

"I've flown lots of generals but this one's the best yet. No fuss and no complaints despite some pretty rugged flights. But we know when to keep our mouths shut after he's had one of those tough conferences."

Burns has always been a glutton for work. At the end of World War I he was 21, the youngest staff captain in the Canadian Expeditionary Force and holder of the Military Cross.

When he first arrived at U.N. headquarters in Jerusalem Canadian officers on his staff automatically called him "Smiler", though never in his presence, until a sharp comment one day made them realize it was not appreciated.

Not even the most senior officer presumes to call him anything but "sir". They respect him for his energy and ability to make decisions.

Asked why he had taken on such a seemingly thankless task as truce supervisor, he replied simply, "For a long time I had been proclaiming that people should do more for the United Nations. Then Mr. Pearson asked me if I would like to do the job, so there I was faced with my own challenge. I had no expectations of great success. I felt then, as I do now, that as long as things could be kept quiet, without compromising U.N. principles, something would have been achieved."

Every day that he is at his headquarters, Burns drives to Beit Jala, close to Bethlehem, for an Arabic lesson with a medical major in the Arab Legion. When he has the opportunity he practices his Arabic in the local markets. He has not attempted to learn Hebrew because most of his contacts in Israel speak excellent English or French.

In addition to being the "most difficult", Burn's job is frequently one of the loneliest. With his wife and daughter residing in Ottawa, Burns lives alone in a three-room suite in a big white house on the hill overlooking Jerusalem in a neutral zone not much larger than the area of the grounds.

From: GENERAL BURNS IS ALWAYS ON THE SPOT  
by - David Willock,  
Montreal Star, December 10, 1955.

The castle-like headquarters of the U.N. Palestine Truce Supervision Organization was built out of the white limestone ribs of Judea for the British high commissioners of the Palestine mandate. It is still called Government House.

Although nobody in the Middle East has ever been heard to call him anything but General Burns, the nickname used by his friends in Canada is Tommy. The General got the nickname because he happened to be a boy during the heyday of the great Canadian heavyweight boxer, Tommy Burns.

From: CANADIAN GENERAL FINDS THAT MEDIATOR'S ROLE  
IN THE MIDDLE EAST CAN BE A THANKLESS JOB

By - Kennett Love,  
Toronto Globe and Mail, November 18, 1955