

Rough Transcript
Cpl (Retired) Diane Bruce, 41 Signal Regiment (27 July 2016)

Deployment(s): Golan 1998

Interviewer/Transcriber: LCol M.C. Vernon

Note: *Quotations are not 100% verbatim*

Timecode	Content
0:20	Before you deployed? History major at Carleton University, full time, and full time as a Class C reservist in Ottawa. Working at a computer lab in Tunney's Pasture in Ottawa. Her boss went overseas on Op DANICA, the Golan Heights. He called and offered her the opportunity. "The next thing I knew there was someone in front of me with papers to sign and I was going."
1:20	Why? "I wanted to see the world. I wanted to do something useful. There were a lot of positions for Reserve signalers, but they weren't easy to get. Reg Force did a lot of the jobs. I didn't want to be the person at Remembrance Day without a medal. Wanted to do something useful."
2:20	Family were excited for her. Her dad was a captain with four children who never got a tour. Single officers did. It was important for him. Her grandfather was in Jerusalem in World War Two. Everyone was excited.
3:15	Expectations? "I had no idea. Did a little research with the info I had. Knew the basics. Really had no clue. The night before we deployed I was in my quarters in Trenton thinking 'what have I done?' I was a little scared."
4:00	Training? A week-long training session at the Peace Support Training Centre in Kingston. Some Arabic, some Hebrew, some basic self defence.
4:40	How adequate was it? It could have been useful. "But I'm not very good with languages. Got basics. Learned how to say 'no' in Arabic. That's all I remembered. Used the self defence they taught us in other areas of life." Met other people who were going to be on tour. So it wasn't all strangers getting together.
5:50	First impressions? She flew into Tel Aviv. Two hour drive to Golan Heights. Beautiful countryside. "I have no idea where I'm going or what's going to happen. Very nerve-wracking. Very terrifying." 180 Canadians there, who rotated in batches of 90. They arrived to see everyone lined up to receive them, with snack packs. Friendly. "It kind of reminded me of M*A*S*H."
7:25	Living? The barracks were long hallways with bedrooms off them, two per room. Guys had one half with bathrooms in middle. Women in other half. We'd been there since 1972 (?) and this was 1998. There

	was a swimming pool. Junior Ranks mess. Patios at all the different areas—supply, MPs. Very much a smooth-flowing, relaxed atmosphere.
8:25	She was there as a supply clerk (not radio operator). She would greet soldiers from other nationalities. Wrote correspondence. Clerk. Paperwork.
9:10	Really fun to interact, communicate with other nationalities. Dealing with their stereotypes of women in military. “I had an Italian general offer to take me a way and treat me properly. But I never had any bad situations. Teaching them soldiers are soldiers.”
10:00	For her, she learned to understand others. PSTC did a good job of preparing them for this. CCUNDOF supplied Czechs, Poles and all the other nationalities. Did a good job of preparing her as a woman for what to expect.
11:10	Reg/Reserve mix? She’s never had a problem working with Reg Force, perhaps because she spent bulk of her career working in Ottawa. Support trade. Very easy to be part of the larger group. Not stand out as someone with less training or less time. “I didn’t have less training or less time.”
12:15	Looking around? The first morning there was an artillery barrage. “I was freaking out. I was not expecting that. It was the Syrians’ way to greet the new arrivals. Boom-boom-boom. Welcome to the Golan Heights.” They could feel the impact of the rounds, but it wasn’t close enough to bother the Israelis. “I don’t know if they were live rounds. Do it every three months. Do it for new rotation.”
14:00	Several tours of area available: Sea of Galilee, Jerusalem. Two 72-hour passes, one to Syria and one to Israel. In terms of battlefield [Audio hum]. The first few kilometres all blown up. No people. [She says 1972, but Yom Kippur War was 1973] “It actually looks a lot like the Okanagan.”
15:45	Memory? Had just taken possession of a new Toyota 4Runner with five kilometres on it. Went into Haifa to see a movie with two other girls. On switchback on the way back, there are minefields on both sides. On way back, a gentleman took aversion to women/UN. “He decided we shouldn’t be on the road. He tried to run us off the road. It’s a movie incident. We had Boston’s greatest hits playing on CD. He’d cut in front of us, then slow down. I’d try to pass, then he’d speed up. But oncoming traffic would force us into the ditch—minefields on the side... We did this all the way up the switchback. It was scary. Want us to turn the music off? No, I need the music.” Man took off. At top of mountain there’s a fork in the road. Man is in the middle, flagging them down. Instinctively start to slow down. Then thought he’d try to run us into a minefield, so I sped up. Hope he gets out of the way. And he did. And as I’m telling this story my hands are getting sweaty, my heart rate’s up. But it was exciting at the same time. Like a chase scene in a movie.”
19:30	“When I hear the songs today, I laugh. My heart rate goes up and my

	hands get clammy. It was 'More Than a Feeling'. That's how my brain works. Think about it, but don't stress about it.
20:00	Longer leaves? Hers was disappointing. "I was supposed to go to England to see a friend of mine and he committed suicide right before , so I had to change all my plans. Sorry."
20:50	As a History major she'd done a lot of research. On one 72 hour pass another guy brought his son over, a 12 year-old, asking lots of questions. So she told him all about Palmyra, loves to share her knowledge. He thanked her afterwards because he had no idea his son would be so inquisitive. [Hum stops]
22:05	What's it like to see Syria now on TV? "It breaks my heart. I loved Syria. When I was there in 1998 I absolutely loved it. It was beautiful, the people were fantastic and friendly, and to see the footage of it now... and I look at some of the people and I think, 'Did I ever interact with these people? Did I see them in the souk in Damascus?' We went to see the water wheels in Syria [the Norias of Hama] and it was like a party atmosphere and people were up late, and friendly, and [there's] music and sitting around in patios. And you see the footage of the same town now and it is heart-breaking. For me, that's why I was happy that we were taking Syrian refugees in because I've seen their home when they were living happily, and to see the footage of what it is now, I cannot even imagine the terror that these people have..."
23:40	Dynamics among Canadians? It was a family. It didn't matter who you were. Sig op, clerk, officer. Got food together, but officers ate by themselves. On patio night you'd go patio to patio and have a few drinks, socialize and relax.
24:45	Alcohol policy? Pretty free/open. You had a card that limited the amount you could purchase. Patios had alcohol. No limits on what you could drink.
25:20	Coming home? Flew into Vancouver and Penticton where her parents had returned. Two months there, then back to Ottawa. It was very easy to return home. "I'm very much in the moment. That was a great experience. Now here's my next experience."
26:00	She took a Class B with JTF4 in Ottawa. Then became a pay clerk in Ottawa.
26:40	How satisfying? "It was a fantastic experience. I had the opportunity to stay but didn't and I've kicked myself ever since. Should have done another six months. Made me want to do further tours." Still doing useful work, helping people who need to be helped. Had friends who went to Haiti and Africa. "I wish I could have done more tours."
27:55	How did it affect you? "[Now], when I talk to people about world events, it just seems people don't see beyond their own doorstep. Which is a shame because in the world we're in now, you have to be aware of the world as a whole. And not just Red Deer or Ottawa. So I think by going out and seeing a different part of the world, seeing two

	or three different cultures, it opened me up to the fact we are a world community and we have to start behaving that way. And accepting people that need help into our country. Sending help where help is needed. And I feel a lot of people miss that point. Because they haven't left the province or the town they live in."
29:10	Professionally? It gave her more confidence. Made her a people person. Had a few civilian jobs where she used the lessons with people who were a different trade or regulatory body. At Wal Mart she had to deal with government regarding food safety.
30:10	For other reservists, definitely do a tour. Not everyone has a great tour and not everywhere is as comfortable as the Golan, but it's a necessary experience to understanding other people and cultures."
	Additional visuals desired: --Yom Kippur War aftermath on the Golan?