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INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

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INTERVIEWEE: Peter C. Dudley

INTERVIEWER: J.R. Digger MacDougall

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Interviewed 19 November 2003

By J.R. Digger MacDougall

INTERVIEWER: Canadian war Museum Oral History Program Interview with Peter Dudley, recorded on 19 November 2003, in Ottawa, Ontario. Interviewed by J.R. Digger MacDougall. Tape 1, Side 1.

DUDLEY: And the interviewee is Peter Carson Dudley. The last name is spelled D-U-D-L-E-Y.

INTERVIEWER: Peter, why don't you start off by just giving me some background about yourself. Just where you were born, and sort of, take it from there. Then I'm interested in how you got into the military, and how you eventually got into flying.

DUDLEY: Thanks Digger, because now we're talking about how to put thirty years and a very enjoyable career, into a few short sentences. Okay. I was born in Vancouver, [in] 1935. Therefore, my introduction into the Army was at the age of fourteen—when you leave the Boy Scouts, you go into the Army Cadets. Remember, this is 1949—four years after war. Army Cadets is still Army. You got to drive trucks, fire machine guns, and you were led by officers and NCOs that had wartime experience.

In Vancouver, the local infantry regiment happened to be a highland regiment. It was the Seaforth Highlanders, which also meant that you get to go to the Cadet camps. You'd get a hundred dollars for a summer and learn how to operate radios. The end result, of course is, as soon as possible, at the age of fifteen, because you're in the Cadet Corps of that regiment, and you can operate radios, we became the Signals Platoon in the Reserve battalion, at the time. And all five of us, as high school ex-Cadets had a ball driving trucks and operating radios, at the age of fifteen or sixteen.

Interesting--my family moved to Ottawa, my last year of high school. By this time, being an expert in radios, I figured out that the Armoured Corps had more radios than the Infantry. And they also rode, instead of walked. I transferred to an Armoured Car Regiment, here in Ottawa—the 4th Princess Louise Dragoon Guards. Again, you have to remember, this is a Reserve Army that still had equipment. They had a hangar full of Staghound armoured cars, and we had Lynx scout cars, and we had trucks. Again, you had the opportunity, with each armoured car had a 19 set in it. That was what you learned as a cadet, and it was still the radio that the regular Army used. It meant that you could really do something.

The end result was that being a Corporal in the Armoured Car Regiment meant that you immediately tried to get to be a Sergeant. The RSM said, "I don't want any more nineteen year old Sergeants." And told the Colonel, and said, "Why don't you take him?" End result--I was sent as an Officer Cadet in a Reserve Army Regiment. I went to Camp Borden in

1955, on the Method 'B' Command Contingent six months course. At the end of the six months, I returned to Ottawa.

The family decision was, "If you're not going to go back to school, you've got to get a job." I said, "I can then join the Army." I promptly did -- 13 Personnel Depot, Wallis House. A short discussion about whether I should go in the Infantry. I pointed out my Armoured Corps—I already had done a certain amount of Armoured Corps training. And the end result was a train ticket to Petawawa, and an Officer Cadet, as third phase in the Royal Canadian Dragoons.

INTERVIEWER: So, you were already well trained before you got into a regiment. How did you move from that into being a pilot?

DUDLEY: The interesting thing there is the Royal Canadian Dragoons had, of course, gone on, to the divisional exercise in Gagetown, in 1956—exercise Rising Star. I was in a turret in my Centurion tank, having my usual delights, being an Armoured Corps Officer and the Armoured Corps, by this time, had been authorized to raise a helicopter troop for each of the four Regiments. The Adjutant had mentioned that this communiqué had come in, while we were on the exercise, and he didn't get a chance to talk to me. And I said, "Well, what happens now?" He said, "Well, we put your name in anyway."

That resulted in a TD to RCAF Station London, or, as it was called Crumlin, which was the Air Force--the RCAF Aircrew Selection Unit. Remember, again, this was an Air Force that was still recruiting for an Air Division. It required an awful lot of pilots. So this, of course, was pretty interesting, too, because, you know, you're already a commissioned officer, so therefore, you're not a flight cadet. And you're trying to convince the psychologist that, when he asks you, "Why do you want to join the Air Force and fly airplanes?" You have to explain that, "I'm not in the Air Force, and I don't want to fly airplanes. I want to fly helicopters for the Tank Corps."

End result was I finished the aircrew selection, and the regiment is posted to Germany. I spent the next two and a half years as a tank troop leader, in the brigade in Germany. And on return, from Germany, you go into the normal cycle of postings outside the Regiment, and I [was]selected to be an Army Cadet Liaison Officer, which turned out to be very interesting. I was trying to get to my hometown of Vancouver, and I found out there was another posting of the same qualifications which was St. John's, Newfoundland. Again, a very interesting, but shortened tour as a Staff Officer in Headquarters, Newfoundland Area. The system then caught up with me, and I received a wire saying that, "On successful completion of your Part 2 Lieutenant to Captain exams in Camp Borden, in the Armoured Corps School, you will report to RCAF Station Centralia in November of 1960, to start on Army Pilot Course 60-2."

To keep this in context, the Armoured Corps, when it started off in 1956 or '57 to recruit pilots, I was out of the country. So therefore, when I came back, the Army had then decided to use the RCAF training facilities, to qualify its pilots. In the meantime, the first group of Army pilots, Army pilots for the Armoured Corps, had been trained in Fort Rucker. But in my case, it was the third course to go through Centralia.

The reaction to the Air Force to having Army pilots was quite interesting. Their point was that they were there to train pilots, and they could train anybody to fly. They were delighted

to train the Army. The quality of the instruction was very good. Again, since we're not Flight Cadets, and in this case, I've already had five years of military service, and a tour in Germany, and the other members of my course were two Artillery, and two Service Corps officers. Our first meeting in the mess was to decide the ground rules of how the Army would get along with the Air Force. Which would be that if any two of us, at any given time, turned up at the same time, in the same uniform, the junior officer would have to go back and change. Our intent, of course, was to make sure that the Air Force knew that the Army was there in Centralia.

Also, because we couldn't be put into the Flight Cadet's mess, we were allowed to be in the instructor's room all the time, which was really an interesting concept of how to learn airmanship, because you're listening to your instructors. The Flight Commander had been a wartime Mustang pilot. The Deputy Flight Commander was a very smooth gentleman, who like most of them, had been Sabre pilots for five years in the Air division. One of the other instructors was an ex-Golden Hawk. Our comment was, you know, "Don't you feel a little bit of a letdown flying Chipmunks, instead of Sabres?" And again, you had to realize this was an introduction to the difference between the Army and the Air Force.

These people were on short service commissions. They were delighted to still have a cockpit. They also, I think, really felt it was easy to train Army pilots, because instead of twenty-five hours, which was the introduction to flying in PFS, the Army pilots got sixty hours, which included some cross country work. Our Air Force instructors could relax in the back seat. And also, they didn't have to worry about officer development and they could shout at us and insult us, knowing quite well that we would reply in kind. The end result was we had an excellent introduction to aviation, and I graduated, three months, with sixty-seven hours on Chipmunk time.

INTERVIEWER: Was that the only aircraft you'd flown, up until that time?

DUDLEY: Yes. Outside of, I think, one trip in a Cessna 195, as a passenger, that was my first introduction to flying.

INTERVIEWER: So, what happened next in your flying career?

DUDLEY: By this time, you're on the normal cycle, which is "pack your car, and go to Canadian Joint Air Training Centre at Rivers, Manitoba." Another insight into—when you're driving down the highway, you turn right at Brandon and you drive down a road, and the road disappears over the rising. All you can see is telephone poles, and five white hangars at the end of the road, and you came to Rivers. Rivers, itself, deserves a whole story.

It was the Joint Air Training Centre and a parachute school. It had fighter elements and the Tactical Fighter Flight. It had transport elements. It had the Air Supply School, and the Light Aircraft School, and about six different exchange officers from the Americans and the Brits. It was a military education in itself. One happy hour in Rivers, you could learn an awful lot.

INTERVIEWER: Did you finally meet some Army pilot instructors, at Rivers?

DUDLEY: I'll have to go back on that, too, because in Centralia, as I say, five of us just met, so to speak, and from different backgrounds. And our first introduction to Army Aviation was a Staff Officer Major, from the DLA—the Directorate of Land Aviation—a Committee, in Ottawa, came down to give us a briefing. He sat us down with our Air Force Flight Commander, and told us that just because we could loop and roll our Chipmunks, we were not to get carried away with the Air Force attitude towards flying, and we were not allowed to loop and roll our L-19s.

This was a bit of a shock to most of us, who really wanted to go and fly helicopters, and had no intention of flying L-19s. It also gave us an interesting outlook into what the old elements of Army Aviation thought about the Armoured Corps and the Service Corps joining the group. It was not an impressive speech. Our course leader, an Artillery Captain, turned to the Air Force Flight Lieutenant and said, "On behalf of Corps 60-2, I'd like to apologize for that briefing." And the Flight Commander said, "We've heard it twice, and we can't understand it either."

The reason I bring this up is because when we arrived at Rivers, we were then sat in a room and got addressed by the senior Army pilot there, who said, "Look around to the guy next to you, because he might not be here in three weeks." We left that briefing with the understanding of saying, "Just a minute." After sixty hours, and a reasonable assurance by the Air Force that we were going to have an aptitude for flying, we felt that this remark was taken a little out of context, too. The end result, of course, was the opening remarks on our course critique at LAS was, the school seemed to lack the drive and direction in the many things it did.

Which rather summed up the fact is that we were selected to be helicopter pilots, but we had to go through a ritual of fixed-wing training, which basically -- because it's cheaper to learn on an airplane, than it is on a helicopter. But it did add a fair amount of time. It was interesting. The instructors at the Light Aircraft School, for the most part, were again, very competent individuals and very interesting. We enjoyed it, but it did add a bit more time. The end result was, I spent another couple of months learning to fly—about a hundred and twenty five hours in the L-19, which, when you learned to land on roads and fields, is an experience, and it gave you a good background in navigation.

INTERVIEWER: What were some of the things that you did during that one hundred and twenty five hours of flying?

DUDLEY: The first one, of course, is just to learn -- like everything else -- it's to learn the airplane itself, and the characteristics of the L-19. Most of it was cross-country navigation, and field work, when again, to select the field and land on a field in an airplane designed to do that, was an excellent experience. Now, whether it was pertinent to what we were going to do in the Armoured Corps was immaterial, but it did give us some more air experience. What it did lead to was getting my Army Flying Badge on the 12th of May 1961, with a total time of a hundred and ninety two hours.

INTERVIEWER: Now, you called it Army Flying Badge—not wings. What was the difference?

DUDLEY: Technically speaking, when you come to military qualifications, the word ‘wings’ doesn’t mean anything. It officially is called the Army Flying Badge—a lion with blue wings. A very distinctive badge which, in fact, when you looked at the flying badges of various countries, this one always stood out. Needless to say, we were all very proud of it.

The next step of course is--finally is--to learn to fly a helicopter. By that point, we then go in to the same hangar, flying the same airplane, but with a different unit. We went to the basic helicopter training unit, which was an RCAF unit run by a group of very interesting personalities, which were the old time Air Force helicopter pilots. The OC of the school was Carl Bond who had flown with the 108 Communication Flight when they built the DEW line. Again, you couldn’t have asked for a better introduction to helicopter flying.

The interesting point was we were the first course that actually went through completely on the Hiller CH-112, and the Hiller 12-E. Previous to that, they’d been using the Sikorsky H-5, and the Hiller was just coming into service at that time. Again, this was sixty-two hours, in only five weeks, and it was basically just how to learn to fly a helicopter. The Hiller itself -- because, remember, the Army at this point had been using the Bell H-13 or the Bell-47. But the purchase of the Hiller was an agreement with the Navy that, although they were entitled to have some light helicopters, they would take the H-13s that were at Rivers, and not use the Hiller.

So, the Hiller purchase was literally twenty-five, which the first three were bright yellow, and marked RCAF, and the remainder were painted brown, with white Army painted on the side. But they were also used as tactical trainers, and then loaned to the BHTU as a basic trainer, too. One can also qualify the fact that pilots, generally speaking, are very susceptible to liking the airplane they learn to fly on, anyway. The older pilots said, “Well, you know, the Bell is a much smoother airplane.” To us, we didn’t know any difference. And flying a helicopter was such an abrupt experience, that we were quite happy with the Hiller.

It was sort of a Harley Davidson of the helicopter world. It had a big, loud engine and it had a twist grip throttle, and you had to skid it around corners. But once you learned to adapt the characteristics of the airplane, it was actually a very good piece of kit for the Army reconnaissance role. It was rugged. You could move it over the ground. It had a reliable engine, and its maintenance record, after a few minor points, was quite good. And it was probably the cheapest thing the government could have bought, at the time. But it was a good introduction to light helicopters for the Army.

INTERVIEWER: Peter, you now have your Army Flying Badge. You’ve gone into the Basic Helicopter Training Unit, to learn how to fly a chopper. What happened next?

DUDLEY: Yes. Okay—the Army Aviation School. The Light Aircraft School, by this time, remember, had changed its title to the Army Aviation Tactical Training School. They, of course, were committed to bringing helicopter pilots up to a reasonable Army standard. And they started a Tactical Training Course. I started that one in December 1961. The Hiller had a few development problems, which is usual in any airplane, so the course got dragged out, and was abruptly terminated, from my point of view, when I was posted to the Helicopter Troop in the 4 Canadian Infantry Brigade Group, in Germany in May 1962.

Now, the Helicopter Troop was the Armoured Corps' first example of a completely new concept. It was formed in 1961 in Rivers—Lorne Glendenning was commanding it—and it had officers from all the regiments, and it had the Senior NCO. A very interesting concept, and, in fact, well ahead of both the British Army and the American Army, at this time. The Berlin Crisis slowed its deployment to Germany down, and it didn't go until the spring of 1962. One of the officers on that troop had retired from the Army. They required a replacement and, as usual in my career, it's nothing to do with ability. It's merely being in the right place at the right time.

I said after being a tank officer in Germany for a number of years, I would be delighted to go back as a helicopter pilot. And subsequently, posted to Fort Chambly as a pilot, in the 4 Troop of the Recce Squadron, of the 8th Canadian Hussars, commanded by a Major P.B.B. Grieve—a wartime officer of great ability. The development of the troop, again, being a new concept and everything else, they had to give it hangar space. They had to organize it. It essentially was seven officers, six NCOs, and about eleven RCEME craftsmen. We had a Staff Sergeant, a Sergeant, two Corporals, and the remainder were the classic RCEME Craftsmen, group 4—cross-trained in all trades.

The organization for the Recce Troop was strictly as the fourth troop of an independent Reconnaissance Squadron, commanded by a Major. The Squadron Commander was a Major. The three Recce Troops had Ferret armoured cars, and 4 Troop had its Hiller CH-112.

INTERVIEWER: How many Hillers did you have?

DUDLEY: We had six. The brigade also had two Hillers at the headquarters, run as a Communications Flight. So, this was the introduction of rotary wing to field units of the Canadian Brigade.

INTERVIEWER: Peter, this sounds like you're, sort of, at the root of the pioneering movement, let's say, of helicopter reconnaissance, within the Armoured Corps. What were some of the things that you did while you were serving in that troop?

DUDLEY: Well, the first thing off that we had to do was deal with the fact that when we purchased the Hiller, they couldn't decide what colour to paint it, and they were painted shiny brown, with white Army markings, and silver engine covers and blades. And, we decided that it had to be camouflaged. Of course, the fact is we lived in the field.

The organization of this troop was a three quarter ton command post, and three quarter ton trucks towing a trailer. The trailers had barrels of 8087 av gas. There were two RCEME mechanics driving the truck, and there were two Sergeants, and two officers in each section. And when you moved around the field, that's exactly how you existed. When the airplane ran low on fuel, the truck had a VHF radio, and you would merely say, you know, "Pull over to the next field." You would land. RCEME mechanics would refuel it and do the servicing. You would get back in and carry on. All your tasking was literally through the squadron headquarters.

But you have to understand that an independent reconnaissance squadron was deployed across an entire brigade front, and literally. And I'm quoting one of the successful squadron commanders who, after being complimented on the ability of his squadron, he said, "I don't

command it, once it's committed. The Lieutenants and the Corporals—the car commanders are the ones that do it. We're given an overall mission, and we're expected to fit ourselves into both the ground and the tactical situation.”

INTERVIEWER: So, notwithstanding you were a pilot, you continued to live as Army?

DUDLEY: Oh yes, very much so. In fact, this is why my remark about, you know, changing the colour of the airplane. When you moved, you just moved wherever you could find a space big enough for the helicopter, and where you could hide it. Because remember, you had air reconnaissance all the time, and hiding a silver coloured, shiny brown helicopter, which is an awkward piece of kit anyway, requires a certain amount of ingenuity. And it took us a number of years to get the suitable authority to repaint them, which we did.

They had the wartime camouflage. They changed the white Army to black Army, and painted the inside of the cockpit, and all the silver, which only left then the white helmet of the pilot, sitting in the middle of the air. And we had to get special dispensation to paint those brown, too. We then had to take our light khaki flying suits and dye them dark green, because that's the only other thing you could see in the field. In fact, our one piece flying suit rapidly became a useless piece of kit for living in the field. I think, whereas the Armoured Corps found out about one-piece tank suits, too. It was just a sideline on dress and deportment. Our normal dress was a pair of KD trousers, a khaki nylon shirt, which was a bad idea, and a sweater, and an interim flying jacket, and of course, a black beret.

The tactical concept was that we entirely worked in conjunction with a car troop. There was very few independent reces that you would do, other than doing road or bridge reces, and everything else. Once the brigade was deployed, the cars were deployed, and it was up to the helicopter section to determine where the best place it would be that they could assist the scout car troops to move around the ground. And since most of us had a lot of experience, both in tanks, and in my case, recce, and remember, the Armoured Corps had provided very, very competent Senior NCOs.

The Armoured Corps—both in its officers and NCOs—had a lot of surplus talent. A Sergeant in a tank regiment, once he'd done a tour, to them it was something different. And we collected a very competent group of NCOs. And the combination of having a helicopter, side by side seating, a pilot who understood the tactical situation, and an NCO who, in addition to understanding the tactical situation, was very good at operating radios and reading maps. Because remember, what we had to provide was information.

You could be the best pilot in the world, but the scout car commander couldn't have cared less. He knew what your call sign was, and he knew who the crew was, and he weighed his actions based on what information you gave him and how good you were at delivering this information. And what we wanted to do, of course, was to give, you know, a six figure grid reference, with a great degree of accuracy, within thirty seconds, and a recommendation to the scout car commanders of what we felt the situation was. But generally speaking, it worked very well.

Again, we're in an environment that the British Army had just gone into the air troop thing, assigning their helicopters to units, and they had not really developed the Army Air Corps concept as a complete and separate entity. I had an opportunity to work with the British

armoured car squadrons, although their helicopters were a different generation. They had a Skeeter, which was a very interesting piece of aeronautical equipment, but it was underpowered. But, they were doing, in fact, very similar work. But again, I think we had a better airplane, and of course, our NCOs were a very valuable contribution to the team's effort.

INTERVIEWER: Peter, how were you maintained in the field? Who maintained you and how were you maintained?

DUDLEY: Being just an extra troop of the Recce Squadron was that the fuel, the food, ammunition, everything else was a normal supply effort. Your first line servicing was the people who drove the trucks and serviced the helicopter. And the backup, of course, was the Aircraft Servicing Platoon, of the RCEME Workshop—the Brigade Workshop -- which in true Army fashion, was commanded by a Captain, wearing blue wings. Therefore, he could do all the test flying. If there was any problems with the airplanes, it would have had to go back to the workshop or be fixed in the field. It was the same thing if your tank broke—call the brigade workshop, and they appeared. They could do the engine changes and everything else.

The relationship between the maintenance crews and the flying crews, of course, were—you know, it's pretty difficult to distance yourself, when there's only six of you, and you're all eating out of the same pot on the back of the truck. But it worked out very well, although some of the visiting Staff Officers said, "Well, we can't understand why the RCEME Corporals are cooking food for the pilots." We said, "It's called crew true cooking—crew messing." And they said, "Well, why do the officers sleep in tents beside the truck, and the craftsmen have beds inside the truck?" And the answer to that was, "It's their truck, and if you think a pilot is going to tell his mechanic to sleep on the ground, just because he is a commissioned rank, and he is servicing your airplane, you've got another think coming."

One had to recognize there were certain adaptations to be made, both on the aviation side and the Army side. But in general, it worked out very well together. In addition, the brigade had a helicopter at the brigade headquarters, which was run by two pilots. And the Army Service Corps Transport Company also had a helicopter, which again illustrated a point that once you had airplanes that could work in the field, next to the military units they served. That's where they should be and you didn't want any long communication facilities between a C&L Flight and a headquarters. And that proved its point too, because the brigade headquarters knew that when they stepped outside the door of the CP, the helicopter was there and, in this case, either an Artillery or a Army Service Corps pilot was standing there, saying, "Where do you want to go next?"

Which also relieved the Recce Squadron from a lot of C&L Flights. Although we developed a technique that -- because we could do a lot of Air OP work, that we worked as much as possible, with a close relationship with the artillery regiment. And our other great customers were the engineer squadron, because if they couldn't get the C&L helicopter, they could always ask us. An engineer recce was another high point. Generally speaking, it was an interjection of another piece of equipment to a traditional Army role.

The biggest error we made is we didn't write anything down. The cavalry expects you to get on with the job. The Armoured Corps gave us helicopters, and we got on with the job, but we

didn't write anything down. So, there was no doctrine that flowed back from it. The attitude was, "If you knew what your job was, you didn't have to have a book to read about it. So, just get on with it."

INTERVIEWER: For the record, just clarify what you meant by C&L Flight, and then I'd like to hear about how you came up with policy and doctrine.

DUDLEY: The C&L Flight was the Communication and Liaison Flight which was, again, positioning a helicopter where it was going to be used all the time, which was at brigade headquarters. The doctrine thing, again, was—one has to mention it now, because it becomes a thread through all the other activities and units that I served with—is we didn't have a central doctrine school. The Army Aviation School was a trade school. It taught you to operate the equipment, and gave you a tactical sort of oversight of what you were expected to do with it. But the individual Corps that used the airplanes were the ones that would dictate how you used it. And it was largely, again, left up to the units in the field. And this lack of a central school, held us back in the future because there was always a slight difference of opinion, of how things should be done.

At this point, I think I should clarify. It might be because I'm a helicopter pilot, and because I'm Armoured Corps, I felt that the initial training we got, and the effect of the Air OP Flights had coloured Army Aviation up to this point--missed an opportunity. I really think that the Artillery, when they were offered the chance to go rotary wing, said, "No." They would stick with their old metal Auster—the L-19. And, I think this somewhat limited the brigade helicopter concept that would have served the Army to a better degree. Because the L-19 was an excellent piece of kit, but remember, it was only for the Artillery and it was back five—a little further behind the battle.

A helicopter used by the Artillery and they did it a trial and said, "It couldn't replace the L-19." I think this is a grave error, because having two people sitting side by side, the helicopter was a very much—it could climb faster, and was very much more maneuverable, and didn't stall. It was a far better Air Observation Post vehicle than a L-19. But, remember, again, the Armoured Corps provided competent Sergeants. The Artillery tended to say, "Well, he's just a radio operator, and they were just Corporals sitting in the back."

For what it's worth, if the Artillery had gone into helicopters, and put Senior NCOs in, they would have been served Army Aviation to a better degree. Having said it, I shall leave it alone. I also mention this because once we were deployed in the field, our working relationship with the Artillery was excellent, because of course, we all knew each other. And invariably, an invitation to the Air OP mess on a deployment was always a very good invitation because they knew how to live in the field.

We also got to the point was -- although it was not endorsed officially, they were always interested in helicopters, and we used to give them a lot of ad hoc stick time. And the compliment was returned, because they said, "You guys are qualified in L-19s?" And we said, "Sure. We have nothing else to do." And a twenty minute check out and there we were back, soaring in an L-19, flying over Germany. It meant that the Army Aviation had an inherent—you know, pilots are pilots. What I'm really saying, is that the Army really had—its core doctrine didn't allow it to really get together as a group.

INTERVIEWER: Peter, you were with the 8th Hussars, at the time. I understand that you stayed in Germany when the Garrys replaced the Hussars. How did that happen?

DUDLEY: By manipulation of two dedicated Fort Garry Officers—Colonel W.R.C. Wright, and Major D.A. Nicholson. The end result, of course is the Armoured Corps knew that it was going to have problems staffing all of these helicopter troops, and the original helicopter troop was formed by the officers and NCOs of all of the four regiments. The 8th Hussars knew that they were leaving in the fall of '62, so, therefore, they said, "There's no problem. Keep your badges up." The Armoured Corps knew that it was going to have this problem, and there had been administrative action taken by the Director of Armour, and there was a message in the works to say that Armoured Corps officers and helicopter pilots were not required to change badges on posting.

That was in transit when the handover from 8 Hussars to Fort Garry Horse happened, and the Adjutant phoned us up and said, "Get over to the tailor shop--Major Nicholson's compliments, the tailor will know what to do." And that was our introduction to the Fort Garry Horse. We immediately went down and asked Colonel Little. We said, "We were promised we didn't have to do this. There's a message coming. What did you do to us?" And Colonel Little, in his nice, affable style of leadership said, "Well, I think you'll be better off as Garrys. I want you to be part of the regiment." And he said, "You can always go back to your own regiments, when you go back to Canada. But as a favour, I'd like you to be in the Fort Garry Horse."

The end result was, of course, we never went back to our previous regiments. I changed my RCD flashes, to the yellow and black of the Fort Garry Horse. I really considered that to be my regiment. It was also helped by the fact that the Recce Squadron commander wore blue wings as well. And his name was D.A. Nicholson—a wartime trooper and an excellent Recce Commander, who I quoted earlier. When he was complimented by the German Corps Commander on the efficiency of his reconnaissance unit, he said, "It is not me. It is my Corporals." But it was D.A. Nicholson, by personality and training, that kept that Recce Squadron to the high standard it was.

He also made it quite clear that his junior officers, as troop leaders, were in charge, and the fact that the helicopter pilot was many years senior, and probably had more rank, that the ground commander was in charge. And his quote was, "You will not direct or chivvy the car troops by your comments or information. You will anticipate what they need and provide what they need." Which is an excellent summation on how the tactic worked.

The helicopters never flew ahead of the cars. They were on the flanks. Their object was to think what the car commander could see. If he was in a tight corner--if he was in the woods--the helicopter could go to either side, or gain a little bit of altitude and give him information that he could help. Even negative information helped the car commanders, because we would come out and said, "I can see around the corner. I don't think there's anything there." It means, "There might be something there, but I don't see any." What you're telling him, of course, is, "I don't see tracks. I don't see glints. I don't see any sign of any activity."

Now, this relationship was developed over the exercises. And in Germany you did exercises all the time. And it was, again, the fact that the observer NCOs were in the Sergeants' mess—they had more time and rank than the car commanders, but the car commanders knew

who was in charge, because the CO had told them. This, although it was sometimes difficult to understand to anybody else, it worked very well, as long as you kept the mission in mind.

INTERVIEWER: So, this takes us into the whole world of Tac Hel Operations—Tactical Helicopter Operations. How do you make the transition from, let's say, Army Aviation, to Tactical Helicopter Aviation?

DUDLEY: Well, as the world turns, as the soap operas keep saying, remember, the Army had developed this troop, and the Armoured Corps had kept its private Air Force—they kept it for ten years. It had an excellent record. It was, in fact, using helicopters in conjunction with ground reconnaissance units at a lower command level than either the British or the American Army. We had opportunities to work with the American Army, even at this time. But remember, they were getting caught up in Viet Nam and their Army Aviation did not have any organization comparable to ours.

The end result was that my tour ended in December 1964 and I was elected to stay with Army Aviation which is an interesting point. From your Armoured Corps career point of view, [it] is that most of us knew that if you selected a second tour, that your name was sort of removed from a list. This was proven, I think, by when one of my very good friend, L.H. Caldwell—Luke Caldwell went to talk to the Director of Armour, and when talking to the clerk, he found that all the files for the pilots were in a separate cabinet. In fact, they were in a box, underneath the desk. But it also illustrated the point is the Armoured Corps could not maintain a supply of competent junior officers that were medically fit, and had a tactical background, to keep these helicopter flights going.

The Armoured Corps had gone from two regiments to four regiments, and they could not afford the training time, or they could not afford to commit an officer to a career pattern that was going against his better interest. It was interesting because there were some RMC grads that went into the flying training, too, but they were literally advised, you know, “Get your wings, but remember, if you stick with it, it is going to be a kiss of death to your career.”

It didn't apply to most of us because, in many cases, like we were either commissioned from the ranks, or in my case, like OCS through the militia. And you pretty well knew where your career was in the Armoured Corps to start with. And we were quite happy in flying airplanes because we enjoyed it, and also because we felt we were contributing something to the efficiency of the Corps. And the Armoured Corps had a very nice attitude towards its officers and NCOs. Promotion wasn't everything, as long as you contributed to the Corps. This point became sensitive when the Canadian military moved into unification. But that's a separate story, which I'll get to in a minute.

INTERVIEWER: Peter, I'd like to go back to your time in Germany, for a moment, and get some idea from you of exactly what were you doing when you were in that seat in your Hiller helicopter. What were you doing when you were actually on mission, and what did your missions entail, and what happened when you were out there?

DUDLEY: Again, it depends on the role given to the Recce Squadron to start with, because remember, we were a sub-unit of a brigade recce unit. But in most cases, it was anticipation. Because once you got a mission, which would last—the brigade mission, which would be any phase, from three to five days long—you knew where the Recce Squadron was going to be.

If it was an advance, the normal dictates of road recce and flank recce came out. Essentially, it was that the Helicopter Troop had its own command post. You knew what the mission was to the scout cars. You were detailed. If the scout cars needed you, you were detailed to it. If not, you could be given additional tasks.

For example, if an infantry battalion was having a specific manoeuvre—a river crossing or something—quite often, they would delegate us to do a recce task for that. In that case, we could also deploy one of our LOs, and I would—for example, I remember turning up in the Canadian Guards, with a jeep and a long extension cord, and I would insert myself into the CP, and I was literally talking to the helicopters. So, once they found out, if they had a gap—if there was something—a vacuum on the battlefield, they would turn to me and I'd say, "Just a minute. You know, within five minutes, I can tell you something." That was another example of how the Helicopter Troop was totally integrated to the brigade battle plan.

It really also depended on the fact that, in the old Army, you knew who ran the CP. You had worked together. You knew the personalities of the infantry battalions, the engineers and the people you work with. And through a series of exercises, they knew what to expect from you, and what you could or could not do. It was a constant effort to maintain the purpose and lesson of Army Aviation, but it was a good introduction. There's no mystery to it because, in fact, it is merely applying another piece of machinery to a tactical situation. This is not air power per se—it is merely, you know, aviation used to support the Army Brigade.

I might mention here, too, that the success of the Helicopter Troop in its ten years was that it had an excellent safety record. Our perpetual problem was wire strikes, because our navigation and altitude was, what they used to call nap-of-the-earth. Which was -- you were a vehicle hiding behind trees and barns. You were flying at three to five feet all the time. And in Germany, wires are painted green because it blends with the background of rural Germany. And it means that, if you weren't careful, you'd run into them. We had a series of wire strikes. We did a lot of work on them, which eventually developed into a wire strike protection kit, after we came back from Germany, which was literally the same thing we used to use in jeeps and scout cars, in the Second World War. Which was a piece of angle iron in front of the helicopter, so it wouldn't break the control rods.

INTERVIEWER: Interview [with Peter C. Dudley. End of Tape 1, Side 1.]

INTERVIEWER: Canadian War Museum Oral History Program, Interview with Peter Dudley. Tape 1, Side 2.

DUDLEY: Yes, the wire strike effort was -- again, once you recognized what the threat was, we got the protective device eventually and also, we then revised our training. This meant that once you--any tactical area we used had to be--do a wire recce before we went into it. And most of the cases, after a couple of close calls, you got very sensitive to wires. The end result, of course, is when I left in '64 -- the troop itself, remember, only lasted from '62 to '72, and it continued, as the regiments changed. The personality of the troop changed a bit, too, because the Armoured Corps could not provide any more pilots, and then they gradually were replaced by Service Corps pilots, by Infantry, and finally, in the latter point, we started to get pilots from the Air Force and the Navy.

The interesting point here is that the personality and the ability of the individuals was sometimes quite separate from their background, and some of them--some very good recce pilots. Particularly the Army Service Corps because they were experienced pilots and, again, could easily adapt to the Army concept. The same applied to the Infantry, although there weren't as many of them because the Infantry did not provide very many pilots for Army Aviation. The first Navy pilot was an excellent individual and adapted well. Again, the Air Force pilots came from a varying background and they were sometimes -- and I hesitate to get a little sensitive about this -- but they took a much longer time to realize what the Army was all about.

Some did extremely well. For instance, the first Air Force pilot to the C&L Flight adapted to the Army, and was recognized, you know, as a good administrator, as well as being a very good pilot. But again, this reflects on the fact that the Army Aviation School -- and once we got into integration, the training these people got could only be limited to some very basic lessons on the tactics of low level flying and navigation. And it was largely left to the individual, as usual, to figure out what is the purpose and role he had when he got to the unit. And again, some adapted extremely well. Others, depending on their personality, were some that took a little bit longer.

INTERVIEWER: How did that change?

DUDLEY: It largely changed because a reflection—there was a dilution factor, of the personality of the Commanding Officer and the Flight Commanders and the number of line pilots. Because we were rapidly moving into the area of unification, I should explain that my second flying tour was to go to the Army Aviation Tactical Training School, as an Instructor Pilot, which lasted from 1965 to 1968. Which again, it was an Army Aviation School, but we were starting to get into unification, which happened, by the way, while I was at Rivers.

The interesting point was that, as a pilot, it meant that one day you were not allowed to fly the station Expediter. The next day, I was given an instrument flying course by an ex-Air Force Service Corps officer, and we were qualified, in Rivers, as instrument training pilots on the C-45, which was a twin-engine fixed wing airplane. Which is a bit of a shock to a helicopter pilot, after a number of years, to suddenly find yourself, in the cloud, with a multi-engine airplane. But again, it was a sign of the times, and it was a sign of unification.

The fact that I was the Base Flight Safety Officer, as well as the Unit Flight Safety Officer, helped a lot in this regard, too, because I also qualified as a pilot on the 1 Transport Helicopter Platoon's Boeing Vertol CH-113—a great shock to the Service Corps, who kept saying, “Why is the Armoured Corps flying our airplane?” The fact that the CO of the Army Aviation School was a Major in the Strathcona's Horse somewhat helped because he pointed out, as a Flight Safety Officer, I was required to be familiar with the equipment.

I was also offered a T-33 checkout, from 408 Squadron, which was a resident jet squadron in Rivers, but unfortunately didn't have the time to pick that offer up. But at least the offer was made. The essential part about unification is that it really took the Air Force, and eliminated the Air Force, and then required them to completely readapt their thinking into what the Navy and the Army wanted, which was the formulation of Tactical Air Wings and the 10 Tactical Air Group.

At this point, I was due for a posting, and the unification said, "Well, you've got an instrument ticket. You've got twin engine time. Your next posting is to fly trackers off the BONAVENTURE." My answer to that was to point again to my—still wearing blue wings—and say, "It's not dark blue. It's light blue. It's not Air Force. I'm an Army helicopter pilot, and I want to go to an Army helicopter unit," which is forming in Petawawa, on the Bell 205, which is a UH1H—the famous Huey of the American Army experience. And it was 403 Squadron, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Casselman, who had been the CO of the Army Aviation School while I was there. It was perfectly logical, I thought, as an Army pilot, to go to 403 Squadron. And, by a few phone calls, the deed was done.

This is another error. 403—they purchased ten of these Hueys off the end of the U.S. Army production line—a single engine turbine helicopter, and it was a classic helicopter. It flew exactly the way a helicopter should. In fact, we referred to it as the Dakota, or the DC-3 of the helicopter world. Easy to maintain. It carried a lot. Easy to fly. In fact, I think I did qualifying in about ten hours, and then, we went down to Fort Worth and picked up the last of them off the production line and flew them back to Canada. An excellent airframe, went on to be the base rescue one, but it certainly was an introduction to the turbine world for the Tactical Aviation.

INTERVIEWER: Was that the H1B?

DUDLEY: Yes. It was a UH1H. It was a D model, with a slightly bigger engine. But it's a fifteen passenger—the classic Huey. 403, again, suffered from the problem is it was a conversion unit. It was a tactical development unit. And every time they had an opportunity, they would send it on exercise. So, therefore, at the same time, we would convert our pilots, or train other pilots on Hueys. We would then move the squadron to Denmark; to Norway, to Germany, to Jamaica. And it was the first sort of trial unit for the utility tactical helicopter role for the Army.

It had a very interesting group of pilots—Air Force, Navy, and Army--and had a lot of talent. Unfortunately, it didn't give us much time to write any doctrine. So, the mechanics of flying the airplane, plus the fact that we were deployed on a lot of exercises, created, again, a gap in doctrinal development which made it difficult for the new Tactical Helicopter Squadrons to pick it up.

The other interesting thing about Army Aviation is -- you have to remember, and this is classic—a description of this is we went to Germany. We were trying—Army Aviation is now begging the Army to use their helicopters. They deployed 429 Squadron, with Buffalos, to the army brigade. But the army brigade said, "We can't use a large turbine transport." And the Army said, "Look, we'll just stay in Gutersloh. We can't use it." Which the Air Force said, "Well, if the Army can't use them, we can use them for something else." I say this because the 1 Transport Helicopter Platoon took its Vertols to Germany.

Again, it's very difficult to put an aviation unit, into an existing army brigade, without extensive training and adaptation to the supply system. Both the Hueys and the Vertols are met with the same answer, because you're talking to an old friend in the Service Corps Transport Company, who said, "Give us something to do." He said, "I've got one major exercise. I have a lot of trucks. If this brigade runs out of gas, I'm in trouble." He said, "I don't know." He said, "I know you guys, but I don't know what your units can do, and I

haven't got the time to figure it out, at this point, in a major exercise. I have to stick with my trucks. Sorry about that." Which illustrates again, that just suddenly giving the Army airplanes and helicopters is not the total answer.

They have to be integrated into the system, and properly used, and used at the right time, at the right place. I just give that as an aside because that was a characteristic of using the Hueys, too. The next point was, invariably, we would wind up on an exercise on the side of a mountain in Norway, or somewhere in B.C., training the infantry how to get in and out of helicopters. But the point is, after deploying the airplanes and the time on an exercise, this seemed an awkward time to do it. But remember, there was only ten of these available, and every time we went somewhere, we would go back to the basics. Which certainly reminded me of my previous experience in the Armoured Corps where, in fact, we would do the same thing—stay in garrison all year and then do tank / infantry training on a major exercise.

I make this point, again, because without the Army—not to say they were suspicious about Army Aviation—they were not too sure how to use it. And unless you have key people in the Army, knowing what the Army helicopter can do and asking for it and demanding it to do more, the helicopter units would just say, "Well, the Army doesn't understand. We'll go off and fly circuits, and build up our flying time."

INTERVIEWER: Did we ever get those key people?

DUDLEY: No, we didn't. There was a constant attempt to do so. And again, the Helicopter Troop in Germany—it was like the Artillery. "Put your CO forward. Advise the Army." Once the tactical helicopters came into effect, the same thing would apply, except until we went in integration, and then the COs would sit back and operate the airplanes, and send an LO forward to find out what the Army wanted. And, in many cases, this meant that we missed opportunities.

INTERVIEWER: Peter, you mentioned deployments to Norway. Tell the listener something about what your role was as an Army Aviation helicopter pilot and/or liaison officer in Norway.

DUDLEY: Well remember, the Canadian Forces had committed themselves to the combat group in the northern flank, which meant we had to promise to get some troops to Norway if NATO had problems there. And to exercise this, of course, they would put a battalion group into a Norwegian exercise. And, of course, mountainous areas in the wintertime—an excellent place for helicopters. Both the 1 Transport Helicopter Platoon, which had Vertols, and 403 Squadron were deployed to Bardufoss in these winter exercises.

Again, we arrived. Luckily, we had plastic skis on our airplanes, and we were suddenly in a composite group of RAF and Royal Navy Wessex, plus this one Canadian Huey Squadron. Interesting concept because the Royal Air Force Wessex weren't allowed to fly in falling snow, because they had problems with icing in the engines. The Royal Navy were a different group of people entirely. They had a Canadian Exchange Officer there to help them out, along with the U.S. Marine Corps. And needless to say, the 403 and the Royal Navy got along like a house on fire, which is a characteristic. I think the Army and the Navy always seem to work together, because they are largely operationally oriented. You know, get the job done.

And again, the fact [was] that the CO would go forward, with the infantry battalion, up in the mountains. And the trouble was, we were about forty five minutes flying time from the air base because the ability for an operational training unit which was not equipped to deploy in the field. It didn't have the equipment nor the techniques that it could move around. And we were largely lodger units. I think with a little bit more imagination, we probably could have got the Helicopter Squadron into the exercise area, because we could have just turned to the Norwegian Army, and used their facilities. But it was another illustration of the fact that we were developing doctrine, based on the equipment and tactics of a unit that was actually not totally equipped to do it.

The concepts were there. But any failures to accomplish the mission were then misinterpreted by the Army. In many cases, again, we would get there on the exercise, and we would, in fact, find that the infantry was trying to get up the side of a mountain. And I can remember one mission, where we would follow them up the mountain, because we were listening to the radio and knew where the exercise phase lines were, and literally had to park it in front of them on a road, and force the infantry to get in the helicopter, because they said, "No. We were not allocated any air support, and my mission is to climb this hill." I said, "I'm here to help you. For Christ's sake, get in the helicopter." And eventually, they would recognize that there was some value to this.

The problem here, again, is that in many cases, if you had worked with them, they would have known who you were. But when some helicopter comes out of the blowing snow, and says, "Here. Get in there." You can consider that the infantry platoon commander said, "Who is this? Why is he here? And why should I put my soldiers into this bloody airplane?" Another classic example of how it is. It's not a new concept to have a helicopter. It is merely fitting the helicopter into the traditional training cycle of the Army. We invariably found ourselves always trying to tell people what the helicopter could do, at the same time we were trying to do it, which somewhat lessens the impact at the end of the exercise.

INTERVIEWER: Peter, what did you mean that you were showing them what to do, while you were doing it?

DUDLEY: Well. Essentially, it meant that if you didn't get into the planning cycle of the exercise, you were then exposed to the unit when you got there—which you had to do your basic deployment drills. The other thing is, if your tasking messages didn't have sufficient detail, you were, the time you got the airplane launched, the time you flew to the exercise area, and the time you got in contact with the infantry platoon that you were going to carry -- to them, at two and a half miles an hour, is one thing. But you had to know what the mission was, and who you were going to contact when you got there. And looking for an infantry platoon on the side of a Norwegian mountain depends on having good grid references. And a lot of this was communications. A lot of it was tasking.

I know it's difficult to try and get all this point across in a verbal discussion like this, but it comes back to the same thing. Unless we were actually co-located with the unit, and really had a good understanding, and had the confidence of the company commanders and the platoon commanders, we would invariably be trying to insert the helicopters into an existing situation, which sometimes didn't work out as well as it should.

INTERVIEWER: Peter, we're still discussing 403 Squadron. Where did you get your pilots from?

DUDLEY: Again, well, 403 was on the verge of the unification, so we started—we were getting them from the Army Aviation units, the Air Force and the Navy. You have to remember, prior to this, when they formed 1 Transport Helicopter Platoon which was a success story in it[self]. We surely should have to refer to, is when the Army produced 12 transport turbine Helicopters, commanded by a major who had been a parachutist in the Second World war. And they got it up and running and staffed with trained pilots. But they were using short service commission Air Force Sabre pilots who had very limited career development when they returned to Canada. And they had already heard about the Army.

In fact, I can remember going to happy hours in 4 Wing, as a tank officer, and talking to Sabre pilots, who asked me questions about Army Aviation. In fact, one of them being an ex-Black Watch officer to start with, had already planned out how to get into the Army Service Corps. Unfortunately, he didn't make it because he was involved in a mid-air collision.

But I can also remember being in the Army Aviation School and there, at the end of the bar, is five guys in blue jackets with silver snakes on the pocket. My immediate remark was, "Is this a secret society, or a strange religion?" And I was told, in no uncertain terms, that this was 444 Squadron of the RCAF, and they were all Lieutenants in the Army Service Corps. The Army Service Corps then required them, on transfer, to spend one year, and pass a promotion exam before they were sent back on to a helicopter unit.

They all did excellent jobs, and all spoke very highly of their experiences. And I'm speaking in later years when I talked to them at retirement. Their five years in the Air Force was interesting, but he said their career in the Army Service Corps was very much appreciated. And the point was, the Air Force was throwing out better pilots than the Army could recruit. Which told you something about it. One would hope that unification would solve this problem. It didn't do it completely.

INTERVIEWER: What did you mean by a silver snake in the pocket?

DUDLEY: Oh, the 444 Squadron badge is a cobra, and the motto "Strike swift, strike sure" But remember, this is also, when I mentioned that I met 444 as a Lieutenant in the Armoured Corps, then I met the Service Corps officers who told me about 444. Remember, at the latter part of my career, I turned up as the Ops Officer of 444 which, since it was originally an Air OP squadron, was the ideal squadron to be in Germany. But, that's another story.

INTERVIEWER: Peter, how did you finish up your tour in 403? What was sort of the transition? What was your next flying posting all about?

DUDLEY: Well, 403 was formed in Petawawa, and using an old tank hangar and its single engine Hueys. But it was a transition unit. It was never designed to be other than that, sort of a trials unit for the utility helicopter role, which as I said, it did very well. The Canadian government then funded twin engine Hueys. Eighty seven twin engine Hueys were purchased, and the tactical helicopter world was moving onto us. 403 was then sent to Camp Gagetown, and became the Helicopter OTU, which was its traditional role--with Marsh Wright commanding it, which was an excellent choice.

Since I had then finished a three year tour, I was faced with another career choice. An oddly enough, the pers manager found Leo Noiles, and offered him a tour in Germany with a recce troop. And Leo said, "No, I don't want to go back to Germany," and hung up the phone. I picked up the phone, dialed the number, and said, "What Leo turned down, I have no objections whatsoever to go back to Germany." And the deed was done. And I was posted back to Germany, as the Armoured Corps troop, which then belonged to the Royal Canadian Dragoons. It was not an independent squadron. It was still the old establishment--my old unit, except I was now wearing Fort Garry badges, instead of Royal Canadian Dragoon badges, and was working for an old friend of mine named Lieutenant Colonel R.J. Brown.

The troop at this time was commanded by a Black Watch Officer. It had Service Corps, Navy and Air Force. Still doing its same role. Still equipped with the Hiller. But it was facing the unification clamp in that there was discussions about combining the air elements in the brigade. But you, again, have to realize that most of these decisions were based upon establishment. They were based on money. They were based on people. That no changes could be made to the Canadian Brigade Group, by increasing, say, the air element or the helicopter element unless you gave up vacancies for someone else.

Which meant that every unit commander, every branch official, would not want to limit their activities to give up resources to Aviation. The Brigadier commanding said, "Right. You can do it, but you have to do it within the establishment you have now." Which resulted in the Air OP Troop, the Helicopter Troop, and the Aircraft Platoon of the RCEME workshop, were then converted to a Helicopter Squadron. And the discussion, because we were all sitting around the table--General Chouinard was at the head of the table, and he said, "Right. It will be done." And they said, "What are you going to call it?" And they said, "Well, we asked the Air Force, and they offered us a series of numbers—404, 428."

I rapidly scribbled out the design of the snake, passed it to Bill Lewis, who was going to be Major in the Artillery, and I said, "This one." And the General said, "What is that?" I said, "It was an Air OP Squadron in 1947. It's been a Sabre Squadron in 104s in Germany. It's always been in NATO. It was disbanded ten miles north of here, and it's perfectly logical for it to come back." He said, "Right. That's what it will be." And we then created 444 Squadron, and brought the snake back to Germany. 444, again, was a perfectly logical thing to do.

The interesting point was that the Artillery, with three fixed wing airplanes and a Major, were then combined with the Air Force's six airplanes and commanded by a Captain. But that was an indication that the Armoured Corps could not convert the rank, because the helicopter people only worked for a Major. It was another indication that there was -- all the way through Army Aviation—that there was very little career progression. If you stayed as a pilot, and before unification, when you were still held on the list of your Corps, you really had very little opportunity unless you went back to the Army Aviation School. But in any case, 444 again, worked out to be a classic case of the right unit, at the right time in the right role.

In fact, when you consider that it converted three units into one, converted from fixed wing piston engine airplanes, to turbine engine helicopters because the Bell OH-58, in American terms, the Kiowa, CH-136 was now coming into service. They couldn't send the pilots back

to Canada, so they brought the airplanes to Germany. They sent me to the U.S. Army for a two week conversion course. I went back to Canada, and got checked out—reconfirmed my IP classification. And we came back, and 444, literally, in fifteen days retrained all its pilots, re-equipped from piston engine helicopters and airplanes to turbine engines, and only stood down for fifteen days, from its NATO role.

INTERVIEWER: What was your role in that conversion?

DUDLEY: I had been the Troop Commander of the Armoured Corps Flight so I became the Operations Officer of 444. But being an instructor pilot, of course, it was logical to also do the training. So, converting the pilots—again, we just took a common syllabus, and got on with it. Again, most of the examples of flying are usually very practical, and very easy to accomplish. But, once you've been an instructor pilot on two different airplanes, designing a syllabus for the Kiowa was no problem at all. The adaptation again, required us to retrain the Artillery Corporals as observers, which was an interesting exercise. The Armoured Corps NCOs were, again, a very experienced group, and it made it very, very easy to bring the unit up to speed. The maintenance side of it—again, you'd found out that the Navy was surplus-ing maintainers, so we had Chief Petty Officers in the Aircraft Servicing Platoon, who came over to 444, which again were machine rated and classic NCOs, and maintainers in their own right.

INTERVIEWER: So, they got along well with the Army?

DUDLEY: Oh, yes. The unit, as I say—in fifteen days. And to get the number was an indication to the brigade that there was a new unit—that we weren't just add-ons to other units. We were a new unit. The 1 CAG—remember there was still three Air Force squadrons just up the road, and they kept on saying, “Well, doesn't 444 belong to 1 CAG?” And we said, “No. No. We belong to the 4 Brigade, not to 1 CAG. But 444 is here.” And again, it was a delightful unit. It had a good piece of equipment, and at a role that we had been doing for ten years. It allowed us, as I say, to convert to the role, and carry on with no problem whatsoever.

INTERVIEWER: 1 CAG was defined as what?

DUDLEY: As the 1 Canadian Air Group, which was the three 104 Squadrons that still existed in Baden-Soellingen. The other thing about 444 was that it marked the retirement of the Hiller. And so, the last official Hiller flight in the Canadian Forces was the transition to 444. I was the pilot and Warrant Officer Middleton of the Royal Canadian Electrical Mechanical Engineers was my observer, who had been our Maintenance Sergeant of the original troop, ten years earlier. The Hiller flew off into history.

They were sold to a British company to be crop dusters, and Andy Seguin, one of the great personalities of the Army Service Corps and Army Aviation, had already promised one to the German National Helicopter Museum, but unfortunately, he didn't get away with it. The Canadian government said, “No.” There were still value in these things and they couldn't be given away. It was a good try, anyway. So, Buckeburg never did get its Hiller.

INTERVIEWER: So, notwithstanding that you disposed of the Hillers, you still had basically an independent unit, this time with Kiawas, and with the three L-19s. Is that correct?

DUDLEY: Yes. The conversion to the Kiowa, once it was done in Germany, meant that we literally controlled our own time schedule. It was not difficult. The experience of the pilots helped that out a lot. The observers had no problem converting. We already had the vehicles, once we combined the Servicing Troop from the RCEME workshop. So, the unit was really an ideal brigade unit. The exception was, it didn't have Hueys, as they gave it a utility capacity, and quite often, we would be using two or three Kiowas to carry people. Remember, the Kiowa, in addition, had the pilot and then three seats, so you could use it, in a limited fashion as a liaison airplane.

The good news about 444, again, was it didn't belong to 1 CAG. It didn't belong to 10TAG. It operated under CFE Flying Orders which are written by the SO Air at the brigade headquarters, which was an ex-pilot of the Helicopter Troop. So, we literally wrote our own standards. We wrote our own training syllabus. We wrote our own operational procedures. We wrote our own maintenance techniques, converted the vehicles to an establishment, which was literally two sections and a maintenance section.

We could operate because the brigade requirement, on deployment, was to vacate the base within two hours. The Helicopter Squadron could move off the base within two hours, and it could move anywhere in Germany. It was a delightful unit because, again, the experience of the pilots and the observers, and the maintenance troop, just made it an organization that did not require too much extra activity. It was a total delight.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned that 444 had the ability to move within two hours. What does that mean?

DUDLEY: Well, it meant that the operational standard for the brigade was that if you practiced a deployment, as they call it a "Snowball", you had to move the units in their vehicles off the air base, within two hours, to a deployment area. It was a holdover from the NATO role. But it was a useful tool because it kept the operational tone of the unit at a very high state.

I can also mention, when it was divided into two sections -- because we had combined the Air OP and the Armoured Recce -- it was simply that the two Flights had their own command posts. One of them was largely dictated to C&L and Air OP. And the other one kept its traditional role in supporting the recce squadron. And because we were co-located, both with the artillery regiment, and the armoured regiment, and because our NCOs still had personal connections with the units, there was literally no problem whatsoever of integrating the sections into the tactical picture when we required.

Also, you've got to remember that Germany is not very big for a helicopter. By the time the brigade went anywhere, the Helicopter Troop, with its own maintenance unit, and its own fuel and everything—totally self-contained--would just move along, like any other unit. Germany was, of course, very adaptable, because our technique was, of course, to use villages not woods. Moving a helicopter in the woods is difficult. But a small town in Germany. It was my job, as the Ops Officer, to do the recces for the next harbour. And my

ambition was to find a small village with about five roads, four big barns, one Gaststube, and small enough that we could take over the whole village, without having to worry about infiltration.

INTERVIEWER: Did you do those reconnaissances by air, or did you do them by vehicle?

DUDLEY: Oh, no. We did them by air, because if I was not in the CP, I knew where the next area was going to be. You know, you'd just use the helicopter. You'd take about six good locations, and then you'd just follow it up with the jeep.

INTERVIEWER: You must have been a very popular pilot, with the German populace, then?

DUDLEY: As long as you know the technique. Because when you go there, immediately you find out where the Burgermaster is. You find out—you go to the Gaststube owner. You carefully tell him that you are Canadian—you are not American—you're not Belgians—you're not Germans. Because I asked the Burgomaster one time, and he said, "Well, we know in Germany, of course, that you have manoeuvre rights, and you can come in here, but we know the difference between the armies. We've never had the Canadians before."

I asked him when we left, I said, "What do you think now?" He said, "We've never seen an Army that operates like yours." What they did, of course, was immediately go into the Gaststube, and eat everything in sight, until the Gaststube owner had to buy more supplies. He said, "Don't you feed your soldiers?" I said, "Well, they've been in Germany for a long time. They like it."

And the other thing, of course, you would convince the farmers that if the helicopters came, then the tanks and the APCs would not. And of course, after years in Germany as a tank commander, you know how much damage a tank can do to a village.

INTERVIEWER: And how much a squadron can do to a village!

DUDLEY: And most Germans are familiar with how an army operates. They said, "Oh, yes. So, if you were here—nobody else." And I said, "Yes. And we don't take up much space. We don't damage anything." And they said, "Good! Excellent! We'll make sure what you need." And literally, we would wind up in some amazing places. Usually, we'd look for barns and hard standing, to move the helicopters. As long as we could move them on their wheels to the edge of the village, then we could take off.

INTERVIEWER: So, you were always able to use your Army Officer, your tank officer experience, throughout all your roles when you were flying?

DUDLEY: Again, when you had to keep insisting to the personnel people that you are not a pilot—that you are an Army officer, first, and a pilot second. And if you insisted on remaining with helicopter units at the expense of your career—whatever limited career I had. And because, as I say, there are two things I'm very proud of—is a black beret and blue wings. And, it's very, very different to explain the value of a Helicopter Squadron, and the enjoyment that all ranks had, because they knew what they were doing, and they were left alone to do it.

They would send surveys over. They sent a medical doctor over there because they were going to survey us on sleeping conditions and food and health. And he wrote a report saying that, you know, “They sleep in the weirdest places. They’re always wet. Their rations are very poor. But their morale is extremely high, and I can’t explain it.” But the fact that they sent a doctor who was a vegetarian, and didn’t drink, was probably a limiting factor as well.

Again, the safety record of 444 was excellent. By this time, we’d learned our lesson about wires. We had the wire strike protection kit, which I mentioned earlier, which oddly enough I had a development aspect in, because it was in Rivers after we’d had a series of accidents that we had actually asked the Aeronautical Engineering establishment to design this. They came up with a hundred and ten pound device that didn’t work. And they turned it over to Bristol Aviation, in Winnipeg, and I went down to them, and talked to their engineers. And they said, “What do you really want?” And I said, “A piece of angle iron—just like we had on our jeeps and scout cars.” And they said, “Yes, we can do that.” And they got a wire strike protection kit. They got all the money and the fame, and we got a device that helped us.

INTERVIEWER: So, you found the wire cutting device that they had, which weighed a hundred and ten pounds, to be totally useless, on the supposedly, light aircraft?

DUDLEY: Yes. It was designed for the Hiller, and again, it was a classic example of, the engineers were told to develop a wire cutter, and their first question to me was, “How big of wires do you want to cut?” And I said, “We don’t want a wire cutter. We want a wire protection device.” At that point, there was a discussion between whether pilots or engineers knew what they were talking about, and the project was moved to a civilian contractor, who merely said, “What do you want?” and got on with it. That’s merely an aside.

INTERVIEWER: Peter, you’re probably one of the most experienced pilots, at this stage in your career, because you’ve been doing nothing, except flying airplanes, at this stage. What happened next in your career, and how did your career develop, and what contribution did you make to Army Aviation at that stage?

DUDLEY: That’s hard to say. Let’s correct one thing—I’m not flying airplanes. I am an Army Officer, flying rotary wing aircraft. And one has to keep in mind that you’ve got to buy into this or you have to accept it from your own point of view. The Air Force felt the airplane was their sole purpose in life. The Army and the Navy recognized that the airplane, or aircraft of any form, could help them do their role. But they could only help them do their role—they couldn’t replace it.

I don’t want to get into Bomber Command, or the elements of air power, or that famous phrase of ‘centralized control and decentralized execution.’ But the theme throughout all of this was, and particularly because of unification, there was two sides of this. The Air Force didn’t understand what the Army wanted, and unfortunately, the Army, because of a lack of doctrine, because of core concepts or regionalism in the Artillery Service Corps and Armour, because the Army—remember, I said it earlier—you can’t pass something unless you give something up. And there’s no way the Army is going to give up thirty bayonets to get a helicopter.

Therefore, unless they had a very convincing need for it, and the Army—remember, the classic example is the infantry always knows that the artillery will be out of range. The Armoured Corps is going to get bogged down, and the Air Force won't be able to fly, because of weather. And at the end, it will be the poor bloody infantry, doing the job. That is a mindset that you have to understand, because that--let's face it--it's the infantry that fights the war. And unless you can convince the infantry to use the rotary wing resources, you are going to have limited endorsement or help in developing Army Aviation.

And also, remember, the Army, by this time, is downsizing. I started off in the Army, [it] was at the peak of its peacetime expansion. As a reflection on my career, remember, that as a Private in the Reserve Infantry, or a junior officer in the Tank Corps, or as a helicopter pilot, you're always dealing with people who have wartime experience. In the infantry, you know, there was two Victoria Crosses in the Seaforth Highlanders. When I was a 2nd Lieutenant, the Colonel had the DSO and the MC. The Majors had MCs. When I went to flying, the Wing Commanders had DSOs and DSCs. Even the Flight Lieutenants and Captains still had several war ribbons on.

But the military is essentially a bureaucratic thing. We always do things the way we did it before. And new concepts have to have a focal point—a guru, a leader, and everything else. We did not develop, as the British finally did, an Army Air Corps. We couldn't afford it. Maybe we didn't want it. Maybe it wouldn't work. The U.S. Army had more pilots than the U.S. Air Force, but that took them years to be recognized as a combat arm. And I would like to point out one thing, that many elements of the U.S. Army resented very much that the Army Aviation was given the equivalent combat status as the infantry, or armour and artillery. But what I'm trying to say is the Canadians were no different than anybody else, except that we were doing it on a much smaller scale.

The fact we did it well was, on some occasions, again, just the right time at the right place. I quote 403 because they had a good airplane and interesting role. 444 was a good example. At this point, remember, my next step in my career was to go back, and be posted to 10 Tactical Air Group, which was the air element of Mobile Command—FMC—Force Mobile Command.

Unification really struck the Air Force very hard, because they lost their title. They lost their reason for being, and were told that they were subject to Marine and Army doctrine and tactics. What happened now is, we have helicopter squadrons. We've got the twin Huey equipping each brigade. We have LOHs in each Brigade. But we've run out of Army pilots. The next element of command for these squadrons -- when they looked to the Army, the Army was not successful in providing people to command these squadrons.

We didn't have enough. If you lose anybody to retirement, or to ill health, or to other career implications, there was nobody at Majors or Lieutenant Colonel rank to command these squadrons. So, then they were passed by default, to Air Force officers who didn't understand the Army, and resented the fact they couldn't command a jet squadron and were swept off to command a Helicopter Squadron. Mind you, in some cases, these individuals proved to be excellent squadron commanders. But they had the limitations of learning the role, learning to adapt to the Army, and also, having to move a ground unit around the battlefield.

And when you talk to a jet pilot, who, after years, when he stops his engine, and rolls back the canopy, somebody brings a ladder to the side of the airplane. He doesn't have to worry where the fuel truck comes from. It comes. As soon as he stops the engine, the truck comes to re-fuel his fighter. And if he doesn't have a ladder, and an oxygen tube, and a gas truck, he can't go anywhere. Now you're telling this guy that, "You have to get the gas truck. Along with your airplane, you have to move the gas truck, and you have to move all the maintenance and you have to do it within two hours at any given time, twenty four hours a day."

It's an awful lot to ask for, and there's no school to teach you. You pitch these people into it. In most cases, they worked out very well. But, at the same time, you're losing impact on the Army, because they say, "Look. We've got problems. We asked the helicopter units, and they can't answer. They've got their own problems." The Army only gives you one chance. If you can't produce, if you are a problem to the army brigade, they say, "Nice guys. But remember, if you can't help us out, we haven't got time to deal with your problems. Go away, and we'll call you later."

INTERVIEWER: So, what was your role in 10TAG then, as you went through this transition of unification? You now end up in 10 Tactical Air Group. What was your role there, as an Army Aviator, and what progressed in your career?

DUDLEY: Another interesting experience, because now we have a Tactical Air Group. We have an Air Force Brigadier General. We have an Air Force Colonel, as a Deputy Commander. We have an Air Force Lieutenant Colonel, as the SO Air. And by the time you worked your way down, you have the SO Hels, as a Major, Army Service Corps.

INTERVIEWER: Interview with Peter Dudley on 19 November 2003. End of Tape 1 of 2.

INTERVIEWER: Canadian War Museum Oral History Program Interview with Peter Dudley, recorded on 19 November 2003, in Ottawa. Tape 2, Side 1.

INTERVIEWER: Peter, would you continue on with what your role in 10 Tactical Air Group was, and what was going on in Army Aviation, at this time? Please describe your involvement in it.

DUDLEY: Okay. The first terminology we have to sort out is there is no more Army Aviation. We are now Tactical Aviation, which gets [to] the classic thing -- Tactical Air and Tactical Aviation. Remember, unification had really gone into effect. FMC is there—it has an Air Group, which has two jet squadrons, plus the Reserve Otter Squadrons, and all the Tactical Helicopter Squadrons under a Brigadier General. Then, the common phrase is "Tac Air is fast. Tac Av is helicopters."

The idea of combining CF-5 jet pilots and helicopter pilots, of course, is interesting, but they don't have too much in common. But the Air Force had lost its identify, and remember, now, it wasn't even called Air Command. It was Air Operations Branch. They got their air command status back, but one has to remember that the senior officers of the Air Force were really affected by the lack of impact that the Air Force was given. And they fought to get it back, and they were successful.

What it meant to the Army, of course, was they had this Tactical Air Group sitting at the Headquarters in St. Hubert, across the street. But they also had their own Air staff. They had key doctrine writers, and other Staff Officers, Air Force, in FMC Headquarters. Each brigade had an SO Air. And this was the Air Force's connection to the Army. But it was expected that 10TAG would be, sort of, the doctrinal cell that would develop all of this. But you're asking, again, a group of officers to get in to a situation they're not prepared for, and then, figure out where to go.

If you asked the Army, the Army said, "Well, we're not too sure." The Air Force said, "If you're not sure, we'll tell you." The Army says, "We don't like what you're saying to us, because this is not what we wanted." And this argument went around and around and around.

INTERVIEWER: And how did that impact on you, particularly?

DUDLEY: Well, it was interesting, because I mentioned that the SO Hels was a Major. The SO 3 Hels were Army pilots. In my case, it was, in fact, I replaced an Armoured Corps officer, and the other officers were Artillery, Service Corps or Armoured Corps in the hel shop. And we were to advise the Senior Staff Officer Helicopters of how the Army wanted its airplanes. The SSO Air was a Lieutenant Colonel 104 pilot, reconnaissance background, a degree in law from Glasgow University, and his name was Dave Huddleston, who later came to command the Air Force.

His first question to three Army pilots—one Service Corps, one Armoured Corps and one Artillery. We all fell apart, in saying, "Well, it might work for them, but not for us." Colonel Huddleston, with his legal mind, said, "That is not what I asked. You came into my office. You didn't have any answers. Now go away, and never come back unless you have an answer to the question that I will give you. I don't want debates. I want answers." And we got out into the hall, and looked at each other, and realized that this is exactly where Army Aviation has put itself. Because we had not had a unifying headquarters, or a unifying identity, we were prone to answering any question by our superior officers in what it meant to us in the Armoured Corps, the Service Corps or the Artillery. It certainly concentrated our thinking and improved our staff work.

The other question that had to come up was the Air Force had to realize that the Army wasn't clear in what it wanted, and therefore, it had to really apply pressure. But the Air Force was not capable, or did not want to do this. They were quite happy, as long as they could fly their airplanes, do circuits, do whatever they wanted. But they were not, shall we say, challenged, or felt it was their role to try and get the Army to be more specific in what they wanted.

An example of this would be, RV81—1981. We have a concentration, because money is short. This is the first time the Army has got a big brigade exercise going. All the Tac Hel Squadrons were in Gagetown, all parked on an airfield—Blissville airfield -- all under command of an Air Wing Commander—again, an Air Force officer who, although he had commanded a Helicopter Squadron, didn't really have an affinity for what the Army really wanted its airplanes to do. Then, you say, "Well, surely the Army pilots would tell him what should be done." No--the question here was--the Senior Air Force Officers, once they found out that the Army pilots didn't have an unified point of view, were then adapting themselves to whatever advice that they got from whatever source, or they would sit down and try and

develop it themselves. But what I'm trying to say here, is that nobody really went and asked the Army what they wanted.

I quote RV81. The Colonel of the Air Wing was at the airfield. They would send a Captain, to the Army brigade Headquarters as an LO. Now, fortunately, he was an ex member of the Canadian Guards, and a very good officer, and a very good pilot. He rose to higher command in the Air Force. But the point was, again, the Army didn't clarify what it wanted. The training plan didn't incorporate the Tactical Aviation units, to a great extent. And we were practicing a form of command and control where the air tasking messages would come from the Brigade Group Headquarters to the Air Wing Headquarters, and they'd be passed out at a morning briefing to the Ops Officer of the Helicopter Squadrons, who then would respond to this.

The first reason it didn't work is by the time you got to the morning ops briefing, to be given by the Air Wing Ops Officer, all the helicopters either needed to be committed or they were going somewhere else. The command and control system was, I think, designed for Tactical Air, in Normandy, in 1944. But it was certainly not suited to a helicopter unit, on the ground, with an Army unit, on the ground. It was probably impossible for the helicopter units to deploy in Gagetown to separate units because, of course, of the amount of JP 4 and the fuel they required to run. But once we set ourselves as an Air Wing, they were teaching the Army their own lesson.

The next point you would get out of RV81 is -- and again, this is part of planning and anticipation -- all of the reconnaissance units of the Canadian Armoured Corps were in Camp Sussex, a few miles away. All of the LOH Flights, for all of the Tactical Helicopter Squadrons, which were dedicated to doing LOH support to the recce units, were at the Blissville Airport. Logic would dictate that maybe you should have moved the LOHs, even on a temporary basis, to Sussex, and let them get together. This did not work. You would go to the tasking system. The airplanes would arrive, at whatever time, and then fit themselves in to the ongoing exercise. Again, we didn't learn the message. It didn't get across.

The next point—because in 10TAG, we did tactical evaluation of Squadrons, and we would wind up on exercises and the Utility Tactical Helicopter Flight, with its ten Hueys, would be inserted in troops. And they were concentrating on flying in close formation, and as Tac Eval, we said, “Why do you want to do that? If you fly around with a group of unarmoured vehicles in a battlefield, at two hundred and fifty feet, in a close group, somebody will see you and shoot at you.” They said, “Well, this is the way the Army wants it.” Well, no. I don't think the Army really wanted to fly in close formation. The Army wanted the platoon to be landed in a tactical group at a certain point, at a certain time. It didn't care how you got there, as long as you got to the right place.

It was the Air Force's interpretation that we had to do it in formation that rather caused the discussion. But the discussion went nowhere, because as soon as you turned it to the Air Wing Commander, he said, “Well, that's the way we've always done it.” And the questioner said, “Well, it's not the right way of doing it.” History says, this is like the Army, and it's APCs. They argued for years whether you could drive onto the obstacle, or you had to dismount before it. There's nothing new in Army tactics, but the question of applying the helicopter the tactics, was you could have done it at low level, if you had thought about it.

But there was no system to think about it, and if you did bring these suggestions up, it was not receptive at your higher headquarters. So it was easier to do it the old way.

INTERVIEWER: And did you run into those very problems, as a pilot?

DUDLEY: Oh, yes, very much so. Because we would do the tac evals, as 10TAG Headquarters, and later, in my next tour as a Chinook pilot. You're invariably doing air assault exercises, which did not seem to be based on a realistic appraisal of what the Army really wanted. The ever comment about RV81 was, when you had your units together, at the same place, it should have required 10TAG to impose a training schedule. They had a few limited exercises. But it would have been a classic opportunity, as I mentioned earlier, of really codifying the LOH tactics, or getting all of the UH—Utility Helicopters—Squadrons together, to work these things out. But we worked it on an individual tasking basis, and tasked by squadron.

The point was that 10 TAG had a problem of even to get all of its aviation resources to Gagetown. In many ways, I think that the actual training value was somewhat lessened. I can't dwell too long on this because, again, in 10TAG, we would do the tac analysis of the squadron, and they were going through a ritual. But I don't think, in many cases, they understood the purpose of the ritual. And again, as I'd mentioned earlier, the Army couldn't afford the time, to educate the Helicopter Squadrons, or it did not have the ability to clearly dictate to the Helicopter Squadrons what they wanted.

The Air Force attitude was, "We're the experts. Just tell us where you want us, and we'll get on with it." And then, the Army would say, "Well, you guys are the experts. I guess you guys know what you're doing." What we really required was a real honest discussion between the two elements. And we felt, in many cases, we didn't really achieve the, sort of, integrated aspect that should happen. Mind you, I must also say that since the pilots would arrive at these brigades and squadrons not knowing what to expect from rotary wing,. And not knowing that, in some cases, you would have to ask a pipeline pilot, in the new Canadian integrated Forces, "Why do you want to go and be a rotary wing pilot?"

Well, they were smart enough to find out if you went into transport or jets, you took a long time to get to be a Captain of the aircraft. If you go rotary wing, you got more flying time, and you got to be the Aircraft Captain, in short order. I'm happy to say, in many cases, if you didn't require the headquarters to point out the tactrine and doctrine, because as usual, they would express themselves as junior officers to other junior officers, in the mess, about what should be done. And they were rapidly brought up to speed on what the Armoured Corps and the Infantry expected from Tactical Aviation. And one was actually quite pleased with some of the reaction of the junior pilots. They anticipated what the Army wanted, and did the best that they could do to satisfy them. My theme is, of course, that this was done in reverse—seems to be a typical Canadian tactic.

INTERVIEWER: Peter, as I'm listening to you talking about the challenges of RV81, a question comes to mind about tasking. How were you tasked? What was the relationship of, let's say, the pilots to the mission, and how you got tasked and who did the tasking? Where did it come from? And how did order sort of evolve?

DUDLEY: Well, thank you very much, because when I mention RV81, I should also mention that that is no reflection on my being the Operations Officer of the Transport Helicopter Squadron, by that time. But this theme of tasking, and I made a reference to earlier that we seemed to borrow something from 1944 which we used to get typhoons in Normandy. But, once you've spent an awful lot of money in making an airplane that can be parked anywhere, and can lift off vertically, you don't have to have a tasking system to communicate to an Air Group, when the airplane is next to your Headquarters, or in your own locality. And, as similar to my other remarks, I don't think we paid enough attention within 10 TAG to the fact that we adopted a system that did not seem to provide what the Army wanted.

The Army wanted airplanes assigned to them, that they could dictate under operation control what they did, and they wanted them to be there. They didn't want to have to ask for them, or queue up for them, or assess priorities, and everything else. The whole unification and the Commanding Officers of the Navy and the Air Force that took over these squadrons—that was the only thing they knew. You asked, and a priority was assigned, and then the next airplane was given the task. This is close air support. This is not rotary wing aviation in the field.

I'll give you another example of that. In 10 TAG Headquarters, of course, the entire Armed Forces and all its helicopters were assigned to the Olympics, in Montreal. This was a major operation, and of course, it was divided into very clear operational roles, which was a rapid reaction force, an LOH element for the police and security overhead downtown Montreal, an airport security for all of the major airports, plus the usual liaison and transport missions. 10 TAG's answer to that was to set up a command structure, which had an Air Group Headquarters in the FMC Headquarters. And I was the Desk Officer in the tasking cell of the Air Force.

I had a board with all of the helicopter missions and Otter missions on it. And the request would come in and this would be allocated, and I was required then to make out a daily task sheet, which I would take up to the Senior Army Officer, which happened to be a Brigadier General, or Major General, who'd sign them. It seemed to be rather an awkward situation because the first thing that happened, when the initial briefings is, the Chief of Defence Staff, General Dextrase came down. He said, "I noticed the Rapid Reaction Force is over in St. Jean, but the Vertols to carry it, are parked in St. Hubert. I think it would be more appropriate if the Rapid Reaction Force, and the airplanes to carry it, were co-located." And immediately the 10 TAG said, "Yes, we'll take care of that, General." My comment is it should not require the CDS to point out an elementary concept of using aviation resources.

The next classic was the police force that was doing the low level LOH searches had helicopters—Francophone pilots from 430 Squadron, specially trained with communications and infrared, and every kit known to man on their LOHs. The first briefing was from 10 TAG. The police would therefore ask for their helicopter resources in the normal fashion, and when the priorities were assessed, they would be allocated. The head of the police security said, "You can give me anything you like. I want my airplanes every day, all the time, and I want no further discussion on this matter." That ended the tasking for the overflight of the city.

The next one was the airport ones, and the Army kept on saying, “We get different pilots. We have to brief them every day. Can we not have the helicopters assigned to the airfield, parked on the airfield?” This is Dorval. I’m sure that the difference between St. Hubert and Dorval is... And the Air Force said, “No. This is the way we operate, and whatever shift comes on is what you get.” It was never satisfactorily cleared up, and the Army came away with the wrong impression of 10 TAG.

The end result was, and I’ll tell this as a pre-story, because it’s real. General Loomis, an infantry commander of some repute, had gone down to the flight line. An LOH was assigned to him, and he told the pilot, “Sir, I’m going over to the check on the Rapid Reaction Force. I assume that you’ve been briefed. Can you give me some idea about the reaction times?” The pilot’s response was, “It beats me, General.” He said, “I’m going off shift in twenty minutes, and I haven’t even had my lunch.” The General told that story, and the Army was not impressed. If he had been greeted by the officer like abilities of our pilots to that extent. But it was done, not deliberately. I think it was done through ignorance. But that was a telling point in my career as a Staff Officer in 10 TAG.

INTERVIEWER: And very different from the way that you had actually developed as an Army Aviator, through your career.

DUDLEY: Well, as an Army Aviator, and as a tank officer. You know, the tanks supported the infantry. If you waited for the infantry to figure out what the tanks could do, you were probably behind the tanks. If the infantry told you something, as a tank commander, that you couldn’t do, you knew you had a Corps doctrine and a Commanding Officer to back you up. The same thing with Tactical Aviation. You had to anticipate what the Army needed, and it wasn’t the question of how they did it. It was what you want done, and we’ll do a better job for you. And once you then inculcated that into your individual pilots, you had the entire world in your hands.

I’ll give you another example. Again, when I mention that Colonel Huddleston was the SO Air. As usual, tactical discussions in the officer’s mess. Colonel Huddleston made a comment about the Army’s Staff Officer’s attitude towards 10 TAG, and I said, “Well, Colonel. You have to remember, there’s a group of Army officers, and you can see them in the mess. They’re down there, in the corner. They talk to each other. They’re different Corps, but they are sort of the key group within FMC. And what you’re saying is that the Army does not—it only considered pilots who think and act as officers.” And the Colonel said, “What do you mean?” I said, “You’re an officer first, a pilot second.” He said, “That’s an interesting point. Can you prove it?”

I said, “There’s ten pilots standing at the bar behind me. If I just go and ask them that question—are you an officer or a pilot?—I guarantee what the answer is going to be.” And of course, the lawyer’s mind said, “Right, Peter. Prove it.” So, I went down, ten pilots, “Are you an officer or a pilot?” Pilot. Pilot. Pilot. Turned to the Colonel, and I said, “I’ve won my point.” I don’t know what I won, because it certainly wasn’t going to advance my career. But he did advise me that one of the Colonels was an ex-hockey player that probably didn’t take lightly to having jokes made at his expense. But I will admit that that Colonel, whose name was Henderson, was a real personality, made a point, at a briefing to the remainder of the pilots, and he said, “When you’re dealing with the Army, think Officer first. Don’t get carried away being a pilot. Act like an Officer.” So.

INTERVIEWER: And that was an interesting impact of Army Aviation on the Air Force, during that particular time.

DUDLEY: It is a factor, too. Remember, flying an airplane is a very interesting thing. The male ego is a very interesting thing, too. When you match airplanes and ego together, all of the individuals concerned with it, you know, you get into this group. That comment about formation flying. The ego says, "We've got to close up." You know, "and be a real pilot." My answer is, "Why do you want to close up, if, as an officer you'd find out you're probably going to get shot down with one burst of machine gun fire?" A classic example. But, they'd turned to you and said, "Well, you know, you're not talking like a pilot." I think I won my point, in that case.

In all, 10 TAG, again--an interesting time and place. An interesting insight into the fact that, you know, you are what you were introduced into the military in your first three years. You can't change this. But the lack of doctrine, the lack of, shall we say, having a figurehead. And I can quote this, "Whether it's leadership or in the military, it's more a figure—a guru—a sense of identity for Tactical Aviation, was lacking." And because of the political situation, because of unification, you got this mixture of people, for various reasons. It's not to fault the individuals. It was just a question of that's how it worked out at that time.

INTERVIEWER: How did you, in fact, impact on training senior officers to understand Army Aviation?

DUDLEY: You won some and you lost some. The one you would win, you would win in the middle of an exercise when you did something, and it worked. But you could never go back and say, "Look. I told you so." And there was no ability to go back and say, "Look, it worked because I, as an individual Captain, did something that made Tactical Aviation look good." You can't claim personal credit for it, and if you didn't get in at the after action report--if you didn't get into the briefing afterwards--the point was lost.

Most of the things that I did were based on the fact that, if I knew the individual concerned. I would go to him beforehand, and say, "Here I am. This is what I want. I'll do something for you, if you can give me a meaningful role." And they'd say, "Well, would you go the extra little bit?" And I'd say, "Whatever you want."

An example here is we got into recce tactics. I'm in St. Hubert doing, well, continuation flying, using reserve helicopters. I'm Armoured Corps. My buddies, in fact--I have social engagements with the local militia regiment, which has jeeps. The conversation comes up about tactics, and I said, "Well, if you have an exercise, I will provide you some helicopters." The end result was we got Lou Cuppins as Artillery Officer, Peter Davis as a Service Corps ex-Sabre pilot, and a few more pilots, because remember, pilots love flying airplanes. Declared a tactical flying area in the eastern townships, and got four Kiowas to fly a militia exercise on a weekend.

The militia were, of course, impressed, because they were used to the regular Army to promise them things, and not delivering it. The fact that you could fall back on experienced LOH pilots made it very easy. It was good fun for us. But it was an indication that, you know, you can get something done if you want. But these were only little examples. They

were only done on a smaller scale. It's the big ones. It's the Olympics, and the tasking methods, there, that bothered me more than anything else. Or, as I quote RV81, where we were still limiting ourselves to, nobody would question the system.

Bureaucracies do not tolerate people questioning the system, but the military is often told, "We want these tactical development things. We want the people to speak up." But when it came to the critical areas, we didn't have the ability to really take a good look at what our problems were, and solve them. I don't want to dwell too [much] longer on this because, you know, the reason for this was self-explanatory, because if you ever wanted a career in the modern Air Force, as a helicopter pilot, you didn't want to be too critical of the system.

And I will point out that the second generation of Army pilots all rose to command of these Tactical Squadrons. I'm thinking of my friends in the Armoured Corps, Service Corps, that commanded Tactical Helicopter Squadrons. We mentioned Lou Cuppins, in the Artillery, of course, who rose to a three star rank. The Guards Officer I mentioned also rose to General rank. So that, the thing developed and evolved into a logical system, but it could have been done a little bit easier, a little bit quicker, and probably with more style, if we paid attention earlier on.

INTERVIEWER: And you obviously had a lot of, I would say, impact on making sure that that happened for the second generation of officers—you know, you and your colleagues. I've got a couple of questions I'd like to ask you that have sort of come to mind as we've been talking. Looking over your own career, what made you a good Tactical Helicopter pilot?

DUDLEY: Think Army. Think what the Army needed, and insert yourself at the right place, at the right time, with the ability, and the confidence, and the piece of equipment, you can do a job. You know, virtually, you're asking the same question that I did as a tank officer that I would do as a helicopter pilot. But this also applied, because I have to mention that after 10 TAG, I went on to the ultimate, to fly transport helicopters with 450 Squadron, and the same thing applied. I'm now flying a forty passenger helicopter that can carry three trucks with ten tons of cargo, and I'm suffering from the same problems.

We could not insert ourselves into the Army logistics role, because the Army said, "Look. I don't have time for you. We like to have you around, but you know, we can't quite fit you in." The end result there was, you know -- you've got to remember, by this time, I'm the Operations Officer of a Chinook Squadron, commanded by an Army Service Corps Lieutenant Colonel. An interesting experiment to take somebody who knows the Army, and knows transportation, and make him a CO of a Chinook Squadron. That's after a number of Air Force and Navy officers had commanded. But Housewing (?) was, again, the right man for the right job.

End result is we were trying to fill the airplanes. The Air Force was quite happy, as long as we put in our minimum flying rate—put some hours on the airplane. I was not happy unless the back of the airplane was full. The pilots, you know, they'd say, "Well, why are we getting these strange missions?" And the junior pilots said, "We don't have a tasking order for this." I said, "Well, I'll get one from 10 TAG. Your mission is to fly the 30th Field Regiment to the United States, carry the 105s inside, and the gunners." "But," they'd say, "we haven't got the tasking order." I said, "It's coming. It's coming." They said, "We know

where this mission came from. You went and talked the Militia Artillery into this.” I said, “You’ve got a role to fly internationally, with a full load, in a Chinook, and you’re questioning me about a tasking order.” And of course, the next thing is to make a phone call, and say, “Give me a tasking order for a mission to the United States.” And they said, “Yes. Sure.”

But, you know, what are talking about—the system, or the individual? The point is, I had a good Commanding Officer. I had a wonderful airplane. And again, the Chinook squadron had the same characteristics—a good group of pilots, and excellent maintenance people—some Air Force, some Navy—and they were just happy to have a role. The roles we got were unique, to say the least. But again, the difficulty was finding sufficient tasks to keep the airplane busy.

INTERVIEWER: Did you actually fly during that period of time? Were you actually flying the Chinook?

DUDLEY: Oh, yes. I have nine hundred and seventy eight hours on a Chinook—yes.

INTERVIEWER: Peter, would you just describe the establishment of the Chinook squadron, that you’re talking about?

DUDLEY: Yes. Simply, the Squadron 450 was divided into East and West. There was four of them in Ottawa. The other three were out West. The Chinook was, of course, the replacement for the 113 Voyageur helicopter. And because of the deployment things, they split the Squadron. And eventually the Edmonton element became 447 Squadron. So, now you had a downsized Armed Forces. You have a Lieutenant Colonel commanding four big helicopters in Ottawa. But again, you have the best heavy lift helicopter squadron around. You have a bunch of ex-Army Warrant Officers as maintainers, or in some cases, Navy.

The Squadron Sergeant Major is an old Army Service Corps individual of proven capabilities, which of course, reflects the fact that if your CO is ex-Army Service Corps, and being a CO in the Army sense, he made quite sure that any postings to his unit were carefully considered from their background. So, he’d rather pack the deal with people he knew that could do it.

There was a Maintenance Flight and a Transport Flight, and again, could move anywhere. Its limitations, of course, was the amount of fuel that a Chinook used. But, again, it was perfectly self-contained. It also belonged to 10 TAG, but it could be assigned anywhere in Canada. Some of the interesting roles. They were deployed to look for the Russian missile that came down. We did another interesting role. We were sent up to assist the U.S. Navy during torpedo trials, north of Thule, which again, for an Army deployment, was a good exercise. We did refueling, setting out these rubber...

INTERVIEWER: Bladders?

DUDLEY: Bladders, when the Tactical Squadrons were assisting in the mapping of the Arctic, which again, was tremendous experience for the Chinook crews.

INTERVIEWER: I'd like to have you go over your flying career. Just think about your flying career for a minute. Two things that I would be interested in asking you. What was the most significant near miss you ever had, and what was your most memorable flying experience, if they were different?

DUDLEY: Well, a near miss—it's a mythical point that pilots, after a while, tend to think of all the things that could have gone wrong, and when they get to be middle aged, they start to get very cautious and look over their shoulder. Now, my near miss is no problem whatsoever, because it also got me into Accident Investigation, and my final posting in the Armed Forces, in the Directorate of Flight Safety, as an Accident Investigator.

I had come back from Germany. We had dealt with the wire strike problem. I was now a newly admitted Instructor Pilot, in the Army Aviation School. I was sent out to get some extra time on, and I am flying, solo, in my Hiller, and I'm saying, "How, you know, after three years in Germany, with wires all over the place, you know, nobody is going to hit a wire in the flat Canadian Prairies." At that point, with my mind in neutral, I looked up and saw the telephone line in front of me. The interesting result there was because I'd already looked into the wire strikes in Germany, I found that most of these accidents were overreaction after the initial impact.

In other words, if you didn't break your control rods, the airplane was still flyable. And once the impact of the cracked bubble -- I said, "It's still flying. I'm not going to do anything strange." And I went over and landed the airplane. The fact that the controls were restricted was something, but the point is I had, the old classic, I had a drill in my mind, landed it. At the same time, I sent a "Mayday" on the radio.

The unfortunate thing is that this was the Joint Air Training Centre. The Army had been criticized for its high accident rate. The Army general who had said the next Army pilot would be disciplined had just took off from Rivers, when I hit my little wire. And the Army establishment—remember, this was prior to unification—was going to answer the Air Force requirement, and make an example. And I said, "Well, you can't make an example of me. I was only doing what you told me to do." And they said, "Don't worry about it. We'll take care of you later. We just want to make an example of this. You know, we'll give you a slap on the wrist." And I said, "No. No. No slaps on the wrist. I want a medal for saving the airplane, and don't give me a hard time."

The end result was they attempted to have some sort of disciplinary action. They didn't read the Flying Orders. And of course, the subsequent inquiry said that, "This Instructor Pilot was doing exactly what he was told to do, in an approved area, at an approved altitude. And the fact that he hit an obstacle—it meant that you couldn't see the obstacle. Therefore, nothing further is to be done." Which, immediately, they dragged me in and said, "Since you've beat the rap on this one, we're going to punish you by making you the Flight Safety Officer." I said, "That's an odd way of going about it, but thank you very much."

The end result was we went onto the wire strike involvement kit. I got to be the Unit Flight Safety Officer, which got me more qualifications. I got to be the Base Flight Safety Officer, for Rivers, which introduced me into a very interesting concept of safety management. in the Air Force. And the end result was, when my Chinook tour was up, I had already prepared my way into DFS . And when DFS had finished, and my retirement after thirty years, it was

leaving the Air Force on a Friday morning and going into civil aviation as an Aviation Accident Inspector in the Safety Board on a Monday.

Here I am, nineteen years later, still in Aviation Safety in Transport Canada, still flying my helicopters in a very limited fashion. And still, in fact, being very proud of my experiences in the Armoured Corps and as an Army Aviator.

INTERVIEWER: Peter, you provided excellent, excellent footage on....

DUDLEY: And, I can say one more. I still wear my blue wings, and I wear it on the full dress of a Highland Regiment, here in Ottawa, which puts me exactly back where I was fifty years ago—the back row of the pipe band.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I thank you very much on behalf of the Oral History [Program] of the Canadian War Museum, for your insights, your opinions of, and achievements within Army Aviation and Tactical Aviation. Thank you, Peter.

Interview with Peter Dudley on 19 November 2003. Tape 2, Side 1. Interview ends.

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