

Major (Ray) R. O. Lange CD



Major Ray Lange was born in Saskatchewan on the 3rd of November 1931. He attended the local Cadet unit from 1941 until 1947 at which time he began a career as a steeplejack in the construction industry.

In May 1953 Major Lange joined the Regular Force Army and was posted to the RCSME at Chilliwack where he attended the Basic and Corps training prior to being shipped to 3 Fd Engr Sqn RCE in Korea in February of 1954. By this time the truce was in effect and 3 Fd Engr Sqn was tasked with mine clearance, bridge building, road building, water supply and the numerous taskings that befall an Engineer unit. Much of this work was carried out in close proximity to the DMZ where Communist North Koreans with their Chinese allies fielded a million troops who looked prepared to break the ceasefire at any time.

Ray returned to BC in December of 1954 where he served with 3 Fd Engr Sqn in Victoria prior to being posted as a Lance Corporal to the 1 Airborne Troop RCE in Calgary in February of 1955. He was promoted to Corporal in January 1956 and Lance Sergeant on 01May57. During this period he attended many courses including Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Warfare (NBCW) courses in preparation to his appointment to Unit NBCW Trg Sgt.

In August 1958 his airborne unit was disbanded and Ray transferred to 1 Fd Engr Sqn in Petawawa as Recce Sgt of a 90 personnel Fd Tp. During the Summer of 1959 his troop was tasked with fortifying a building to withstand an NBCW attack. This involved reinforcing the floor beams and placing over one million sand bags to beef up the walls.

In September 1959 Sergeant Lange was posted to 4 Fd Engr Sqn as a Fd Tp Recce Sgt. After a year at this position he was appointed to be the Troop Sergeant, still with responsibility as the NBCW Instructor, but now also, owing to his ability to speak German, as the unit interpreter. This was the cold war period and Ray recounted, “The Berlin Wall was being built and this created a need for increased security. Red Alerts were the order of the day and when the sirens sounded we all had to disperse immediately, even in the middle of a mess dinner”

On his return to Canada in 1962, Ray was posted to RCSME as an Instructor in Field Engineering subjects. He also completed his Fd Engr Course Group 4A.

Ray was then posted as a Sgt to I Staff Eastern Ontario, District of Ottawa in September 1964 and was promoted to WO in March 1969. While at this posting he was responsible for, amongst other things, monitoring the training at 3 Fd Engr Sqn RCE (Militia) and Armouries Security at Cornwall, Pembroke and Kingston.

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It should be noted that during this period Quebec Separatists were attacking Federal Government facilities and the armouries were prime targets, necessitating all Sgts and WO's to be armed with live ammunition. In June 1969 WO Lange was sent to 4 Fd Engr Sqn, Germany for his second posting in that country, this time as the Support Troop WO. After Canadian Government cut-backs WO Lange moved to Lahr where he was appointed as an Fd Tp WO under US Army Command.

In 1972 Ray was posted back to RCSME as a Standards Writer and in 1973 he was promoted to the rank of MWO and posted to 1CER as a Tp MWO.

In August of 1974 he was sent on a 3 month French language Immersion course in St. Jean, Quebec, followed by a posting to 5 Fd Engr Sqn in Valcartier as Sp Tp MWO after which he served as the commander of the Engr Eqpt Tp.

In 1977 MWO Lange was posted back to CFSME as the Sgt Major of the Heavy Equipment Sqn for a year, followed by a move to Sgt Major of Fd Engr Trg which was followed by another year back in Standards.

In early 1981 Ray was posted to 1CER as a Training MWO in RHQ.

While there, Ray took advantage of the offer to take a commission and extend his compulsory retirement age.

Ray passed all the necessary prerequisites for commissioning and was posted to 6 Fd Engr Sqn (Militia) in the rank of Captain to serve as the Unit Regular Support Staff Officer (RSSO). In his words, "My terms of reference were to do what I could to help the Militia and if I did my job well, the Militia would also do well". As those who served with Captain Ray Lange RSSO can attest, both did do well.

Ray transferred to the Supplementary Reserve in December of 1986. In May 1987 he was called out to serve as OC of the Reserve Engineer Training Squadron at CFSME in the rank of Major.

Major Lange finally retired from the Canadian Armed Forces at the completion of this appointment later in that year.

Whilst in Saskatchewan in 1959, Ray met Lin and they were married the following year. They have three daughters, Karla (Fortin), Amber (Chung) and Margo (Frank), all of whom attended the 1982 Military Ball as debutantes where they were presented to the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia.