Forces College 1995-96; promoted lieutenant-colonel and commanding officer of 2 Field Ambulance 1996 through 1999. Instructed at Canadian Land Forces Command and Staff College, also known as Foxhole U 1999-2000. Promoted colonel in 2000. Posted to Ottawa where I've served as director of Health Services Operations and medical advisor to the chief of land staff and surgeon general. And the six and a half years I've lived in Ottawa is the longest period of time I've ever lived anywhere in my life.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me when and why you joined the Reserves?

JAEGER: I joined the Reserves in the fall of 1976 when I was, in fact, the minimum age of 17. Well, some people joined at 16 but there was sometimes, I think, a little bit of jiggling about birthdates going on for some of my Reservists. I have always been interested in the joining the military so it was a question of, really, when can we start and how do we get started? There are funny stories about trying to join the Reserves in 1976. Specifically found out that there was a Reserve unit operating in my area quite by

accident by seeing a newspaper ad for Militia day through the summer training period at Camp Aldershot and actually just went as a member of the public to see their display on Militia. And until that point didn't realize there was a training area right very close to home and a unit that ran in Kemptville, Nova Scotia. And I was attending Acadia University, which was about 15 kilometres up the road in Wolfville. So then set out as a completely wet behind the ears person who didn't know anything about the military to join this unit that was right down the street. And that was actually a difficult process. There was no centralized recruiting or centralized recruit processing as there is now through the Canadian Forces Recruiting Centres. Every unit ran their own system. And, of course, because they're Reservists they only run it on Tuesday and Thursday nights and on the odd weekend. And you had to catch the right person at their desk who knew anything, and who may not give you the correct information. So it was a long and convoluted process that led through to Halifax Armory on one night to a Pizza Hut in Windsor, Nova Scotia where B Company of the unit paraded. And then subsequently back to Camp Aldershot where I finally did enroll about a month and a half after starting this process.

INTERVIEWER: You began your studies in math and engineering and then shifted to medicine. Can you tell me why?

JAEGER: Actually I started university studies in chemistry and then decided that actually just inorganic chemistry smelled too bad even for me to do on a long term basis, and that's when I ended up in mathematics and engineering. And actually went to graduate school in aerospace engineering, testing the often espoused theory that education is never wasted. I spent three years in aerospace engineering grad school, never got a degree and I haven't used anything that I studied since, or at least not in any concrete way.

Why did I decide to shift to medicine? There's two answers. One is that my father is an engineer and I realized somewhere along the way that I wasn't nearly as smart as he was and so decided that spending a lifetime measuring yourself against your father's accomplishments and coming up short was not a particularly comfortable way to spend your life. And the other was I had always wanted to join the Canadian Forces and at the time most engineering occupations were still closed to women. So while I really wanted to be a combat engineer, and build bridges and subsequently blow them up—or perhaps not in that order—that was not an option. So I had to find something else to do. And right about the same time a female medical officer by the name of Wendy Clay was making headlines, or was getting a little bit of press coverage anyway, as being a base flight surgeon and receiving her pilot wings. And I said I thought maybe medicine is one of those avenues where the occupations for women are not artificially constrained. So I transferred to study medicine.

INTERVIEWER: Could you describe your post graduate training in the military?

JAEGER: Sure. The first of the courses that I took along that vein was the Canadian Land Forces Command and Staff College course which is a course designed for mid-

grade captains, captains who've been the military maybe 7, 8, maybe 10 years total, depending whether or not they were sponsored through school. I was the only physician, in fact the only health services officer and the only woman on my course of 61 students, including – there were about 10 international military students. This course focused on junior officers—captains—so it's a very tactical level course. It teaches you how to do military staff work at the battalion to brigade levels: operations orders, administration orders, overlay orders, assigning troops to task, doing what we then called military estimates to come up with a plan to conduct a certain kind of military operation. Six months long. I did that in 1991, from January through the end of June. And, of course, the military being the military, my husband did the same course from July through December. So even though we were posted together at that point in time we didn't see each other for a year, which was lot of fun.

Canadian Forces Staff College is a course for majors held at the Canadian Forces College in Toronto. I did that from August of 1995 through June of 1996. There were a little bit over 100 students then and a substantial number of international students. This one is tri-service. It includes officers from army, navy, air force and a wide range of support occupations. A very broad military education whereas the previous institution was more of a training institution towards achieving competence in certain specific functions. Really, the Canadian Forces College is the first of the military educational institutions I attended. Enjoyed it tremendously, made contacts there that are still relevant today. A substantial number of my classmates are fellow general and flag officers. And it's always nice to be able to pick up the phone and call somebody you know as opposed to trying to break the ice when you need to call them on an issue.

A National Securities Studies Course, which is now called a National Securities Studies Program, is a relatively recent evolution in Canadian Forces officer education. It rose from the ashes of the National Defence College which was sort of shut down—I'd have to look it up, or you're an historian, you can look it up [laughs]. It is the last, the most senior of officer educational opportunities run by the Canadian forces for senior colonels—those extensively believed to have flag officer potential. I attended that in January through June of 2003, I think. Yes, 2003. Very small class. I think there were only eight other Canadian officers in the course. And a fascinating, fascinating chance to study international relations, geo-politics, geo-strategic issues, and the somewhat less fascinating but equally important, to understand the machinery of government in Canada and who really gets to decide what and who really does set the priorities and how the government of Canada really works, which is something I don't think many Canadians really understand to a great degree.

INTERVIEWER: Did the SWINTER and CREW trials generate opportunities for you?

JAEGER: I believe that they did although at the time I wasn't really aware of the politics or the storms of controversy or even, frankly, what the trials entailed. From my perspective what I can tell you is that as a senior medical student meeting a career manager for the first time I was asking for postings to an army field unit and I was told that this was not possible. And I thought that this was back around again being told that

doors were closed and I didn't react tremendously positively to this news. But by the time I got to half-way through my internship and almost ready for the first posting message to be released, lo and behold, it was all of a sudden possible to be posted to 1 Field Ambulance in Calgary whereas, sort of, a year and a half earlier this was not possible. So I can only attribute that posting opportunity to SWINTER, I believe. This was 1987 was the posting season when I travelled from Toronto to Calgary. And I was, I believe, the first medical officer posted in permanently to—not as part of the trial but as the post trial real posted people. So, in that respect, they certainly did generate opportunities for me. CREW less so because I was posted into a support unit that was the target of the SWINTER trials, but the CREW opportunities came fairly fast on the heels thereafter.

INTERVIEWER: Could you describe your work with 1 Field Ambulance, please?

JAEGER: Sure, I'll do my best. That was my first posting after finishing my post-graduate training at York-Finch General Hospital. And I arrived at 1 Field Ambulance still wearing the lieutenant's rank because, as a medical officer, although the working rank is captain, you have to have documentary proof that you actually have a license to practice before they will action your promotion. So I had finished the training but, of course, as usual, the paperwork was lying a little bit behind. So I reported in as a lieutenant to my new unit. And I can't remember if it was the commanding officer or deputy commanding officer who said, "Welcome to 1 Field Ambulance. Did they tell you about the Boy Scouts?" At which point I said, "Thanks sir. And no, they didn't."

The Boy Scouts in Alberta were having a major jamboree, thousands of Boy Scouts congregating in a place called Sylvan Lake, which was to start about 10 days or two weeks after my arrival. And I had been tasked as the camp medical officer along with a contingent of medics and associated other supporting folks. It was probably the busiest week I'd ever spent in my life. I saw over 500 patients by myself in a seven day period, which was quite a lot. In retrospect, I probably should have been smarter and said, "Do you think maybe there's somebody else who should do it because I still did not have my license come through?" And one thing, looking after civilians was fraught with danger in the military anyway, and looking after children is doubly sensitive. And to do so before you've received your license to practice was actually naïve and foolish. But in the end, no harm was done. I think the Boy Scouts got very good care and, if I learned anything about the scouting movement, it's that the young scouts themselves are much more mature and responsible than those that purport to be their adult leaders because the injuries the Boy Scout leaders managed to come up with were many and varied.

So my career at 1 Field Ambulance got off to a roaring start. After that the daily routine was, most of us assigned to 1 Field Ambulance spent most of our working days actually at the base hospital. We were sort of the backbone of the base medical staff and only went to the field to train with our platoons and companies during either a field ambulance unit exercise or a brigade level exercise. So we did not spend quite as much time on the field, for instance, as the medical officers who were assigned to the infantry or the armoured regiments did. But still, it was very rewarding time when we did get to go.

Nobody liked to be the one doctor who was left behind during major training periods. You had to leave somebody behind, and I will use the term sick, lame and lazy. Somebody had to be left behind to look after those who were not well enough to go on the training exercise. That was a very lonely and not very much sought after experience.

Spent a year with 1 Field Ambulance and then, for no particular reason other than postings were fairly rapid and came in close succession those days, was posted over as the unit medical service officer to 1 Service Battalion which put me in the category of medical officers who deployed to the field much more often. That was an interesting year. I re-established connections with the man who became my husband. We had known each other back in our Reserve careers much earlier and sort of drifted apart but found ourselves both in the Regular Force and both posted to the same base, so re-established that connection. We actually bought a home together the fall of the year I was posted to 1 Service Battalion. But to give you an idea of how busy we were, how fast the—you couldn't even call it operational tempo because it wasn't operations that were driving it—how fast the training tempo was, we bought the house in October of 1988, sold it in June of 1989 and never cut the grass. So we set some kind of a Calgary real estate record there.

INTERVIEWER: Could you tell me about RV '89 please?

JAEGER: Yeah, sure. RV '89 was the last major exercise I did in Canada before my husband and I were posted to Germany. The RV—or Rendezvous—series of exercises were infamous, I think, in the Canadian Forces as the attempt to get Canadian soldiers used to working at levels above brigade. So virtually every person in a green uniform from across Canada would be blasted out of their comfy little cubby holes and assembled either in Gagetown or in Wainwright to exercise together. And this really was a phenomenally creative undertaking because none of our areas are really big enough to host that scale of exercise. Nor were we really established, or equipped, to do so. We—the army—was making it up on the fly as we went along.

RV '89 was held in Wainwright, April through June of 1989. The entire exercise was 12 weeks long. I got there a little bit late because I had been on my flight surgeon's course prior, immediately prior, to the exercise. And when I arrived there the unit had already set its bivouac, had been there five or six days by the time I arrived. I say the unit which is a bit of a misleading term. Under the division construct for RV '89, all of the three Canadian service battalions had been – sort of had omelets made out of them. Instead of having 1, 2 and 5 Service Battalions deployed as themselves to support brigades, their component companies were taken apart and re-combined to create a transportation battalion, a maintenance battalion and a supply battalion who altogether were supposed to support the division. So really making a division support group for this divisional level exercise instead of having brigade group service battalions. So, in fact, two of our sub units were new to me but battalion headquarters and maintenance company came from my parent unit.

Anyway, I arrived a few days after the start of the exercise to find the cooks—as only military cooks can do with their sense of humor—had put on the menu chalkboard the words "89 and a wakey", counting the number of days left in RV '89. Now, that was the era of long exercises, long deployments into a training area where you would cover everything from individual skills, range work, section level work-up training platoons. And at the end of the whole thing there would be the division level exercise. So you had to appreciate that we sat in the bivouac for twelve weeks for the sake of – I think the actual division level exercise was four days long.

So, most people didn't mind too much. You got field operations allowance, didn't have to pay for meals. All of the units in those days set up canteens, sold alcohol across the bar. Their unit non-public accounts swelled tremendously as a result of RV deployments. Those were the days of a harder drinking Canadian Forces than we see now. In fact, Labatt's put out special cans of blue with a special RV '89 logo on them. I believe they minted 250,000 of those RV '89 cans and sold them all out with two weeks left to go in the exercise. I actually did the mental exercise of calculating the average consumption of beer across the exercise, taking into account how many people were there, how long they were there. And the average daily consumption was over three beers per person, per day. And, of course, when you consider many people drank none or only one per day, there were some people who were doing a tremendous bit to contribute to the unit non-public fund account. Not the healthiest way to live your live in the Canadian Forces. We're a little smarter about things like that now. But that's the way it was when I was a very junior level officer.

So RV '89 came and went with a bit of a bang. Lessons I learned from this deployment is that bored soldiers get into trouble. And when you sit – by the time you came up to the 9th, 10th, 11th weeks we had a lot of bored soldiers who were finding creative ways to get into trouble. So the MPs, as the time went on, the MPs got busier and busier and the number of charges laid got longer and longer. And I chalk it up quite simply to the fact that the soldiers had been there too long and had too much time on their hands. What else can you learn from this kind of deployment?

One thing that I learned is that you should never be deployed the same places as your other half—with anyone you're romantically entangled with—because it's actually just better to leave them at home and be done with it than to have them nearby but off-limits. So we sort of carried that philosophy further on through the rest of our careers. I also learned it is a very, very difficult thing to sell a home by long distance, especially given the fact that this is pre-cell phone era and also the communications technology didn't let you do very much—also pre-fax. So, trying to sell our house at the same time was interesting but proved to be feasible in the end—just. And it's difficult to arrange a posting and a move when you're living in a tent in Wainwright, but this can also be done.

We went from there to get ready for our posting to Germany. This posting had been made necessary because our commanding officer had said, when he was advised that my husband and I were going to get married, his immediate reaction was "Christopher, you're posted." He didn't say anything about me being posted but I think my husband

kind of resented being singled out, to this day. And we had to sort of decide whether we were going to let the system do its thing for us, or whether we were going to try and influence things. We tried to influence the system and were reasonably successful. I called my first commanding officer, the gentleman who had been CO of 1 Field Amb when I first reported in to Calgary, but had then been moved to 4 Field Am. I phoned him and said did he know of any openings for medical officers in Germany? And he said, "Can you be there tomorrow?" I didn't know at the time that the medical officer for 4 Service Battalion had been removed from her position after getting romantically entangled with one of her medics. So he had a unit without a medical officer that was in desperate need.

And it was relatively easy to arrange that posting for me. It was just a matter of getting the Logistics branch career manager to find something acceptable for my other half. Now he wasn't at the time my other half. We actually got married after we left Calgary and before we got on the plane to go to Germany. Got married in what we considered our hometown, which was Halifax. Then took – we were still flying service flights—Boeing 707s—from Trenton in towards Lahr with a stop off in London. We actually got off the plane in London and took our honeymoon in Ireland before getting back on the next week's service flight to continue our trip into Germany. So as we have done many times in our career, we made both the R and D staff and the compensation and benefits staff scratch their heads as they figured out how to process the paperwork to show that two single people left Canada but one married couple arrived in Germany. And I think we've been poster children for interesting personnel management problems ever since.

INTERVIEWER: Could you describe your time in Germany?

JAEGER: Sure. It was a very interesting time to arrive in Germany although we didn't know that at first. We arrived in the summer of 1989 and, of course, those with a historical bent will recognize that at the end of October 1989 was the fall of the Berlin Wall. But, as I said, we didn't know that when we went in so we were sort of playing it straight, as you will. Accommodations were quite tight in Germany. It's a crowded country, lots of people. And it was normal for Canadian families to live what we called 'on the economy', which is as in 'to rent apartments or homes in German villages'. We had one arranged by our sponsor. Everybody who is posted overseas at those times was assigned a sponsor who was supposed out to look out for those little administrative things for you. But it wasn't to be available for several weeks after we arrived. So we spent quite a long time living in a hotel room. And when the time came to move into the apartment, I in fact had already deployed with 4 Service Battalion onto the major fall exercise which was titled very creatively FALLEX. Generally ran about six weeks every late September through October in Germany.

So my husband was left to move our furniture and effects into our apartment. I would say by himself but if you met my husband, you'd know he never does anything by himself. He is an expert at causing things to happen. And so he enlisted the support of other members of the 4 Service Battalion officer's wives club, of which he was the only member of the 4 Service Battalion officer's wives club with a Y chromosome. So he

enlisted other people to help him move into our new apartment. And I must say they all did a very good job decorating the place before my return. He does admit, though, having thought that since he was wielding a hammer and hanging pictures on the wall, "Where is my wife?' hammer hammer hammer, "Where is my wife?" hammer hammer hammer. And felt sort of very much left out. And I don't know if it was a blow to his ego, being the spouse left behind at that point but I think he got over it shortly thereafter.

So FALLEX was, of course, the last FALLEX before the fall of the Berlin Wall. It wasn't the last FALLEX. We continued to have them. We just didn't realize in the two subsequent years it went on that we were essentially exercising against a ghost, or exercising against a threat that had disappeared.

But there was tremendous value for a professional military officer in going through that experience with FALLEX because of the sheer scale of the exercise. I mentioned the RV series earlier and that was a fairly impressive organizational and logistic feat by itself. But FALLEX took that up even a further notch. And if you didn't appreciate the art of the large road move, then going through one and living through one. And FALLEX would teach it to you because if you missed your timing, each of the routes assigned to a unit – you had a marked credit number which told all the control people—the movement controllers—when you were supposed to be on the route and when you were not supposed to be on the route. And if you missed your window timing, you could be left sitting by the side of the road for six, eight, ten hours as the American Corps exercised their right to take over the road. And if you decided you wanted to buck the trend, there is nothing quite like an armoured vehicle launched bridge coming toward you on the route to make you change your mind and get off on the shoulder. I think of all the armoured vehicles the AVLBs are the ones that are the most visually impressive when you see them coming toward you.

So it was a great experience from that point of view. It also was different for a Canadian to exercise in a semi-urban setting. The Canadian Forces has a tendency to take itself off and hide in the woods and pretend the entire world is covered with nothing but woods. Well, you can't pretend that in Germany because there's a village in Germany every two kilometres in any direction no matter where you are. And so the emphasis then on camouflage is not to put nets over yourself and cover yourself with tree branches. It's to blend in in a small village so the location of your vehicles and your activities is hidden. It was a much more realistic experience, much more useful experience than the idea that you'd always be setting up in some piece of completely unoccupied terrain. From a medical point of view it also makes eminent sense. If you can make use of something that has a roof, walls and electricity for a medical facility, why would you decide to put it up in a tent and run a generator if you don't have to? So those series of exercises were still interesting even if, sort of in retrospect, not necessarily that useful.

It was an interesting time from a personal and social point of view as well. My husband and I found that we were not particularly well suited to the German way of life. We did not find it a comfortable way to live for the first six months we were there. Small things, really, perhaps. But being very much the yuppie couple—very much the two careers, no

kids pair—we had become used to doing everything on the weekends or running out and doing errands at lunchtime, neither of which is possible, or was possible, to do in Germany, particularly in the Black Forest area in 1989. At the time—and I think to an extent still—Germany was a society framed around nuclear families where the wife didn't work. And so did her errands in the morning or in the afternoon, cooked every night, shopped everyday so didn't need a large refrigerator. And there certainly were no large refrigerators in Germany at the time. And it was just that difference. And we found we were very, very frustrated. We couldn't get to a bank to open a bank account because the banks were closed from noon to 2:30 in the afternoon. So it almost meant taking a half day off work to go and get any errands done. Couldn't go shopping after work because every place except the Canex was closed. Couldn't go, at first we couldn't go shopping on weekends. I say couldn't because it was our fault. Because we worked fairly hard and like most people we were still going to the mess on Friday nights. And we tended to sleep in on Saturday mornings, Saturday mornings being the only time on the weekends when the stores were open so we had to change our lifestyle to fit the German flow. We did eventually find ways to survive. And some of the ways did involve driving 100s of kilometres to American PXs on the weekends when you needed to shop, but everywhere else was closed. And we did honestly enjoy our time. But for the first six months if you'd given us a return plane ticket it wouldn't have taken us very long to pack our bags and be heading back to Canada. It's just interesting. I've always been aware that you can feel culturally displaced in very strange countries, but I didn't think I would feel that culturally uncomfortable in such a western environment as Germany.

It was interesting to watch the evolution in the changes of the Warsaw Pact in the fall of the Berlin Wall. Ever since we'd arrived there'd been sort of the leaky route. You would see East German cars on the road in West Germany. And everybody knew that Hungary was basically the weak link in the Iron Curtain. So East Germans would drive through Hungary and then would cross into Western Europe from Hungary through Austria. And we'd see the odd car in West Germany. But we didn't see this necessarily as any inkling to come. I think we were truly surprised when the wall fell in October 1989. We were surprised and, you know, sort of pleased and good for them. But we didn't understand really now important this was. We certainly didn't understand that this was the beginning of the end of our tours in Germany. Although it was. We were just more interested in the fact that now you could take a community organized bus tour to Prague to sightsee and buy crystal. And come back the same way without fear of any repercussions or without worrying too much about what was going to happen at the Czech border. So we were all in our sort of comfy little bubble and certainly didn't have the foresight to understand what this might mean.

I started my German career with 4 Service Battalion. So I went from 1 Service Battalion in Calgary to 4 Service Battalion in Germany which made me sort of a service battalion expert for health support. They're interesting groups of soldiers, service battalions. They tend to be older. They tend to be less fit than combat arms soldiers. They are more likely to include people who have spent time with the air force and the navy and therefore have a little bit different attitude toward military service, a little bit different culture. They put more demands on the health care system because they are older and less fit. They tend to

break more. But still nothing remarkably difficult in terms of the medicine that you see. Backs, knees, upper respiratory infections, skin problems. Germany, with its atmospheric pollution and a few different plants tended to bring out the asthmatics. If there was anybody who had a slight tendency that way before they left, they were almost guaranteed to get worse once they arrived in Germany. And that applied in spades to their families, particularly the children.

One of the interesting parts of our work in Germany is we all did shifts in the emergency department of 313 Field Hospital, which was the major Canadian supporting hospital for the base. And that is one of the places where the Canadian Forces is responsible to look after families. So not only did we see members but we saw their wives, we saw their families. And most of the time this was rewarding but sometimes it was extremely frustrating. After seeing my third or fourth child in a fairly short space of time with chicken pox brought to the emergency room, I noticed one thing the Canadians in Germany lacked. We had an acute shortage of grandmothers because all of these people had they been at home with their extended families, the grandma would have said, "It's just the chicken pox. Here's what you're going to do." But no, in Germany they ended up being traipsed to the emergency department.

Another memorable trip to the emergency department was a member who had been stung by a wasp. There are millions of wasps in Germany. They don't spray. They're very environmentally sensitive in terms of using pesticides. Not quite so environmentally friendly in point of view of having huge BMWs they drive at 200 kilometres per hour on the autobahn. But, God forbid you should use any pesticides to keep the wasp population down. So people got stung a lot. And this mother brought her young son in—he was about eight—and he had a little red swelling about the size of a quarter, as you would expect. I said, "Has he ever reacted badly to a wasp sting before? She said, "No." "Is he having trouble breathing?" "No." "Is he itchy anywhere else on his body?" "No." "Does anyone else in your family have a history of allergies to bee or wasp stings?" "No." "Why are you here?" "Because it hurts." I said, "Aah, that's what wasp stings do." She said, "Aren't you going to give me something to make it better?" I said, "I'm afraid not." Another example of the acute lack of grandmothers in Germany.

The other common one was before people went away for a long weekend they'd bring their child in who seemed to have a few sniffles. Well, we're going away for the weekend so we thought we'd better get it looked after just in case it turned into something. Well, you know, you have a cold and you're just going to have a cold. So that was another sort of wasted visit. It wasn't exciting medicine most of the time but it did challenge your communication skills, perhaps made you better at managing people.

While I'm on the subject of things that I saw clinically, I was—and excuse the profanity but it's a term we use a lot in medicine—I was the shit magnet when I was on call. Shit magnet is somebody who whenever they're on call something predictably will go drastically wrong. And I think two out of my first three shifts—two out of my first three Friday night shifts—involved people getting horribly drunk and, believe it or not, dangling fellow members of their celebratory parties off balconies and subsequently

dropping them. I actually had two patients come in like that, sort of two weeks apart, one of whom ended up having to have surgery for a damaged kidney and the other one who was observed for head trauma. Luckily, neither of them ended up seriously injured. But I would counsel people, if you're going to have a drinking party, don't do it an apartment that's several floors up. And if you do do it, for God's sake, don't hang anyone by their ankles over the balcony because no matter how strong you think you might be, things can happen. Which I didn't appreciate very much. That's a theme through my career actually is; or through almost every military medical officer's career; is that soldiers do dumb things, particularly on Friday night after a pay weekend—sorry, after they'd been paid that week—and Germany was, with its fine tradition of neighbourhood watering holes, Germany was certainly no exception to that rule.

INTERVIEWER: I understand you have a story about your early days with 4 Field Ambulance?

JAEGER: Yeah, indeed. I was a brand new major; a company commander with 4 Field Ambulance and almost at the same time that I arrived, the unit was changing commanders, the lieutenant colonel who was in overall charge of the unit. This was a highly anticipated change. I have to admit that the outgoing fellow was, although a nice fellow, was not viewed as being particularly effective as a unit CO. So we went through the parade which involved our partner units from the French army, the British army and the German army. And it was interesting to have those groups on parade. One of the quirks of the German army is they do not march backwards. So when you do open order march, the Germans will do an about face, walk three paces, and then do another about face. They will not take three steps backward. It's a cultural thing. I guess they don't retreat, ever. So that's how they express it on parade. So anyway after the usual ceremony and I looked wonderfully sharp – in those days we still had the tan uniforms which I actually liked. Some people didn't. As we were leaving the reception after the parade, I looked back. There were two huge sort of sign boards on the way into 4 Field Am unit lines that were actually cut into embankments and had sort of the unit crest in different coloured rocks embedded in concrete. Well, some enterprising person, I have no idea who, climbed up there with a can of spray paint and painted 'under new management' under the unit crest. And I just had to laugh as I drove home after the parade.

INTERVIEWER: Interview with Hilary Jaeger, end of side one.

END OF SIDE ONE

INTERVIEWER: Canadian War Museum Oral History program interview with Hilary Jaeger. Tape one, side two.

Could you describe the lead up to your tasking to Yugoslavia, please?

JAEGER: Sure. I'll do my best although I admit that a lot of that is very, very foggy in my memory, especially the lead up. I remember much more about the actual deployment. So here we are in very early 1992. I suspect actually the warning phase and the pre-deployment training actually started in 1991 in the aftermath of the implosion of the former Yugoslavia after Tito's death. As an aside, it's amazing what one strong man can do to hold a country together that doesn't seem too reparable for many, many years thereafter. So, after the conflagration subsided to a certain point, of course there were the various international interventions that sought to make things better in what remained of—you can either consider what remained of Yugoslavia or what was emerging—in terms of the new nations. Slovenia, of course, was very, very lucky having had a very small both Serb and Croat population. It didn't have a lot of ethnic mixing and also happened to be a fairly wealthy part of Yugoslavia with strong ties to Austria. It got off very, very easily and has sort of been thankful for that ever since. Croatia was the first part that had a real – where you had a real battleground and conflicts that lingered because of the ethnic mixing and pockets of Serb presence throughout the country.

At the time the deployment started, Bosnia itself was relatively quiet in fact. The conflict hadn't reached there. It was almost like watching a forest fire encroach on new terrain but the forest fire hadn't encroached on Bosnia as of when the deployment was planned, or in fact when we first arrived. So I was earmarked as a major, as the senior of three medical officers to be deployed with the initial rotation. The core of the initial rotation was built around 1 Battalion of the Royal 22 regiment. But the maneuver companies were actually split. There was one big maneuver company from the Van Doos and one big maneuver company from the 3 Battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment from Baden. So we had a mixed English-French infantry unit. And the other major component of the Canadian contingent was almost the entirety of 4 Combat Engineer Regiment, which was part of 4 Brigade and also to deploy at the same time. I'm sure there was a lot of pre-deployment training. I'm sure there was a lot of pre-deployment preparation. I know we were being fed, on the ground, first hand eye-witness information from members of the European Community Monitoring Mission, who were about the only neutral and credible observers on the situation. At the time, I remember that we were frantically painting vehicles white and going over kit-check lists and calling together what we thought we required.

Now, this was a United Nations deployment. The United Nations does have guidelines for troop contributing nations that are both meant to be a list of what the UN honestly thinks this undertaking needs, but it's also a caution that it's the only thing the UN will pay to replace, or maintain or upkeep while you're there. I don't know if this is a matter of well considered national policy, but we certainly took a decision from Germany that we were not going to abide by that list, that we were going to take much more than the United Nations said that should be needed. And this proved to be prescient and very useful as time went on. So we took many more armoured vehicles than the UN thought were necessary, much more in the way of crew served weaponry, things other than rifles and machine guns. We took mortars. We took anti-armour weapons with us at the time. And we took much more in the way of health services support. I would say outright that we didn't take as much as we would take now because we were operating under the idea that we were deploying essentially at unit level—even though we had two units at the

national contingent—and doctrine said that units had unit medical stations which are essentially pre-hospital and primary care deliverers only. Units do not take with them hospitals. And they do not take with them surgical capability. So we deployed without hospital or surgical capability on the assumption, or on the premise, that it would be provided at higher echelons by other nations. Specifically, the British were responsible for our sector for what we call in NATO terminology Role 2 Support. And I think—although I could be wrong—the French were responsible at mission level for Role 3. So we only went with general duty medical officers, medics, ambulances, that kind of thing. No surgeon, no anesthetist, no internist, no nurses, and no bed capacity of any kind. But we were pretty well equipped in terms of quality of supplies, quality of ambulances to meet the need from that perspective. Of course, it was a big unknown. We had no idea what we were really going to face when we got there. We had good ideas of who the opposition was, what they were equipped with and how many of them there were. But what you never know is how they're going to act in a deployment. And that remains one of those great unknowns now.

It was an interesting deployment. I think somewhat unique, although being somewhat unique is like being somewhat pregnant. Unique in that we deployed by rail having the convenient fact that there's a functioning rail line between Germany and Croatia—or the former Yugoslavia. We exploited that. It certainly has tremendous advantages in that it's possible to get troops and equipment to the same place at the same time without having to send heavy equipment by sea or by rain and then send troops by air and then somehow marrying them up. Everything arrived in one place at one time. All you had to do was secure the railhead. Now, of course, you had to have a secure railway line as well. But the movers did a pretty good job of organizing that. Because it was a very heavily loaded train—or the one that I was on anyways—there was more than one train that left at two to three day intervals to move equipment in for the initial deployment. But anyway, it was very, very heavy and slow moving. And the European rail system was given low priority so when things came by that were on a tighter schedule—you know things that carried German businessmen from one town to another—our train would be pushed off on a siding and would wait while the scheduled traffic went by and then resume our progress. And if I remember rightly, I think it took four days from departure in Lahr to arrival in Daruvar, Croatia in April of 1992. That's long ago now. It's 17, 15 years but it doesn't seem that long ago in memory.

So it was very much a ROTO 0. And that's traditional Canadian military terminology for the initial deployment of a peacekeeping mission is a 'ROTO 0.' We've gone away from that kind of terminology recently to one that sort of incorporates the year and the task, and I actually find it harder to remember. It was a very much a typical ROTO 0. Basically everything starting from the ground up – establishing contracts for where you're going to live, what facilities you're going to work out of. Nothing was taken for a given. We spent about the first probably month, maybe three weeks, living in a hotel in Daruvar. It seemed like every town in Croatia had a hotel, but only one. And they were all pretty much the same. You sort of got used to the ex-Communist way of doing things. Sort of a slight attempt to make things nice but without any kind of personality or soul shining through. It was really sort of perfunctory. It had rooms and bathrooms and a kitchen with

sort of tolerable food and therefore it was certainly better than putting up your four-man tent in some field somewhere and crawling in and out of sleeping bags. So we were there for about three weeks until the arrangements were concluded to use an abandoned Yugoslav national army camp on the outskirts of town which is where the majority of the battalion moved for the rest of the tour. The exception being some of the maneuver units who were deployed forward into various villages along where the ceasefire line had sort of stabilized.

And we settled into a kind of a routine. I was one of the lucky people—not that lucky—but it turned out to be lucky in the end. I had the very first leave block period, which I thought was in my toughed-up junior commander sort of way it was good leadership to take the least desirable leave. It was least desirable because then you had nothing left to look forward to for the rest of the six month tour. So I had been home on leave and very shortly after returning to Croatia we got news of the upcoming deployment to Sarajevo.

Now the whole Sarajevo story is a bit of a strange evolution. I'd love to know whose decision it was in the first place because I have a psychiatrist I could refer them to. But somebody in the UN decided that the mission's headquarters should initially be in Sarajevo. Now this is interesting because it was not in proximity to where any of the people were actually operating, to where any of the deployment zones—there were four at the outset of the United Nations protection force. Anyway, Sarajevo wasn't near to all of them. Zagreb would have been a much better choice but I think they felt that would not have been sufficiently neutral. That that would be favoring a Croat zone over the Serbs so they decided to take the headquarters to Sarajevo.

And at the time, initially, Sarajevo was quiet. There was nothing going on there. As I said before, the conflagration had not swept through Bosnia up to that point. But it was a bad choice simply because of geography. It was hard to get anywhere. But it didn't take too long after the initial deployment for rumblings to start through Bosnia. And these were only tremendously accentuated after—I forget which the two countries were—but two countries actually recognized the existence of Bosnia as a separate state. And that sort of put a match to the tinder in terms of bringing the nascent tensions in Bosnia up to the surface. So fairly early in the deployment Bosnia actually blew up in terms of open conflict with three factions. Lots of people forget that there were actually three factions in the Bosnia conflict, not just two. And sometimes there were actually four because there was breakaway Muslim group in the north around Vehaj [?] somewhat later. So there were at least three factions, sometimes four. And the eruption of this conflict made it necessary for the UN to move the headquarters from Sarajevo, which they did in sort of unceremonious and not very dignified fashion. And pulled back first through to Belgrade and then finally relocated the headquarters to Zagreb which is where it should have been in the first place. But it took them about three months to figure that out the hard way.

Then, of course, we were left with the media focus and the actuals of the significant international concern about the fate of Sarajevo as Bosnia imploded with fighting in the streets and with the image of the Olympic stadium having become sort of a burial ground for war casualties, which it did. And the total descent of what had been a cosmopolitan—

vibrant cosmopolitan—city into a very, very bitter factionalized fighting that seemed to have neither reason nor end. So the immediate concern was to open a humanitarian air bridge into Sarajevo. I kind of liken it to the Berlin airlift of our generation. And this was, of course, made possible and sort of given lots of impetuous by President Mitterrand of France who took the bold decision to land his own private aircraft on the tarmac of Sarajevo at the time where the airfield was under Serb control but still within small arms range of just about everybody else. So it was in no way secure. But after he had done this symbolic act, it really kind of forced the hand of the mission to follow up on that. And the Canadians were picked in large part because we had broken all the UN rules and brought all these heavy armoured, all these armoured personnel carriers and weapons with us that no other contingent had with them. And we were joined in this effort by a number of French marines and special forces types who were – I was never quite sure what they were up to but they all looked like they came off the streets of Marseilles and were very, very tough characters. I wouldn't want to have any of them not on my side, as it were. Although we had had warning of the move, the actual timing of the move came as somewhat of a surprise.

There's a concept in the military known as Notice to Move, and theoretically you always have at least that much notice to move. So if you're on 12 hour notice to move, the earliest you can possibly move is 12 hours from now. That's an elegant theory. It doesn't work very often in practice and it particularly doesn't work very well if you're on the advance party, as I was. So I went from 12 hours notice to move in one evening to, 'We're leaving at 2 o'clock in the morning.' And because I thought I had 12 hours notice I ended up packing my jeep and deploying on the road move with damp underwear hanging off the antenna and anything else vertical I could tie it off from because I had been in the process getting ready to go, making sure everything I had was clean when we started the trip. So I hand washed all of my jockey shorts before—that evening—before, I thought, going to bed. But as it turns out I had to hang these damp things somewhere.

This turned out to be about a 72 hour road move. It's only about a five hour drive if you can drive it unobstructed on routes that are in normal condition. But this was not normal condition and this was not unobstructed. And we did hit a couple of road blocks where the local warlord of whatever faction had decided that he wasn't going to let the UN through his part of the turf today. Luckily, we managed to make it through those things without any shots being fired. That isn't actually a guarantee. And it's not a very comfortable thing to be part of a convoy of hundreds of vehicles on one route going through what we call defiles, i.e. narrow pieces of terrain where it's fairly easy for some bozo to pick off a lot of people. But we did use, do some judicious deployment with supporting weapons at one point. And under the leadership of the commanding officer. It was largely unknown to us. Although I was in the advance party, I was probably about 40 vehicles back from the very head of the convoy so really had no idea what was going on. You just get very good at sitting and waiting.

And you also get very good at deciding whether you really had to pee or not. The guys just pee on the tires. I mean it's very easy to be a guy. And, of course, we had all been warned that the virtues of every girl were likely to be mine so I was not interested in

trucking off into the woods to find a private place to have a bio break. But I just decided that at a certain point you don't care and you just sort of stand in between two vehicles. And you're not going to hit the tires but just make a puddle on the road. And away we go.

So 72 hours later we rolled into Sarajevo on to the tarmac and started to get oriented to the task. The rough breakdown was that the RCR Company ended up headquartered at the PTT building—which was the telephone, telegraph building which is right on Sniper Alley and closer to downtown whereas the Van Doo Company were deployed in and around the airports providing security there. And the real task was yes, to secure those two places but to make it possible for the trucks full of humanitarian aid to—under the coordination of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees—to take the trucks of aid where they needed to be to be distributed. That's a process that has its pluses and minuses, quite obviously. But it was a busy place there. We were there on the ground for a little bit over a month. Hercules aircraft with donated supplies coming in at roughly 30 minute intervals all through the daylight hours, at that time. Very, very busy airfield.

You learn some things operating in that environment. First of all, you learn the difference between mortar rounds that are a long, long way away and mortar rounds that are close enough to be important. They really do sound very different. I think I started that whole process far too stupid to be scared. And I've never been particularly good at what the army calls crack-thump training. I can't pinpoint the origin or the impact areas of small arms without guidance. I'm not very good at it. So I never knew anyway if it was anywhere close to me or not. But I do remember mortar rounds landing—I was at the PTT building at the time—and mortar rounds landing just outside the wall. I mean, literally 10 feet outside the wall and just the wall between me and the rest of the folks who were watching actually JFK at the time. It was the movie on that night.

What else do you learn? You learn that some of the RCMP guys aren't very bright. One of the days when I was actually staying at the airfield; I had a room on the second floor. Of course, it was just a room—no glass in the windows—but it had walls and a little bit of privacy. No power either, but, you know. There was a multiple launched rocket attack that was targeting an apartment building just across, probably about 300 metres from where we were, in one of the suburbs near the airport. And so you could see sort of at one a second, the rockets hit the building. It was quite an impressive sight to see this. There was quite a barrage going. I happened to be talking to one of the RCMP police trainers there. And he got out his instamatic camera and started taking pictures with it. But, of course, it was dark so flash went off. And I thought the last thing you want to be doing in Sarajevo at this time was to have a sudden flash of light emerge from a window of a building you're in. And I think my appreciation of tactics and operation security was a little bit better than this and I suggested he might want to try doing that without the flash. And could he please go several windows down the hall before he did it again? Who knows if anybody was actually watching or not, but you don't necessarily want to take that chance.

The deployment to Sarajevo also brought home to me no matter how much we try in the medical services we can never get away from the fact that people don't understand that we're not responsible for bodies. When we first arrived, early in our arrival, we had to sort of clear the airfield. And one of the things we just had to sweep and look around for what was there. And it could be mines, could be who knows what, booby traps. And one of the things they found was, surprisingly, an old JNA soldier. So they called me, as a medical officer, to come and look at this guy. Well, he'd been dead for a couple of weeks and, in fact, he was missing flesh on his sort of half-skeleton if you rolled him over. You're three weeks too late for me, my friends. What do you want me to do about it? We ended up trading him back to the Serbs which gets you some brownie points. Or at least gets you some good will. But it's not the first time or the last medics get called to deal with dead bodies even though doctrinally according to [unclear word] is a personnel function and the movement of the body is a logistics function. But I guess they sort of thought that—I don't know whether to be flattered or not—they thought that we were the right people to handle it. Maybe they thought that we saw lots of dead people because we create them. I don't know. Anyway, so we had to get over that little hump.

Didn't have any fatalities of our own in Sarajevo. Didn't have too many serious casualties, one or two, probably the most serious of which was a corporal from the RCR who lost his foot in an anti-personnel mine when he jumped off a wall without really knowing what was on the ground where he was going to land. That was the case where I really got into hot water with the receiving hospital in Germany, 313 Field Hospital, because we were able to get the patient on the plane pretty easily. They were landing every 30 minutes, not a big stretch. And it didn't matter what nationality the plane was. If you said, 'Can you go to the Lahr airfield and take this guy to 313 Field Hospital?' they would do that. I don't even remember if it was a Canadian plane that took him out. We just put a senior medic on the back who could find his way around and he'd make sure he got where he was going. So moving the patient was easy but phoning the hospital to tell them he was coming was—if not extremely difficult—impossible. The only functioning phone was General Mackenzie's InMarsat and that's a satellite phone. First of all, it was only one of them and secondly, it was enormously expensive. I wouldn't have minded. I wouldn't have been concerned about the expense but General Mackenzie, who was on that phone probably 12 hours out of 24, and it wasn't far from him the rest of the time. So it was for all practical purposes impossible to tell the hospital the patient was coming. And physicians get very, very annoyed when they get unexpected patients. And I got a lot of flak back from the leadership of the hospital for being so ignorant and stupid and incompetent for sending a patient without notifying him ahead of time. And so we kind of let that one wash over us.

I got a little annoyed with 313 Field Hospital on another occasion after we'd come back from Sarajevo and were back in Daruvar. And this concerned the one fatality we had in theatre. And it was in a de-mining accident. If you say mining accident people have visions of coal miners in Nova Scotia. It was an engineer in a de-mining accident down in the south part of our sector. And had a bit of confusion with the helicopter medevac which didn't help any but it didn't make any difference anyway. This poor fellow was done before. There was a med-tech on scene who had tried to resuscitate him but was

doing nothing but suctioning blood out of his mouth and upper airway. Unfortunately, when you actually looked at the fellow's body it was almost unscathed. There was a tiny little nick under his jaw and the rest of the body was unremarkable. Now we have a contract now for preparation and movement of remains. We have a contract with an undertaker in Canada who goes forward to receive the remains and current contacts. I think they go as far as Landstuhl. But in those days we didn't have anything in place. No idea, really, how we were going to get this guy's remains back. One thing we learned very early on: nobody in the former Yugoslavia knew anything about embalming. They essentially don't preserve remains. They just bury them fast enough that they don't bother anybody as they're decomposing. So I thought, well we're not going to get him embalmed before he travels. So what are we going to do? Well, what we did is we took every piece of ice and every ice pack we had and packed them around his body and put him in what's known as trans for case human remains because the aluminum quasi-coffin, you'll see remains coming back from theatre. And we shipped—with prior notice now, all coordinated—we shipped him through Germany so that he could sort of be re-packed and then back to Canada for his loved ones. And we told the people dealing with his family, don't expect to have an open casket because this is – at the outset his body was fine. This is not going to go well with this kind of evolution.

So actually from the point of view of the remains, it wasn't too, too bad with one exception. When he got to Germany our clinical specialist, a surgeon, decided he wanted to have a look at this body. Didn't do an autopsy, he just looked at this body. And as I said there was only just a little nick under his chin. So he decided that, knowing nothing as to what had actually gone on, he decided that this was a survivable injury. And that this person should not have, in the late twentieth century, should not have died. That word spreads like wildfire in the medical community and is enormously damaging to the confidence and the well-being of the med-techs who actually had been trying their damndest to save this guy. So I was hopping mad and said as much back to the powers that were at the field hospital. I honestly believe that unless you've been in their shoes, you know, being in the mud and tired and wet and feeling powerless with very few tools to work with, you should not – you know, if you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all. I don't know if we ever did actually have this fellow autopsied. I'm fairly certain that he had a massive disruption of his mediastinum, which is where your heart and great vessels are because there is just so much blood coming, being suctioned out. He eventually bled out but he did it in such a way that it all got sucked out through his trachea. Anyway.

INTERVIEWER: Could you tell me about the impact of this posting on your marriage?

JAEGER: The tour in Yugoslavia. Well, it's interesting that you mention the tour as an impact on the marriage because we have an interesting marriage from many perspectives. And tours are in many ways the easiest part. My husband and now—if I can bring us to the present—have been married almost 18 years of which we have spent six together and 12 posted apart. So being separated is nothing new. Now, I will have to be fair to the military. We made a decision very early on that we face – let's face it. We're both ambitious so neither of us was willing to take the back seat and just have a job if we

could have a career. And we knew, when we decided that, that it was going to come at a cost. And the cost is that you have to be prepared to accept separated postings. But even together—we started out together in Germany—even being together you're not necessarily always together. When I did Foxhole U—Army Staff College—I did it in six months in 1991, January through the end of June and my husband also did it in 1991. But he did July through the end of December. Technically we were posted together but that was a year in which we saw very little of each other. We joke. It used to actually be on our biographies that we can't keep houseplants alive. We certainly never contemplated having children because the lifestyle is just too disruptive. And it's only in the last six years that we've felt able to have a dog. And the dog seems to be surviving but we are the most frequent users of Oak Meadows pet resort. He spends about 100 days a year in pet kennels just because there is nobody home to look after him in that time frame.

But as to the former Yugoslavia and this tour, we were both serving in Germany when I went merrily off to war. And I think part of the secret to our success as a military couple is we are a little bit competitive. And we're a little bit "I'm more operation focused than you." And neither one of us wants to let the other one get the upper hand. So my husband had to find something. You know, I was off having this grand adventure in what was then the biggest mission going. So he had to one up me by getting on the next biggest mission, which was Cambodia. So in June of 1992 while I was still in the former Yugoslavia, he was preparing for a year long posting to Cambodia for the mission that led up to their election. So at the time I was in Sarajevo, he was settling in at Phnom Penh. I can tell you, it was possible to phone from Sarajevo to Phnom Penh on the Marsat, the satellite phone. That's one of the three phone calls I made during my six months in the former Yugoslavia. And you can actually get a letter—or you could at the time—through the UN mail system from Sarajevo to Phnom Penh, and reverse in between two and a half and three weeks. I didn't think that was bad considering all the disruptions that could happen in between.

What do we find out about marriages and being a military couple? The first thing is that it is always easiest to be the spouse on the deployment. It is much harder to be the spouse left behind with all the bills and regular old mundane house stuff. And you learn to really resent the mundane. Neither of us likes mundane very much, even to this day. It's far better to be the person who actually has a mission. My husband has since caught up and long passed me in number of deployments. I only have the two operational tours and both of them in the former Yugoslavia whereas he's old enough to have done Cyprus when there was a Cyprus, his year in Cambodia, he's done Bosnia under ISAF, nope not ISAF it was IFOR, or was it SFOR? I think it was SFOR when he was there. And he also did a mission to Kabul in Afghanistan. So he's long rocketed past me in the number of tours. But I think sort of the competition kept it healthy.

The one thing we sort of always had going for us was that we understand the motivation, we understand why it's important. We understand the demands of the military. We're not sort of prone to say such ultimately unhelpful and self-defeating things as I've heard other spouses say on occasion things like, "Dear, if you really loved me, you wouldn't go this time." And you actually do get stories of soldiers whose spouses do put that kind of

pressure on them, which I don't think anybody needs. So we've managed to avoid those sorts of pitfalls. And 18 years later we're still going strong. I have priced myself out of the operational tour market. There are no deployed opportunities for brigadier general medical officers. Colonels, there might be a chance and, you know, if I came back as a Reservist I'd get to go on another one some day but as it stands right now I won't do any more, I doubt. My husband may have one more left in him. But we'll see. He's also coming close to pricing himself out of the market but has a little bit of a ways to go.

INTERVIEWER: Could you tell me about the lead up to the second tour to the former Yugoslavia?

JAEGER: Yeah. Paradoxically I remember much more about the lead up to the second tour, perhaps because I was more involved directly in designing it, preparing it, supporting it. This one, this tour was based on Lord Strathcona's Horse Battle Group which is based out of Calgary, where I was posted at the time. And we actually underwent a full six months of pre-deployment training. For the first time, I think—or the first time any of us could remember—because our pre-deployment training period was in the winter, ahead of a deployment again in April—we decided to ask permission and actually got support to do our pre-deployment training in Camp Pendleton in California because training in Alberta in January and February is probably not going to produce anything other than survival, survival training. Which isn't really what we had in mind. So we spent a month living in fairly primitive conditions in Camp Pendleton. Or fairly primitive in tents, two man pup tents which actually the military calls four man tents. Anyone who can fit four people in them is stacking them like cord wood. They were reasonably livable for two.

The only downside to this month long training evolution, and it was great training from many standpoints—I got to do a lot of first aid training with the guys going over and I also got to fire a lot of weapons that medical people often don't get a chance to fire. It was an enjoyable time and a professionally rewarding time from a military point of view. The hiccup was the feeding plan was hard throughout, which the military people will recognize as meaning you're on 'boil in a bag' hard rations the entire time of the training, which was about four weeks. And if that wasn't bad enough it must have been coming to the end of a cycle period for stock of rations that the brigade had because what we had were 60% breakfasts and only 40% were lunches and suppers. As I was mentioning we had an oversupply of breakfasts and no lunches and suppers. But we were down in the States and they have this wonderful non-public fund type organization known as Moral, Welfare and Recreation. And on US bases the Moral, Welfare and Recreation section owns those little canteen trucks like you see drive up to construction sites sometimes. And he would drive in three times a day to our main camp and would do a great business selling microwaveable or steamed, as you will, hamburgers, hot dogs and assorted pre-packaged submarines and chocolate bars; basically anything except what came in the IMPs. I think the amount of food that was wasted as the soldiers tore open their ration packs to remove the hard candies and the chocolate bar and throw the rest in the garbage—which was what happened after the first week—don't want to add up the dollar value of the food that was thrown away on that exercise. But the lesson there is don't

expect soldiers to eat hard rations when there are any other options out there they could possibly find because they won't. They'll spend their own money first. Which they did.

So we were there, completed the training in California and deployed by air to the town of Split in Croatia. And then road moved from Split to the actual deployment site which was centered on a village about 20 kilometres outside of Sarajevo. What was interesting from the point of view sort of tactically or organizationally—or what made the Canadian area of responsibility somewhat different from others—is that the Canadian area of responsibility actually incorporated all three faction's turf instead of just two. Whereas most of the other people, everybody else deployed had either a Serb-Croat line or a Croat-Muslim line but the Canadians had Serbs, Croats and Muslims all claiming little pieces of our area of operation that gave us more than our fair share of little conflagration, little flak points in the area of responsibility.

INTERVIEWER: Interview with Brigadier General Hilary Jaeger, end of side two.

END OF SIDE TWO

INTERVIEWER: Canadian War Museum Oral History Program interview with Brigadier General Hilary Jaeger, tape two, side one.

Could you continue with your discussion of the conditions you found?

JAEGER: Sure. I'll try and bring some life to the situation. This was the third rotation of the Canadian—actually ROTO 3 means actually the fourth rotation by the way we count it—but the third that had been in this particular camp in this particular place since the expansion of the mission into Bosnia, which followed fairly shortly after my previous tour into Croatia. We were headquartered in a camp that was about 400 metres long by about 100 metres wide, quite well fortified with what is known as Hesko Baskins which I sort of describe as sand bags on steroids. They're great big canvas—wiry enforced—canvas containers that the engineers filled with all kinds of rubble. And they make a very nice barrier that you can configure to the terrain you have available. So we're entirely surrounded by Hesko Baskins and a few sea containers kind of stacked up as an interposing barrier with observation posts built on top of the sea containers at various points around the perimeter.

So that was the main battalion headquarters and the main base where most of us companies were deployed out, one in the Croatian controlled territory, one on the Serb side of the line across the river towards Sarajevo. And both of those routes actually were the subject of sniping incidents, attempts to interdict and restrict travel movement. It was a big focus to keep those routes open and passable for the battle group. But for those of us who had really key support functions, to a large extent, that 400 metre by 100 metre camp was the extent of your world for six months. And if you thought about it too much, you were essentially in prison. You might as well have been in jail for the time you were

there. But we dealt with that by not thinking about it too much and by seeing who could jog around it the most and how many times around makes a 10K jog. We spent a lot of time in the gym, all the time, of course, on standby to come back to man our positions should there be any pressing health care needs.

Now, by this time we had gotten smart about the need for surgical care and hospitalization. And I was actually in charge of a small, what we call a forward surgical team where we had one surgeon, one anesthetist, a couple of operating room nurses and a couple of intensive care nurses. So the idea was we could stabilize casualties should anything happen. Luckily, it was not particularly busy and especially not particularly busy with Canadian casualties. But it was there as an insurance plan should we need it. We also had an even more rudimentary – a bunker operating room in case of receiving indirect fire and having to sort of go into the bunker area. We could still operate on a couple of casualties with portable supplies, battery powered lighting, and that was exercised from time to time to make sure everybody knew what they were responsible for carrying and how it was supposed to be set up when we got there.

It was a reasonable tense time in Bosnia two years after the initial deployment. Bosnia still had not decided really where it wanted to go. And didn't decide that politically until, I guess, the Dayton Accords would be a year and a half or so after I was there. This was the time of the so-called safe havens: Goradzde and I know there were two—there were three of them—and I can't remember the other two. And, of course, the debacle of the Dutch peacekeepers and their withdrawal and the subsequent massacres. All of those safe areas were well to the east of where we were and we were not connected to any good, well controlled routes or any kind of corridor to the rest of the UN occupied zones. They really were out there kind of like the end of a lollipop on a stick. And not a viable concept, you know. Something that sounds like a nice plan but really all it was was words.

We had some involvement with the safe haven in Goradzde in terms of providing some personnel for a brief period, including some medical support. But our people were withdrawn well ahead of the ultimate sort of catastrophic demise of this safe haven with little incident to remark of except for one forward air controller who was not supposed to make known that he was a forward air controller. And it came to the attention of the Serbs on the way out there. I don't know too much about what happened to him. That was not a good thing to have your vehicle searched and have all this forward air controller stuff found. This was also the time of the uncovering of the abuses in the back of the Bokovici Mental Hospital, which was part of the Canadian area of responsibility. And I visited the back of Bokovici Mental Hospital early in my tour and once or twice subsequently afterwards. Mental Hospital may have been what it was. But at the time we were there, you know, you can't run a medical hospital with no staff and no medications and no resources. So all they were trying to do really was to hostel these unfortunate patients, some of whom were quite violent and kept in locked rooms and restrained. But there was no way anybody could attempt to treat them with any degree of success or any level of sophistication.

I can't honestly say I remember much about the political evolution or really any documented progress. It seemed like it waxed and waned. Local businessmen set up coffee shops. They opened. It seemed you could almost have a pizzeria index for the level of conflict in the Balkans because when towns are even slightly quiet somebody will open a pizzeria and start selling them. That and people selling cappuccinos are the two things that begin to operate the fastest after conflict settles down. The one thing that operates throughout the conflict and never closes is the brewery. I remember in my first tour going through Vukovar, which I think those who understand the recent history of the Balkans understand what happened in Vukovar. When I visited Vukovar nothing, nothing was moving, nothing was working. It was a dead ghost town for good reason—it might have been on the moon—except the brewery. And there were guys moving cases, obviously full cases of beer out the front door of the brewery. Because I guess no matter how bad it gets the soldiers always need a little supply of pilo, which is the Serbo-Croatian word for beer. So, yeah, coffee shops and pizzerias open after the shooting stops but breweries never close. That's just the way it was.

I can't honestly say that anything much happened politically while we were there. I think at higher levels there was tremendous cynicism that the UN would ever do anything to resolve anything. And thereby it became NATO's problem to impost a solution or to enforce the solution that the Dayton Accords arrived at. Somewhat paradoxically, of course, the actual deployments under NATO were much safer than under the UN because there's a lot to be said in that part of the world for having a big stick and having everyone know that you are willing and able to use it. That kind of means that you don't have to use it. You'll note that all of the, sort of, the tense moments of observers being handcuffed to posts for weeks at a time all happened under the UN mandate and settled down extremely quickly once it became a NATO mission. And I think it all had to do with psychology and the certain knowledge that the United States was there to back everybody up if push came to shove.

We did have an interesting evolution—or an interesting period of time—in which we had a Bug Out Plan. The tensions were such that we thought there was just a chance that we might have to withdraw through Bosnia and down to the coast for extraction. I'm not sure, given the state of routes in the mountains and rivers and lakes that were in the way, I'm not sure this was ever actually achievable. The main road from where we were to the coast required the use of an engineer-run ferry at one point because the only bridges had been blown up. And that, again—if you're moving hundreds of vehicles down a route—that's a choke point. That was going to take quite a long time to achieve and would have been easily interdicted by anybody who knew what they were doing. So I don't know how realistic this withdrawal plan was, but anyway it existed. And we had identified places we were going to go and set up. The challenge was that it had less square footage than the facility we were using in the camp where we were. And so I had a session with some of my senior people, particularly the clinical specialists, and I explained that we give priority to the operating room and the ward and the lab for whatever space we had, followed by the outpatient clinics and, you know, our quarters were just going to – we might end up having to put poochies up, which were temporary shelters. And one of the specialists thundered his fists down on the table and said, 'That's just an unacceptable

way to treat people.' What can you say to that kind of illogical reaction? I kind of stared at him and I said, 'You have a magic wand that's going to produce what?' So sometimes you have little leadership challenges that come out of left field even when you think you have a team that understands what it's there to do. And I think if push came to shove, faced hard up against reality, they would recognize reality when they saw it. And luckily, it never came to that and we actually re-deployed home in a very orderly and uneventful fashion.

And that mission kind of bumbled along with flare-ups and settling down levels of activity. Very shortly after I left there was a major flare-up of activity in the Criena[?] areas of Croatia when the Croats decided to remove all the Serbs. But that was, you know, well to the west of where we were and I don't believe it really affected the Canadians that were in central Bosnia. The Canadians also at that time also had a battle group right in that part of Croatia and they certainly were right in the middle of that movement. But the group I was with—and the successor to the group I was with—was unaffected by that. As I said, no real progress was made until the accords and the decision to have NATO take over and stop pretending it was a humanitarian relief and peacekeeping mission and just impose the settlement that was reached. And touch wood, it seems to still be going reasonably well there although, of course, they pushed the tension, unrest and conflict further off into Kosovo after Bosnia. And a few hiccups in and out of Macedonia from time to time. I guess there are other areas of concern in the world now that have everybody's attention and the problems in the Balkans are relatively small potatoes at the moment.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me about your relations with the local population?

JAEGER: Sure, I'll do my best. The, I say, the local population varied depending on where you were in our area. We had our host town was almost entirely Bosnian, in other words Muslim. The infantry company was surrounded in Croatian territory and one of the armoured squadrons was hosted by the Serbs. In all cases I think we found them to be very resourceful and quite engaging people. And from our ignorant Canadian outside view, saw very little difference between them. They looked the same, dressed the same, with the exception of the Muslims not eating pork they ate the same food. And the preferred meat for all of them was roast lamb. Nothing that's more culturally symbolic for that part of the world than lamb roasted on an open spit. So, indistinguishable to us but instantly recognizable to them. They grew the same crops as far as we could tell. And almost everything grows there. It would be a great place to be a farmer. The produce was absolutely fabulous. Like many former communist countries they had a rich tradition in education and it was very normal and very easy for young people to get very good educations. So this was a country that had had a substantial health infrastructure. It had had a lot of people going to medical school. It had had quite a few doctors. Now what they didn't have left anymore were many of those doctors who had connections, who had means had left. But they still had some health infrastructure to build from. A whole lot better off for instance than Afghanistan is now, trying to build from where they are.

So in each of the towns where we were, there was a functioning hospital of sorts, all kinds of shortages, of course. And every time you'd go into a town to visit a hospital you'd be met by a hospital administrator. Who knows where he came from or how long he'd been there, but most of them probably were legitimately there from before the conflict. They all had a list of absolutely urgently required medications. And here I'll give credit where credit is due. The only non-governmental organization who operated on all sides of the confrontation line was Pharmaciens sans frontiers. Not MSF but PSF. And nobody else was working on the Serb side of the line in particular. And I have a slightly jaundiced point of view of NGOs vaunted neutrality because to my mind choosing where to work is in itself taking a position. And so I give PSF tremendous credit for being honest enough and egalitarian enough and bold enough to work all sides of the line. So we would funnel their requests through PSF for supplies.

There was very little we could do personally to meet their needs. We had more than adequate supplies for the Canadians we were looking after but what is more than adequate for a battle group of Canadians doesn't go very far in a densely populated region. So there was very little that we could do ourselves but we always listened. One thing we did do which we found actually quite useful was we had a bio-medical equipment manager with us. And often these hospitals had equipment that had been neglected and was no longer working. And we could send our bio-medical equipment technologist to do what he could to repair some of their gear. We'd send him to one hospital after another. Sort of, one or two days a week he'd be out with a small team seeing if he could get the x-ray or the ultrasound machine up and running, doing what he could do along those kind of lines. And that was very helpful and essentially cost nothing because his time was what was where the resources were.

We also, under very tightly controlled circumstances, because we never knew when we were going to need them, we would have our specialists go out and work with the local specialists in the local hospitals operating room, perhaps helping to teach or perhaps just consulting on a difficult case. We tried not to see local patients inside our facility. That just brings with it all kinds of problems. First of all, how do you decide who to see? How do you know you're being egalitarian? How do you know you're not being used as a political pawn or that access to you is not being used in some way as a weapon or a coercive bargaining tip? It's very, very difficult to go down that road. Also, if you're not careful with how you approach humanitarian activities you can be quite counterproductive. You have to be very, very careful to be seen to support the resources and promote and build the resources that are in place instead of setting yourself up—however unwittingly—in competition.

I'll give you an example which taught me a lesson I'll never forget. The battalion to the south of us was from Malaysia. They were controlling the area of responsibility. And tough little guys, really and very good attitudes. There was nothing they wouldn't take on. They also had surprisingly good medical support, largely based on the South Asian immigrant population to Malaysia. There's an Indian diaspra around the world and they tend to be among the professional classes wherever they're established. So most of the docs were, in fact, of East Indian origin but Malaysia itself has a significant Muslim

population as did the area where they were working. One thing that's supposed to happen to little Muslim boys around the age of six or seven is they're supposed to get circumcised. Just in contrast to the Jewish people who do it at six or seven days old, six or seven years. And this, of course, is important culturally and religiously and it's something that Muslim families know and expect and plan for and expect to pay for. Well, there was one surgeon, one Bosnian surgeon, still in this town at the outset of this tour. And the only procedures he was doing that he would get any money for was circumcisions. Now the Malaysian battalion decided that as a goodwill gesture, to foster better relations with their hosts, they would offer circumcisions for free. Now this, of course, was well received by the local population, at least in the short term. But what it did was make it impossible for the one remaining surgeon to earn a living. So he left. So you have to be very careful that the intervention you think you are doing out of the goodness of your heart actually has positive outcomes. Because I'm sure that town would have been better off with a functioning surgeon who would also do all kinds of other things for free on the basis of keeping food on the table by doing circumcisions. And if they had thought it through, they would have preferred that than to having free circumcisions and no surgeon. But that's just the kind of things that you, sometimes you have to learn that by experience. Sometimes you can hear that go in one ear and it doesn't stick. But when you see it, it sticks.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned something about an alcohol policy.

JAEGER: Yeah, I think – well, of course, now deployments are frequently dry but my two tours in Yugoslavia represented kind of the evolution of the Canadian Forces alcohol policy. The first tour, the policy was essentially, "thou shalt not be impaired." There was no limit imposed. And although there wasn't a lot of time or much in the way of physical layout for messes, they certainly did exist. Canteens existed. We ran them in the main kitchen tent. And some people did get impaired. And some people did get into bar fights downtown. And one guy memorably fell off the roof of the building he was quartered in and had a very severe injury, a traumatic dislocation of a knee, which in an infantry person is a career ending injury. That disrupts virtually every ligament you have in a knee and a knee will never be the same after that. So, in retrospect, that alcohol policy was not highly successful.

So in 1994—the second time around—there was a strict two beer per person limit. And I'm not naïve to think that nobody ever did have more than two, but what this did was tell people that we're really serious now about not having anybody impaired. And there were a series of sort of the various messes which were set up in camp which would tick you off whether you've had your two drinks for that day or not. Now the one thing you had better be sure of when you impose a policy like that is you are willing to apply it to everybody. And I do mean everybody. I don't care who transgresses. If you don't apply that rule equally to everybody, you'll have no credibility and the troop's morale will suffer. So, lo and behold, approaching the midway point of our tour, was the first episode I was aware of of anybody transgressing the alcohol policy. It was the day of the CANCON show which was where you get variety entertainers to come in for the morale of the troops. You probably saw, CBC just ran the comedy special from Kandahar, which was the same

thing. So it was our CANCON show. And after the show broke up, which meant half of the camp was walking across the parking lot—compound—at the same time—they couldn't have picked a worse time—stumbling across the compound came the paymaster and the Protestant Padre. So this was quite evidently in breach of the alcohol policy. Either that or they had the lowest tolerance for alcohol of anybody you've ever met. But no, well on their way to having a great evening and probably not such a great morning. So they were observed by half of the battle group but in particular by the regimental second in command who acted quite properly and informed that this was going to— that they would be charged with breaking the alcohol policy and would they please just go to their quarters and sleep it off and see him in the morning.

Because of their rank they had to be tried by a superior commander, who at that time was General Crabbe, a man who can be quite intimidating. He has a dry sense of humour and was an outstanding officer, but certainly knew how to put on the kind of act that these guys would remember. They were docked a month's pay and allowances, which is a fairly steep penalty. But they will both tell you the worst part of their punishment was being made to sit on a bench outside General Crabbe's office for two hours waiting to see what would happen. And I'm sure he did that deliberately, to let them stew. But I don't think there were any downstream effects for the paymaster. He's a Logistician—what are you going to do? Everybody wants to get paid so we're not going to fire him. But interestingly enough, the effect for the Protestant Padre was one of instant credibility with the troops. He could do no wrong. If he had worried about fitting in before, he didn't need to worry about fitting in afterwards. They knew he was a regular guy and I think his tour was actually made much easier by the fact that he so publicly made an example of.

INTERVIEWER: Could you tell me about your decorations?

JAEGER: Sure although it's always a bit awkward to talk about things like that. The first one I received was the Meritorious Service Medal which was based on my work through the first tour in the former Yugoslavia. I don't really know what was said or what was provided as documentation. They do have a little citation that they give you, but frankly you could probably use one of those things that you put on your fridge where you rearrange the words. You could probably get one of those for writing citations. And so it's actually hard to recognize why and what triggered it, what the tripping point was. I think perhaps it was the novelty of the deployment and the fact that it was built from the ground up. But I think it probably has more to do with the fact that I was also double-hatted as an officer commanding an actual support element, which is a job not only not usually done by a medical officer. I don't think it's ever been done by a medical officer before since it's a Logistician's job. I don't think I actually did terribly well at it nor did Canada really know what it was to put an actual support element together then. It's something we're very, very good at now. But I had a small—on the national support element side—I had a very small team of very ingenious people who's job it was to provide that support link to every member—every Canadian in theatre; so not just the battle group, not just the engineers but all of the United Nations military observers and the headquarters staff people. And so we were quite busy keeping in touch with all of their needs. And this was another time that we had this rail link back to Germany because

most of our short term needs were met by rail from the folks back at CFB Lahr. And we probably would have fallen on our faces without that. So that was the MSM. I know who wrote it up and it was not my commanding officer in theatre but my subsequent commanding officer. I refer to it as my commanding officer's creative writing award. But it does serve as a reminder that it's an important role of somebody in a leadership position to do that kind of work. It's thankless work because the person who does the work doesn't see any of the benefit. And because of the role of a third party in the honours and awards process, I never think it's, it's certainly not any kind of a slight for somebody to have a long career and not have a declaration because it probably says more about the people he worked with and for than about them. It does serve as a reminder that we should take the time to do these kinds of things.

And the Order of Military Merit frankly is—and I'm not cynical about it. I'm proud to wear it. I was thrilled to receive it—but it is kind of like getting an outstanding PER several years in a row. It's one of these sort of, yeah, you've done well over a long career and here's a little pat on the head to help keep your morale up. So it is less specific perhaps than the other decoration.

And the other thing I wear that I'm actually paradoxically ridiculously happy to be able to wear because it's a collectable award—not an individual one—is the Governor General's Unit Commendation, which comes from the same tour as the MSM. And the rules – it's been awarded I believe three times now: for the Van Doo Battle Group, for the Medak Pocket and again for the 3 PPCLI first tour in Afghanistan. The rules are that those who are posted to the unit that won it wear it and those who were with the unit at the time it was awarded wear it in perpetuity. So I have that, the Governor General's little rampant lion there on my uniform as well. That's a source of some pride because it says, yeah, you actually were there when the press was paying attention, I guess. Just to close the loop on the Governor General's Distinguished Unit Commendation it was awarded to the, for my Battalion the Royal 22 Regiment for the opening of the Sarajevo airport. So all of us who deployed to Sarajevo in the summer of 1992 are the ones you'll see wearing it for that action.

INTERVIEWER: You were the first woman and the first medical branch officer to instruct at Foxhole U. Could you describe this?

JAEGER: Yeah, thanks. It was probably the job I've had in my career that was the most unusual and in some ways the one I'm most proud of. It's not anything I actually set out really. It's nothing I said ten years ago or early in my career, "I want to do this," because it was assumed it was impossible. The position of the combat support directing staff at the Army Staff College in Kingston has alternated back and forth between Logistics branch and the EME branch for a very, very long time. Certainly, as long as anybody I know can remember. And that's understandable. Those are the, sort of, the largest components of combat service support and operations. And as I was coming to the end of my three years as commanding officer of 2 Field Ambulance, a number of forces came together. And I didn't really have too much of a hand in this. The commander of the army was a Logistics officer, General Leach. The Logistics branch advisor and the EME

branch advisor had both been my commanding officers at the time when I was the unit medical officer in Service Battalion. So all of the people who made the decisions about army postings particularly in respect to this position knew me well. And knew me in a positive light, I gather. I'm not sure who in the medical branch thought it was a good idea. But it was. I think there's a general understanding that my career had been unusual in the amount of time I'd spent in the field and the understanding I'd developed for army operations. And that all of these forces came together and this required the Log and the EME branches to agree to step back from the position. They would leave it unfilled which allowed me to get posted in.

Now, I had a wonderful time. It was a rare opportunity to interact with the young up and coming captains from all of the army occupations, all regiments. And what I want whoever's listening or whoever cares to understand is that as the combat service board directing staff, yes you teach those portions of the curriculum that relate to combat service support and are responsible for updating the materials as they relate to combat service support. But when you deal in small groups with your syndicate—and you're assigned a small group of ten people throughout the course—when you deal with that group—you teach them in small groups, two of them in small groups—for everything. So fire planning, where's the best place to set up with your armour, where would the tanks be ahead of the firing line, where would they maneuver through, what are the Signal folks going to be able to do for you, what are the intelligence requirements, how do you decide it is what you need to know, what are your trigger points for a decision to committing your reserve. All of that was part of my responsibilities as the combat service support directing staff. And it was a big stretch and a big challenge. And I actually liked teaching. And small groups are a fun way to do it. Sometimes the discussions just took off and had lives of their own. But, unfortunately, I only spent a year doing it. Someone, a colonel at NDHQ in Ottawa, retired and I was the next name on the merit list. So after only a year there I had to fold my tent and assume the mantle of a faceless NDHQ staff officer which is nowhere as much fun as being a unit commanding officer and not as much fun as being an instructor at Army Staff College.

INTERVIEWER: What have you found to be the most rewarding aspects of your military career?

JAEGER: Well, I think that's relatively easy to answer. I think you probably get a variation on this answer from most people who've been in the military. The most rewarding thing about the Canadian Forces is the people who are in the Canadian Forces and the degree of commitment that they have and the skills and talents and their creativity and to see how powerful it is when humans are organized with a common goal. Organizational behaviour is fascinating and sort of organizational theory, but to see it on the ground and see it actually work is very, very impressive.

Now if you were to ask me which aspects have been less rewarding I'd say it has more to do with the milieu in which the Canadian Forces operates. I did come very close to releasing from the Canadian Forces about seven or eight years ago. And a friend of mine was doing a post grad paper at the time about the nature of service and asked me what

would make me think about leaving the Forces? And I said when I thought the Canadian Forces has ceased to be a viable instrument of government policy. And I thought we were very close to that point then. Not sure we're so far away from it now. So on the less rewarding side is working sometimes for a government—not necessarily now more than at any other point in time—in a country that seems to not understand why military forces are important, that seems to blithely and willfully take almost everything we do for granted. And to have that compounded by a media that has zero understanding of anything to do with the military. They don't have any understanding of anything to do with health care, either. So when you put military health care together and deal with the media you have very, very few people working in the media out there who can get a story anything like half right. And my jaundiced view of the media has made me wonder about the quality of information that is passed on to us in a number of other spheres. Because I know what percentage of the story they get right when it comes to medicine and the military. And if they get that percentage right when it comes to other aspects of their news reporting, then I am woefully ill informed. And so is every other Canadian. And that's not a very encouraging feeling.

INTERVIEWER: Interview with Brigadier General Hilary Jaeger on the 13th of March 2007. Interview ends.

TRANSCRIPT ENDS