

# Australians at War Film Archive

## Edward Kelly (Ted or Ned Kelly) - Transcript of interview

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<http://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/2088>

### Tape 1

- 00:36 **Ted, as we discussed there in the kitchen, if you could just start off by giving us a summary of your whole life?**
- I was born in Forbes, and in 1923, I was the fourth in the family at the time,
- 01:00 I can't think, it might have been, yes, the fourth, to a family of seven, and my mother also reared four other cousins as we went through. I went to school at the Forbes Public School, and left school at 14, my mother - or my father
- 01:30 wasn't too happy when I got a droving job. I went from there, I did six weeks in that trip, I did another job - another droving job, and then when I came back I got a job on a dairy, I only stayed there one week, mainly because I thought I was worth seven [shillings] and six [pence] a week and the old lady only paid me four shillings. And my mother really went crook
- 02:00 because I didn't go back. And then I was fortunate enough to get a job in a butcher's shop, and started my apprenticeship at Mervin Hurst at Forbes, and there - I was there until I was 17, and I left there and went to Sydney, worked in Sydney actually in a battery factory, and where I was staying at Lewisham,
- 02:30 one of the chaps we found he had died overnight and he'd been working there for a couple of years. So I got out of that and went and joined the army. And firstly I joined up at the Showground [Royal Agricultural Society Showground] and I was allocated to the 67/62nd Searchlights, which was around the Sydney area, which we originally trained at Clarendon,
- 03:00 over at Clarendon Racecourse there, and we went to Mosman, that was the 62nd headquarters. I was there for several weeks and then firstly I was posted to the pylons of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. I spent about six weeks on the Harbour Bridge there, they shifted us around because we
- 03:30 had to walk up those two hundred and eighty steps three or four times a day and as you can imagine, we were fairly fit. There was about ten I think at the time there. Then I went to Mosman for a few weeks, then we shifted to South Head which was one of the searchlight stations there, and I was there at the time the submarines were in the harbour. And
- 04:00 then it was decided that they'd start a 73rd AIF [Australian Imperial Force] unit for islands. We were all selected, or supposed to be specialist people, and myself being a butcher, they decided that the 73rd would need a butcher, so that's how I became a part of that unit. We went from - we
- 04:30 got together at Scheyville where we did our training there in Scheyville, mainly general training for the islands, and then we had about two months there, then we boarded the train at Mulgrave, went to Brisbane, we were at Tennyson for a start, I think we had five or
- 05:00 six weeks there at Tennyson, then we put on the trains and went to Townsville, which was certainly a fascinating trip, the old saying was, "The chap up the front would grow the tomatoes - would sow the tomatoes, and the bloke at the back would pick them." But we were at Townsville, I'm not sure of the name now of
- 05:30 the camp at Townsville, we spent five or six weeks training there before we went to Port Moresby, and Moresby we set up headquarters and locations all round Port Moresby, different groups, mainly in the airport areas. At headquarters we were out a bit on the -
- 06:00 away from the Seven Mile Strip, then we had about twelve to eighteen months, two years possibly at Port Moresby. We went from Port Moresby to Lae where we set up around headquarters and that around the Malahang Strip, which was the Japanese strip
- 06:30 at the time. By then the Japanese had been forced out and that, so after Lae we came back to Australia and we were demobilised after leave, which at that time I did get married.

- 07:00 When we reformed again, we went back to Brisbane, and there the unit was broken up and I was assigned to the 1st Advanced Reinforcement Depot, and we finished up in Morotai at the end of the war. And in
- 07:30 Morotai after the war - I do remember one occasion there where the major came to me and asked me if I'd go to Singapore to help bring the POWs [prisoners of war] out, and I had a young chap was my offside, and I said, "Look, I do want to get home," I know my wife was expecting at the time, and to take Ken,
- 08:00 which Ken Dubaiyas [?] did go to Singapore and ironically he did beat me home by six weeks. After we left Morotai on the trip home, we were put onto an English landing barge, and that was our trip home which was quite crowded, there were several - quite a few troops in think, in the thousands there.
- 08:30 But it was quite cramped and down underneath, but one of the things that - it was luckily quite flat, the story was or the rumour was that we had about three months extra rations on that boat in case we got into a cyclone, and we had to go with it.
- 09:00 But we did get a cyclone, but that was in Moreton Bay. That night I did not remember anything of it because I was looking after a chap that had an appendix problem, peritonitis, and I had been looking after him for a few days, because the medicals, they had not really place on the place for
- 09:30 medicals and that. So I was that tired that night that I slept through that cyclone. After the war we came back to Sydney and I finished up buying a house at Arncliffe.
- 10:00 I was fortunate there that in the time that the wife and I were in Brisbane, she did win, with three others, the twelve thousand dollar - twelve thousand pound Golden Casket [lottery]. So that set us up for life after that, I did buy a home at Turrella, Arncliffe as they called it
- 10:30 then. The thing was that homes were very hard to come by, and even though I did buy it, we still had two families living in it, and they were very nice families and they agreed, it was a very big home, four bedrooms. So we shared that for about nine months, and we got on exceptionally well. And from there
- 11:00 I bought a butcher's shop at Bexley North, I was there for about five years. Sold the butcher's shop, in the meantime I'd sold Arncliffe and moved to another home at Kogarah, and had the first child that
- 11:30 was born, we were at Arncliffe, was my daughter Pat, and then later the second child, a couple of years later was Peter, my son. From there I sold - after I'd sold the butcher's shop, the meat industry started to tighten up,
- 12:00 so I did buy another small shop at Turrella which I stayed there for about three years, sold that and went to work for a little while at different places, but I did buy a brewery run, I had a brewery run at - for Kent Brewery, and I was there for
- 12:30 about twelve or thirteen years. After that I bought an oyster business, which was one of my mistakes, and I held that for about - only about three years, and of course when the wool - big money for the wool and that crashed, and
- 13:00 that knocked a lot of the restaurants out. But I was able to sell that, and then I just worked around Sydney for a while, bought the different butcher shops, before selling up in Kogarah and moving up here to the Central Coast. That was around 1975, I travelled around for - or we travelled around for two years in a caravan, just doing a
- 13:30 working holiday, before coming back to this area and building this place and settling down here. We had a good life, my wife passed away in 1988 from Alzheimer's, which was a pretty hard two years, mainly
- 14:00 four, but the last two years when I tried to look after her, then I had to finish up putting her in a nursing home, which I've always said was the hardest part, even worse than death. But fortunately in one sense it - she only was in the home for a month before she passed away.
- 14:30 So since then, you know, I spent about four years on my own and we got into a group that was called EPIC, which is for people over 55, enjoying - EPIC stood for 'Enjoying Pastimes In Company', and that's where I met Helen, and we've been partners now
- 15:00 for about twelve years. I do enjoy this life up here, I play quite a bit of golf, in my younger days I played a lot of cricket and that in Sydney, I think twenty-six years I had with one club, and I've always enjoyed that. I do now
- 15:30 play golf twice a week, and bowls on Friday. I don't know now, where do I go from here?
- Well that was a pretty good summary, you've moved us along in good time there, so what we'll do now is go back and start at the beginning again.**
- 16:00 Right you are.

**But thanks for that summary. Well take us back now to Forbes in the twenties, what are your earliest memories of home?**

My earliest memories of home, as I said there was a big family, mostly eleven in that small home, until the eldest brother who is nine years older than the

- 16:30 second, moved away. But I can remember the Depression years, how we were lucky, I think, and that my father was working, he was firstly on the gas works, but I do remember that he had to share that work with another man, and that's what it was like in the Depression. But fortunately
- 17:00 we had a big yard, my mother grew vegetables, we had a cow over in what they called the pound paddock, just a hundred yards from our backyard, we had WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK s in the backyard, so even though things were pretty hard, we were fed fairly well. But as I always remember, there was
- 17:30 one family that had nineteen children, four or five houses up, and I think all together there was something like thirty-two or thirty-four children in that street, and my mother being the person that she was, I think we fed most of those kiddies too. She was a person that could see no wrong in people, and always wanted to help others. And
- 18:00 yet things were pretty tough in those times. I can remember when the three cousins arrived in Forbes, one of them was only eight months old, and of course they added quite a bit to the home. But we all got on famously well. There was always the little tiffs and squabbles and that,
- 18:30 but it was always a fairly happy home. As we moved on, I did play a bit of sport in school time, I was a bit of a footballer and a cricketer, and enjoyed that outdoor life. I used to do a lot of rabbiting, I was a fair shot with a .22 [shotgun] as I got a bit older, mainly because the
- 19:00 older chap next door had one, and that was always a part of the table, if we went out and we knocked a rabbit or two over, it was always on the table probably that night.

**Sorry, could I just ask you, the cousins that came along and stayed with you, what was the reason that they were living with you?**

In both cases

- 19:30 their mother died, their mother died, yes. Arthur who was the eldest came from the Wagga area, and his father was going to put him into an orphanage, and that was exactly the same with the cousins from Melbourne, Gwen and Jean and – any rate I just forget – Arlene, no, and their
- 20:00 parents, the father was going to do exactly the same with them. There were two other boys in that family, but they were older and they were able to – they got out, I think they were seventeen or eighteen, got out and looked after themselves. We did not have a great deal to do with them, although one of them, Johnny, he went down on the Sydney during the war. But that was the reason why my mother could never see
- 20:30 them – and that was the type of person that she was, that she could not see – I know the father wasn't too happy with it, but then as they got there, they were really his favourites. And the one that I was trying to think of, Gladys, I think she was about seventeen when she went back to Melbourne to live with
- 21:00 one of the brothers, the elder brothers and that. Unfortunately poor old Gladys, I think before she was twenty she died of TB [tuberculosis]. But Gwen and Jean, they still class the family as their own, and they're both still in Forbes today. And that was the reason, and that was the type of person that my mother was, that these cousins came to Forbes.

**How did you all**

- 21:30 **fit in the house?**

Well, sometimes it was four, and sometimes it was five in a bed, three up the top and two down the bottom. It used to get a bit cold of a winter time, but we all managed that, and that was where there was beds in every room nearly, and fortunately the father built an annexe on the

- 22:00 side of the house, and there was a couple of beds out there too, and that. But we fitted, we made do, and that's what it was like, we weren't the only ones, there was a – as I said, the Forbes family up further, I don't know whether their house – I don't think their house was any bigger than ours, but they all managed. And that was the thing in those days, you made do. No matter how hard things
- 22:30 were, you still made do.

**And you said your mum was often feeding stragglers from the street as well?**

That was true, I mean she never stopped cooking. If she made a bowl of soup, vegetable, we might have a rabbit or something like that, it was always a very big pot. And not only for us, there was always somebody hanging on, and

23:00 we never thought anything of it, that's what it was in those days.

**I guess you were never short of playmates?**

No, no, we were never short of playmates, but the family got on well, we had - we played cricket in the backyard as we got older, or we went out doing something, you know, there was always something to do. You made your own entertainment in those

23:30 days. It was really only to the war years, the beginning of the war years that we had a radio in the house, there were no washing machines or anything like that, it was the old copper. So you got out and made - you made a basket, if you wanted a football you filled a sock or something up with paper, and

24:00 made your football out of whatever, paper bags was the main thing. They were the great old thing for making footballs, with filling them up with paper. With our cricket, well, we always had tennis balls and that, there was always that, but we never had a hard ball to play

24:30 with. The girls, they were all - used to play football with us, or they had their friends and that, and they made their entertainment too.

**What was their - how did it break down as far as male and female amongst all you kids?**

First there was two boys, the eldest brother Gordon, who's passed away, and brother Bill, then

25:00 Dorothy, my sister, then myself, another brother, and then two girls. They were the seven in the family. And the cousins, well they were three girls and Arthur, who is still alive in Bathurst, he was the other boy from the cousins.

**25:30 And what school did you go to, at public school?**

I went to Forbes Public School. Actually we started off going to the convent in our - in kindergarten I think it was, and for us, my elder sister Dorothy

26:00 used to take me up to this school, which was on what they call North Hill. We lived on Camp Hill, which was the lower part of Forbes. And this day Sis [sister] decided - or Dorothy as I called her, but she was always known as Sis, got sick of this walking right up through the town up to the Catholic school.

26:30 So she took me in and we started in the public school. We never told the mother for about a week, until the old priest came down and saw her, and wanted to know why we weren't at the school, and of course that's when it all came out, and the mother left us at the public school, so we went

27:00 through the public school system. I only went to - I was more the middle class, never right up the top, I was pretty well known through the school, mainly on sporting days, but I did get to high school, but that was only for about five months, no, four months, when I left and started my droving job.

**27:30 And what do you remember of Forbes Public School, the teachers, the lessons and so on?**

Yes, I can remember quite a bit, Billy Stoddard, that was around fourth class, he was quite a good teacher, very friendly chap. One day I remember I was obviously mucking up

28:00 and I got six cuts with the stick, and they hurt, and of course after - he was that sort of chap that he even felt sorry for you, even though he gave you the cane. And this day as I was no doubt head down, crying, they really hurt, and he came up and put his hand on

28:30 my head, you know, rubbed my head, and I thought it was my mate next door, or in front of me. So I let go with a left hook, and hit him fair in the groin. And of course that created some havoc in the class. But he was a good teacher, those that were a bit on the back side down, he was always there to help you, and he'd stay back.

29:00 I went to fifth class, the one I can remember was Mr Cummings, and he was a real sporting man, and he always took us out for cricket. And one day I can remember he puts three two-shilling pieces on the stumps, down on the Halpins Flat as they called it, and I thought I was made, I clean-

29:30 bowled him and knocked two stumps over, and I finished up with the four shillings. And it was a bit of money in those days. So I was pretty popular with the rest of the school boys on that day. Into sixth class, we had a really good teacher there too, Jack Hinchey, he was fairly strict, he was headmaster of the primary, but always a solid man. But we -

30:00 as we got older we had a few rough nuts there, and there was quite a few little scuffles going on, but he could always get in the middle and handle it. Apart from that, there's not a lot that I - apart from the education side of it, that I could tell you about.

**Well what's - you and your mates, what sort of mischief**

**30:30 did you get up to in and around the town outside of school?**

Mainly around Empire Night [24th May, Queen Victoria's birthday - Empire Day] we might put a few

crackers and that in the letterboxes, which was quite a thing. But we were able to play mainly like as I say in the younger times,

- 31:00 with our cricket, I couldn't say we got up to a lot of mischief. Of at night time we were able to entertain ourselves, with even what they call the old paper chase, and we'd put paper around different places, we had a lot of scrub and bushes in the homes, or just in the
- 31:30 streets, around our area. But as far as doing any real mischief, apart from what I'd already said, we didn't because in those days your parents taught you to respect other people and other properties and that. I
- 32:00 did have one little mishap, our mate Tommy Morris, we had pigeons over at Tommy's place, which was over the back of our place, and Tom wanted some white pigeons, and he knew where one chap had them, so we decided to raid them. But unfortunately we got caught, and
- 32:30 they called the police and we got charged, I think the father was fined eight shillings, and five shillings court case. But my punishment there was that I had to go to church every Sunday with my father. Unfortunately for Tom and his sister, they were illegitimate children and
- 33:00 they were sent to - Tom and his sister were taken from the mother and sent to ... But apart from that, that's about the only thing that we could say that we did any - got into any serious trouble. There were so many around that you were involved in football, there were plenty of paddocks there to kick your football around, and of a night time in winter months or even
- 33:30 the summer months, you know, it was cricket. You could find a paddock that had lights that you could play a bit of football. Soccer was not popular in our days, but we always kicked a ball around and that sort of thing. But never, never doing any damage to properties or anything like that.

#### **What role did religion**

##### **34:00 play in your childhood, in the family?**

Unfortunately I've got to say that that was one of the - religion and politics were the big bug bear in our family, because my mother was Church of England, and my father was a fairly good Catholic. He never objected to that

- 34:30 stint that I had to do going to church, but I think I was about the only one that did go to church for that reason. And politics, well my Dad was a member of the Labor Party, and a very strict Labor man, and Jack Lang [contentious Premier of New South Wales 1925-7 and 1930-32] was his God as like they were in those days, to Labor people, and I do remember there was quite a bit of bickering, particularly
- 35:00 around election times, between the two, but still, as far as the family went, they never affected us in any respect. But that was about the only thing that I can say that my mother and father were at odds with. At times it was pretty strong, but there was never
- 35:30 any pots thrown or fists thrown or anything like that, it was always the arguments. But I think my mother was the one that yes, could always walk away from it, after a little bit of bickering and that that went on. But it was one of the big bug bears of our
- 36:00 life, and that. But mainly it never affected the children, but we did notice any arguments and that was always in that respect.

#### **With all the kids in the house, how did your mother organise to clothe you all?**

Well, even though she had that many, she'd make a lot of the pyjamas,

- 36:30 which were straight, from photos I had in a nightdress, but I was only young. No, we were clothed reasonably well, not that we had a lot of them, most of the time we went without shoes and different times that I think for one short time I was able to get a pair of sandshoes, but mainly sandshoes and
- 37:00 that, that we wore to school in those days. But no, we were kept clothed, she made a lot, not only that, might be able to - I don't know where she'd get them but she always had the money, but in those days you could go to John Marrs and have an account, and she'd pay them off. That's one thing that I do - it might be only
- 37:30 a shilling a week or something like that. But if wanted anything she made sure we didn't go without and that, if we couldn't make it she'd go and buy it and pay it off. I do know that at the little store that we dealt with, the Cousins, my Dad was paid fortnightly, and that account went on for a fortnight, and as soon as my father got his
- 38:00 money and gave it to the mother, there was really a battle or a fight to go up and pay that bill, as soon as she got it, one of us was sent up to pay the fortnightly bill, mainly because the battle to pay it was that - Mr Cousins would always give us a bag of broken biscuits out of the biscuit tin, and they were quite appreciated, I can assure you. But that was the sort of person she was, she
- 38:30 never left ... We had a big table in the kitchen which was two stools and a couple of chairs at the end,

and that's where we used to sit. Most of us, it might have been two sessions, and, "Eddie, you get out, let so-and-so in," or I'd sit over amongst the fire, we had a fire in the winter time.

- 39:00 But we managed, we managed to get fed and that. Quite often somebody would decide to kick the stool over, which I think my father made, which would take about six or seven of us, and we'd all go over backwards, and then there'd be a bit of a fight on. And we'd get blamed, and if those that had to get up, the bigger
- 39:30 ones, might have done it, no doubt I did it myself, instead of getting up, straight up, you'd sort of push the stool and over would go the little ones. But we sat down, breakfast there was always plenty of porridge and that sort of thing. I can remember during the Depression things were pretty bad at one stage, I think, you know, when the father was only getting half his wages
- 40:00 and that, and he could not get the dole because he was earning, and the dole was a food issue from the police station, and you could see them queued up, but we did have - the baker would always - on his way home quite often drop in bread to our place for - you know, that was left over
- 40:30 and I can remember having bread and milk with a bit of honey on it, and that was for some months that that went on. I don't know the reason why that we didn't get the porridge or that Mum was just sort of balancing the budget. But we always had plenty of vegetables, that was one thing, even though the father and even the elder brother Bill, he was pretty good, he'd get out and dig the garden and we always had vegetables in
- 41:00 there and plenty of eggs, we had a dozen fowls and that down the backyard, and milk was never a problem because we had a Jersey cow that could produce enough milk for ourselves and the next door neighbours too.

## Tape 2

- 00:34 **Could you give me a bit of a feel for what sort of a town Forbes was back in those days, what the population was, how big the town square was, details like that?**
- Yes, Forbes had a population of around 4000 in the early days, it's grown considerably since,
- 01:00 but it was a pretty good country town, mainly on wheat, lucerne was another thing, and also the beef industry. Quite a clean and pretty town, they have a magnificent town hall, which was used in the film The Dish, but all in all it was
- 01:30 quite a good, friendly town with businesses and that, things they all struggled with during early parts of it, but no, the wheat and wool and the beef industry kept it going. It was also a railway, bit of a railway town, mainly what they called
- 02:00 the branch line from Parkes down to Stockinbingal, down south, so there was a lot of work as far as railway went in Forbes at the time. They had very big wheat silos, which kept them going, later on they did build an abattoir, which was certainly a boost to the town. Unfortunately I have seen recently where it's closed down, but this has
- 02:30 happened to my knowledge two or three times. But early days there, one of the biggest meatworks in Australia was Darroobalgie, belonged to William Angliss, and that was around about six or seven miles out of Forbes, which would be about 10 kilometres now. And that was one of the big works around Forbes at the time. And
- 03:00 I said, the railway, the silos and that, that kept going. But it was pretty hot in the summertime, pretty hot and dusty, but we had the Lachlan River, where we spent a lot of time swimming, and as I said, in my younger days in the summer months we spent a lot of the time down at the cotton weir [in irrigation channel], and also the old weir as we called them, there were two
- 03:30 sections of the Lachlan River. So you know, it was spent there, the water wasn't a problem, it might have been pretty dirty and that at times until they got their filtration plant many years after the war. But is was a prosperous town for quite a number of years in that respect, with the rural industries and that.
- How did it compare in those**
- 04:00 **days with Parkes, was it a smaller or a bigger town?**
- No Parkes, because of the railway to Broken Hill was always the town that was always a little bit bigger, I think Parkes - I can remember just prior to the war I think Parkes had about 7000 people, and Forbes had grown to in the vicinity of five, to five and a
- 04:30 half thousand. But Parkes - and there was always a lot of tension between the two, mainly on the sporting fields and that, they still do call them probably sister cities, they were only twenty mile away, many times that we had bike races over there, to there I should say. But no, Parkes was always the town, and it still is today, that you know, had prospered a

05:00 little bit more than Forbes, even though Forbes had plenty of water, but Parkes these days has no water problem, but in early days you know, they did have quite a bit of a problem in that respect, but they piped it across from the rivers, but now they have bores down, but they're only just outside of Forbes. But there was always that little

05:30 bit of tension there, between particularly the football teams and the cricket sides and that.

**And you were a bit of a cyclist, were you?**

Yes, yes, I – in my early days I was a – from about 15 to 17 or 14, yeah, I think it was 14 when I started bike riding there, which was fairly popular and there was quite a few good riders there.

06:00 **It was a competitive circuit, was it?**

Oh yes, yes, we had it at the cricket ground, the council had built a cycle track, it was a dirt track, plenty of crashes and that on it, it'd get a bit slippery on the banks. Many times I've had gravel rash and that from it. I was fairly competitive, the best I did do in that was in the junior

06:30 days, which mainly was second, I ran second in the Central Western District junior title. The chap that won it was pretty good. But there was the time that, like as I say, there was plenty of entertainment on the rivers and around the areas with cycling and swimming and that. I was never a competitive swimmer,

07:00 that was mainly for I suppose we'd call them in those days, a little bit of the upper crust [upper class], the same as the golf course.

**Did you have a picture house in town?**

Oh yes, yes, Forbes in the early days had two theatres, the Strand and the Studio. Firstly it was the Strand and after school quite often I'd go and – well not myself, others too,

07:30 we'd help Billy Mills put the film posters around the town or around the thing, stick it on with the old glue as we called it, I think it was made up of flour and water and that, we'd do that mainly to get a pass in to see most of the films free. But when we did – like if we didn't have a free pass from Billy Mills, it used to only cost us

08:00 threepence, to get in to see the matinees and that, which was mainly Buck Jones and Rogers and a few of those others.

**That was a Saturday matinee?**

That was a Saturday matinee, then the Studio opened and – but they both used to fill up of a Saturday night, that was mostly your entertainment, there was nothing like these – there was

08:30 an RSL [Returned and Services League] club and that there, but nothing to the size they are today, and as I say, most of your films were – the Studio would run probably I think two or three nights a week, and so would the Strand, I don't know whether they were owned by the same people but they modernised – I think the easy way out was to modernise the Studio, that was

09:00 why I think it was built there. But there was always plenty of crowds in both, and you always got a newsreel, and two good films. So it was quite a good night for it.

**Would you be able to afford a treat?**

Not really, no, mostly if I struck the father in the street, I could get threepence or sixpence, whatever it was, to go to the – and very rarely you

09:30 had enough to buy an ice cream. That was before I started working at that, but no, you never worried too much about treats. But mostly you could get a penny ice cream, if you had a little bit over or could scrounge that somewhere around the road, by

10:00 doing a little bit of work, or help somebody with doing something around the place. But you never got much out of it.

**It was a pretty big deal, the pictures?**

Oh the pictures was a very big deal, yes, it was always the big thing in the town, particularly if there

10:30 was a good show on, well most of them were all good shows as far as the country person went, particularly the country western, or the old westerns as they used to call them in those days, they were the ones that I think were most – John Wayne and a few of those, Tom Hicks and Hopalong Cassidy, they were really – particularly with the young people and that too. But

11:00 most film nights they were nearly always packed out.

**Did you fancy yourself as a bit of a cowboy?**

No, not really, even in my droving days I was never one that could handle a horse, I did ride, but most of my droving time was with the cart, but now and

11:30 again I'd get in the saddle, but never really said that I was a good jockey or anything like that, no. But no, they were good memories, but I was more like into the sporting side of things, I was a fairly good runner at school, particularly in the hurdles I won – they used to have these central western

12:00 public schools, and they'd all get together. And I did fairly well in those, I won the hurdles for a couple of years, and high jumps and that sort of thing. So as far as the horses go, no, I was more to the sporting type of activities and that.

**Would you or the family ever visit the big smoke? Would you get into Sydney at all?**

Never at all. The furthest in those days we got was

12:30 to Parkes, we used to – if the football went on they ran a special train, and to my knowledge, right up, I think I'd probably been the first when I left Forbes, at sixteen or seventeen, I was sixteen and a half, I think, when I left Forbes, and that was a big deal for me to get on the train and go to Sydney. And fortunately I

13:00 did know a chap that lived in Sydney, whose family was at Forbes, and he worked at the People's Palace which was just down from Central Railway, so that was most country people's first port of call if they went to Sydney on their own. And to this day, I still have the scars on the side of my hip from the

13:30 bugs that were biting me, so you know, the scratching, and that's where I made my base early time, and then I did get in with a friend, a family out at Newtown, and they sort of put us straight. But no, nobody in our family ever got any further than Parkes, though I did ride to Dubbo on my pushbike in later

14:00 times, and that sort of thing, you'd probably sleep under the trees at night time, it would only be over the weekend, but the roads were never good roads, they were always gravel roads, so you never went too far in that respect.

**I believe there is an interesting story about your mum and dad getting married,**

14:30 **which relates back to that tension, that Protestant/Catholic tension?**

Yes. In the early days, and these are things I've only just found out through doing the – finding out about the family history from a relative that's looking into it in Melbourne. My father was down as a drover, he joined – obviously he joined the army,

15:00 when they – no doubt they were married in Victoria, I think it was around Wodonga if I remember rightly, but obviously some tension must have developed and he had joined the army. But in the early part I found out that when they were first married my mother was married in white,

15:30 and as a cousin would always say, "Why was my mother standing up and the father sitting down"? And he would say, "Oh, well that was because of the corsets." But when they were married in the first instance, I find out that the priest had said to them, "You know that this marriage is not recognised in the

16:00 Catholic Church?" Or consecrated as I think was the word used. And my mother being such a determined person as she was, she made sure that they got married a second time, and this time she wore black. And I never knew story until recent months. And obviously he must have – or did leave her,

16:30 and joined the army, but they were in Victoria and I find that he joined the army in Warwick in Queensland. And going on the literature that I've received in his war service records and that, that my mother had found out that he was in the army, so she set to work and found out too, and there's literature there from the army stating where he was, and

17:00 when he'd be arriving home in Melbourne. And they obviously met up there, because I find now that there is a photo that's turned up of he and the mother, with him in army uniform. So that was one of the things that we never spoke – I did mention it to the older sister, and she told me that it was well after the war, and I think Sis was well in her

17:30 twenties or thirties that the mother told her about that story.

**So why do you think she was in a black dress for the second ceremony?**

Well, I think it was just to show the church that she was going to be married, not with their recognition but she just felt well, I'm going to get married and we'll be married and it will be recognised. She was a very determined person in that sort of thing.

18:00 **Did you inherit that determination?**

Maybe just a little bit, but I think I've inherited more of her will to accept things as they are, and not be too determined or argumentative about the whole thing and that.

18:30 No, I don't think I've inherited much of her determination and that. I know the elder brother did, and



one sister, but I feel that – do you want to finish? No, Helen's arrived home.

**OK. What values do you think your parents passed on to you Ted?**

I

19:00 think the values that they did mainly through both my mother and father was the respect, to show a lot of respect to other people, and this was through life with most of the people in our younger days. I think those values have seen me through, and I think most of the family, because we've always got on fairly well,

19:30 the whole family, I mean there's always those little bit of arguments and that, but I think that was it, to respect other people and properties, and things like that.

**You mentioned your dad being in the army.**

Yes, yes.

**What**

20:00 **was the extent of his service?**

He was in the light horse, being a jockey in his younger days in Melbourne, around Gippsland area, he was a member of the 3rd and the 5th Light Horse, and he spent five months on Gallipoli, he was a person that never, ever spoke about it.

20:30 He – reading his war service and that, he spent quite a bit of time in hospitals and that, which is apparently quite common with anybody that was over in that area. But even after the war, you know, I tried to find out a little bit about him, but no, he never spoke about it. The only

21:00 thing I've found out, that he always walked with a limp, and according to my elder cousin he was bayoneted in the leg by a Turk, one went through his leg into the horse too, that's about the only thing that I can say that I've heard second hand, but before the war, you know, being in the army, it was '49 when he died, and the times that

21:30 he'd come down to Sydney and stay with us, I did ask him a few things, you know, what it was like, and tried to compare, and he'd just not say a word about it. So I suppose that goes – I can only say that I never knew a lot about him until I got his war records in recent years, as far as his army service and that goes. And these little things are turning up, like as I

22:00 say, about the Charge of the Beersheba and that.

**Did you hear much about Gallipoli or the First World War around that time? You obviously weren't getting any information from dad, but would you get it from other people or from school or anything like that?**

No, no, there was very little, to my knowledge there was very little spoken in the schools about the wars, compared to what it is today.

22:30 No, I couldn't say that I knew anything about it. And my interest has really only come into it in recent years that I've decided to – I've read a couple of books now on Gallipoli and that, that I've found that there's a possibility that my father was involved in those areas, and there's no doubt he has been. But

23:00 to hear anything about it in my younger days, in schooling, there was nothing mentioned. They always had their Anzac Day marches and that, the memorials and that, but never to my knowledge anything spoken about it.

**Would you or the family have anything to do with those Anzac Day celebrations, ceremonies?**

No, only the father, the father would usually go down and march in the

23:30 town and that. He had one of his old mates which we called Bertie Buehler, he was an Aborigine, but he was known as the whitest man in Forbes, and he was as black as they come, but if there was any charitable work done – and he and the father were great mates. One of the things later on that did intrigue me, and I

24:00 often wondered until recent years why my father was a good friend with the Church of England minister that came to Forbes. And quite often, Anzac Days or other days – but it was only about eight or nine years ago I found out that this padre, this minister at Forbes, he was a minister in their

24:30 Light Horse, and he was the first man that started the dawn service at Albany, where obviously most of the Light Horse men were loaded onto the ships with their horses and that. And as I said, it always intrigued me in later life why he was so friendly with him, but that was the reason, I found out that this padre or

25:00 the minister had come to Forbes, only a few years after the war. I was I suppose then was sixteen or seventeen, or fourteen or fifteen in that stage, and I just couldn't understand it, with the bigotry that went on in our house with the two religions.

**You mentioned the whitest man in**

25:30 **town, were there many Aboriginal folk around Forbes at that stage?**

Yes, yes, there was quite – the Buehler family was old Chockie and his family, and there was the Sutton family we were great friends with, and out at Calarie which was just out Forbes, there was about four or five

26:00 Aboriginal families there then. There were a couple of others which I didn't have a great deal to do with, and their names just don't ring a bell at the moment, but yes, there were a few Aborigines in the town at the time.

**And how well integrated were they in the township?**

The ones that I could speak of were the Buehler family and the Sutton family, also the

26:30 Jones family, they were part Aborigines, and they were fairly good, pretty well known, liked, to my knowledge there none of this – there was always fights amongst different whites and blacks, but that happened, there was a lot of fights amongst the whites too, but never the bigotry that I could, you know, place. They were always made

27:00 welcome, to my knowledge, we were great at school with them, and of course as I say, you're not allowed – Chockie was known as Chockie, and Edgar Edgar was known as Goog, they were Aboriginal. Bertie Buehler's son, old Bertie, he finished up being welterweight boxer of Australia, champion of Australia. And I believe today the son, young Bertie,

27:30 still lives in Forbes, and the family are still, well his family are still there. And still respected going on from what I can hear from the brother.

**Was the Empire, the 'Motherland', was that a big thing in your family?**

Well, I think being the empire, Empire Day was a big day around the town and in the

28:00 schools and that. We all waved flags and sang the songs of Britain and that. Yes, it was all about the British Empire in those days, they were very strong feelings towards them, in respect more than anything, but the Empire was quite a bit. But as our family, I think we accepted it just as most other families did do.

28:30 I think, like the kings and queens, we always no doubt looked up to them, mainly the kings I those days, the fifth and the eighth and that.

**And I believe that the family were known as the Kelly Gang?**

Oh yes, yes, mainly the boys around the town, there was myself and Bill and Ivan as the youngsters, Gordon was known as Kicker. But quite often

29:00 anybody who'd mention the Kellys, it was always the Kelly Gang because there was quite a number of us as you can respect.

**But no relation to Ned?**

No, no, no, we did have some doubts there at one stage when the rumour went that Kate Kelly, who was drowned at Forbes, and before she was there she did ask – was looking for the father, but I don't know what connection or anything

29:30 how that came about.

**So let's talk a bit about you leaving school at the age of fourteen. Were you happy to be free of school at that stage?**

I think so, yes, I was never one that would get knuckled down to my school work. As I say, I get back to sport. And I suppose too that

30:00 we, you know, the family, we were sort of looking after each other and never had much time to study or do your homework, you'd probably finish up doing it somewhere along the line, but there was always quite a bit of homework. But no, I think in our younger days we looked at you know, trying to help the family as much as we could as far as values, earning money and

30:30 that, that's why I – well I had to get my parents' permission, I didn't want to go to school, and well high school I think must have been a bit hard for me, not that I – but no, I enjoyed that little bit that I did do in the high school, and as far as getting back it was mostly looking at the sporting side of it. But no, I suppose I looked at getting a few bob in my pocket, which was

31:00 the thing in those days, you used to try and have some money.

**Money was a priority, did you have any sort of ambitions or dreams about what you wanted to do with your life?**

No, never – my mother always wanted me to be a policeman, that was one thing I know, that she wanted me to do. But far as ambition goes, no, I think I wanted to

31:30 do my best whatever I did do. I know that once I got into the meat industry I was quite happy and enjoyed that, and I think that like everybody that's in an industry, is to get your own business and work in your own business and that. But in those early days you never had the outlook to say that you could see yourself doing that, you

32:00 could not see yourself getting the values or the money to start a business until, you know, well after the war years that things became much more easy. But prior to the war, no, you did not do anything like that.

**So how did you come to droving? Why did you take that on initially?**

32:30 A neighbour next to me, he was a drover, and he'd heard, he told me that this Pete O'Keefe around the road was looking for somebody to go droving, only a youngster. So I went round and saw him, and that's where it started. It was a job, I never looked at anything else,

33:00 you know, any sort of work was a priority to you in those days. And this was a six weeks trip, and when as you said, it was twenty-seven and six a week, which was seven days a week, I thought, "Well that's pretty good," so that's how I approached the mother and I said, "I'm leaving school, I'm going droving."

33:30 Any rate, that's how I started the droving trip. I did two trips with him, and the second one was in the winter time, which was out on the bland, as they called it, down near Quandialla, Caragabal and that way. And when I came back well he had no other trips lined up and the baker told us

34:00 that the butcher, Merv Hurst, was looking for an apprentice, or a boy to start, so I certainly rushed over and saw him, and fortunately I got the job. I was there – I don't think I was quite fifteen, until I left there at seventeen and went to Sydney.

**Was there only one butcher in town at that time?**

Oh no, no, no, there was –

34:30 Webbs had two shops, I'd say there was about three or four butchers. This one was on the outskirts of the town, there was one up in the north so I'd say no, there'd be half a dozen, that's three in the town, yes, three in the town, and three in the outskirts.

**And yours was in the town?**

No, mine was on the outskirts, Camp Hill as we called it, South Forbes and that, and there was one,

35:00 Ticehurst right – not Ticehurst, up on North Hill.

**So that was seen as a pretty good opportunity for a young bloke, getting into the game?**

Oh yes, yes, I could see it, because you know, with the meat industry, butchering, there was always work, no matter where you went, you could get it. But in those days I did not look at that, it was just looking

35:30 at it, it was a job, there was a job to do, and you had work. It made it easier for the family too, because I could take home a bit of meat, which didn't cost me much. I know the family, the kids or the others, I'd take home breakfast and sometimes eat a half a dozen sausages for breakfast. But I was always able to, you

36:00 know, take meat home, and the boss was very good with us. I think he knew the circumstances of the family, but whatever hours he wanted me to work, I was always there, seven days – I'd go out on Sunday and help him kill, that's where I did a bit of killing and that, well he taught me a little bit of killing. But that was always in my twenty-seven and six, I didn't have to do that, I could knock off at

36:30 lunch time Saturday and go and play a bit of cricket or sport, whatever was on, but if he was out, wanted to go out killing for something to do, I'd quite often go out. Most of his – like he'd do his killing probably mostly weekends, because he had a fairly good business, there was himself, his son, and

37:00 myself. So it wasn't a bad business in the town, really. But all the killing would be done, if anything turned up, you might go out of an afternoon and knock over a few sheep or something like that. But looking at it, it was always somewhere that you could get work.

**Did you give that wage straight to mum?**

I gave

37:30 her, I think it was ten shillings, and I'd buy myself a suit, I bought myself – of course in those days your youngsters always had the suit, and Wilsons was the tailor, so you got your suit and paid it off and two shillings, and you went down to McDades and you had your shoes there, and you'd pay them off.

38:00 And that's how you did it. But that's the business people to do business, you never let them down, you

were always there. So the other few shillings and that I might be able to shout the kids to the pictures, which was quite often and that, and then we started to get those little extras, that you spoke about earlier. I

38:30 was fairly – looked after the youngsters, like the younger sisters, Ivan, Shirley and Mona, and I'd always buy them an ice cream or a packet of lollies or something like that. You'd never waste money in those days, but I suppose, as you say, buying an ice cream and that was a real treat.

**When -**

39:00 **when do you recall first being aware that perhaps there was a war on the way in Europe?**

As a youngster I was never aware of it, we never worried much about it. And as I said earlier, we did not have a radio, but I could always remember the mother and father talking about

39:30 it, well before Hitler started to really get into those European countries, and they would talk. Not that I could remember a lot about it, because you know, you're a youngster and you never took a great deal of notice of that. But there was many times they'd say, "It looks like we're going to have a

40:00 war." So that was I suppose, it could have been twelve months before Hitler really struck, and that was the publicity, you know, we used to get the newspapers and that. And then the father did buy a radio, and my mother would – you could not move in the place or talk while

40:30 she listened to the news and that. I can remember her and the lady next door, Mrs Carroll had a radio before we did, and this was prior to the war but getting close to it, and Mrs Carroll would turn that radio up, and the mother would go to the side fence and listen to the news that was coming on, and I think my father, it used to affect his – he used to come home for lunch from work, or dinner,

41:00 and she'd be out there listening to the news, he must have thought, "I'll have to do something about this," and that's when we did get a radio.

## **Tape 3**

00:31 **Ted, I just wanted to get a couple more details about the droving that you did. What was kind of a daily routine in droving?**

The daily routine would be that you start off like early morning, you might as well get the early morning, you'd pack your camp, they were sheep, we had two thousand head of sheep we were droving,

01:00 you'd certainly no doubt you'd have breakfast, pack up the camp, get your dogs working, which there were about five dogs. I drove the cart, we'd get on the road, our limit or minimum mileage we had to do was six mile a day, that's all on the stock roads and that.

01:30 So my job mainly was to look after the cart, pack the cart up, get the horse in the cart and I had one dog with me, and I'd be at the back part keeping the sheep coming along with myself and the dog that I had working,

02:00 where the boss would be up the front, on the horse, slowing them down, you know, so they could feed a little bit. But we had to do that six mile a day. We'd probably walk them for about three hours, I think it was, and stop them where we were, which were mainly on stock routes, not on main roads. On

02:30 main roads you had to keep moving. But we'd rest them there for say an hour or so, we might probably build a – I'd build a fire and we'd probably have a cup of tea. But your day would start nearly daylight, you were always up before daylight, so you know, say you're

03:00 three hours, you were still only around about nine or ten o'clock, or something like that. That would be the first part of it, we'd have probably something to eat and a cup of tea and boil the billy and set off again, move them again for about three hours, then we'd stop and have lunch, cook whatever we had there, mostly we'd

03:30 probably before we started, we'd killed a sheep at the farm that we took them from, and we had no icebox, but you could still carry enough meat, it was cool enough for a couple of days, and it was chops or something like that, so you'd cook those for lunch, have quite a good meal, and

04:00 again you'd pack up, move them on, you'd still have those four stops a day in your day. And at night we'd set up camp, but we had what we'd call a race, put them into a race and block them off with only just one or two strands of wire, might have to

04:30 string it out a hundred yards each side, but I'd set up the camp in a sort of a gate and we'd camp in that little gate, to prevent them getting out overnight. So mainly that was your day, and that was your continuous days, I think the first one as I said was about six weeks.

**What were the routes that you were following again?**

We

05:00 took the first route, the first one was from out at Yarrabandi which was out from – I think it was between Bogan Gate and Tullamore and that, and across through Condobolin, the outskirts of there, to Caragabal, Quandialla, and down to Stockinbingal,

05:30 that's down in the south of the state, just out from Wagga I think it is, yes. It was quite a slow trip, but interesting, you know, I enjoyed every bit of it. We had no – we'd sleep on the ground, with quite a good cover over us, in those days I don't think we knew much about sleeping bags or mattresses

06:00 or rubber mattresses, they didn't exist. It was pretty cold, I can assure you.

**Was it a tough life?**

It was a tough life in respect of, you know, you're camping at mainly night time, reasonably easy through the day, because I spent most of the time either walking and leading the horse and cart and working the dog,

06:30 Jack, he was quite a good dog, he was trained as a cart dog and he knew what he was doing. But instead of sitting on the cart, I used to get down and walk. But it was pretty hard because of the winter months and it was in the winter months, that one. Night times were bitterly cold, so were your mornings, with fog, sometimes

07:00 you couldn't see the sheep and that, but you accepted those things, it was hard but you know, I never thought at one time, "What in the dickens am I doing here?" I suppose I had in my mind, the back of my mind it was worth twenty-seven and six a week, and it was for six weeks. But I couldn't say that I ever regretted it, it was an experience,

07:30 I look back on it today as a wonderful experience, and you know, a lot of the youngsters that have done it, and even today, you can see they organise these sort of groups to go out and muster cattle and drove cattle, so there's still a lot of people, young people,

08:00 want to get out and do what we did in our younger days, experience it, and that's what you've got to look at it as, an experience.

**What sort of lessons of life did you learn from the older and saltier characters you were droving with?**

Well, one thing I did learn about Bede O'Keefe that if there was a pub there, he stopped, or left

08:30 me with it several times, to look after it, but I was never a drinker, I like my drink and that, like most, but not the same. But I think that was one thing that I did learn about it, because a few times he overdid it, and I copped it, you know, when he came back drunk, and I had to do nearly everything myself, including throwing him in off the horse

09:00 and putting him or covering him up, not putting him to bed. So that was one thing I did learn. But my father, he wasn't a drinker, and he never liked us doing it either, you know, even as we got a bit older, so I think that was one thing that did stick in my memory about the droving, that was one thing I did learn.

09:30 **When you were working in the butcher's, the war in Europe formally broke out -**

That's right, yes.

**- what do you recall of the men from the town going off?**

Well they had the army personnel would come around to these towns, and not that I saw a lot of it, mainly because I was

10:00 working, but I do know that particularly my cousin that joined up from Forbes, Arthur Arden, I think in his group there was about ten or fifteen joined up as the army came into the town, and of course when they joined up they were just sort of put on the train, sent mainly to Ingleburn. But I didn't see a great deal of it, because as I said, it happened through

10:30 the day. But I can remember this was happening quite a bit in these country towns, that the army would have a recruiting drive on.

**Did the men and the boys get any sort of send off from the town?**

Oh yes, yes, most occasions, yes. I can remember one, they had a big reception for

11:00 the air force boys, and of course the air force boys they were – as you say, from the money people of the town, and they had quite a big send off in the town hall from that, I can remember that, that is one occasion that I can remember. But as far as the army boys went, they did give them a send off, but nothing to the extent of that one.

**At what**

11:30 **point, and why, did you start to get restless in your job in the butcher's shop, and want to go elsewhere?**

I think that mainly the ambition of most young people in the country was to get to the city, and there was always plenty of work there, and you know, these are the stories that would come back to the country. I'm

12:00 no exception I suppose, all my mates finished up in the city, for work, and even some of the families that left there, had gone to the city and rented houses and that, to get work. Things were never a lot of work in the town for younger people in those days.

**But you had work yourself.**

12:30 I had work, yes, but I suppose I was still one of those that wanted to, for adventure I suppose, just to get away and see what the other side of life was like. We still had the family there, but I suppose too that in the back of my mind with a lot of the friends that were just a little bit older, they were the ones that were eighteen, nineteen

13:00 like my brother, left with the army, they came up, Bill, he was three years older than I am, and he went away, he was one that joined the army from Forbes, and I suppose that was one thing in the back of my mind that - not the army, but to get to Sydney and experience a different life up there. I can

13:30 always say that I've always had the country in the back of my mind, not that I've ever gone back there to live, I've lived in the city, my circumstances, you know ...

**What did your parents think about you leaving?**

No doubt they weren't too happy, I suppose a seventeen-year-old in those days, or sixteen and a half, seventeen, was still a youngster, and

14:00 that's how you were look on as, and you know, you never had the outside life because you were restricted around your town and that all the time. No, the mother wasn't too happy at all, I know she - even when my brother Bill went off, of course she could remember the First World War with my father, I do know that that broke her up, and I think she had the same in the back of her

14:30 mind, that when I left that I'd probably finish up there too, which I did do. But she wasn't too happy, no doubt, she was that type of person. She really looked after us in young and I suppose nobody likes to lose any of their family in any respect.

**So tell us how you got to the city and found your feet.**

Well I went down by train,

15:00 which was most of the travel in those days, and this chap that I knew from Forbes, Noelly Cundill, he met me at the station and put me up in the People's Palace, with one of his mates, we became quite friends. And so to find my feel and my way around, I think Noelly Cundill was the one that showed me around. But then I had to find work,

15:30 and I got the paper and found out that there was a place for rent, or a room for rent at Lewisham, and this old couple, a bonzer old couple took me in, and of course, as I said, it was only just across the road, in Parramatta Road, that the Associated Battery factory was there, and of course they were looking for labour. And

16:00 I started work there and sort of found my way around the city with some friends, Neville Parker, who lived at Newtown. So you know, I had it made in that respect as far as getting around.

**What were your impressions of the big smoke when you arrived in it as a boy?**

It was just unbelievable, to pull into Redfern Station, with

16:30 all the steam trains that were there, and it was just like you'd see in a movie, with all the steam coming around the area and that. And not only that, you'd get into town, into the city, I think it was around about seven o'clock at night, you'd leave Forbes at - it was a thirteen-hour trip in the train, so you left Forbes and then you'd get down there and

17:00 coe come to Central Station, because everybody travelled by train, you know, it was mostly the mode of travel, and of course the place was absolutely packed at seven o'clock in the morning. And as I said, I was lucky that I - I think I was lucky that I had Noel there to take me down there. But it was a thing in those days that people from the country, and particularly my brothers and that, you lived in Forbes

17:30 and you had a bit of spare time and that, you'd go down and see - at Central Railway, and wait for the Forbes train to come in, and see who's coming off it. So I didn't only run into Noelly Cundill, there was four or five other people there to talk to. So you know, you felt you were still among your Forbes people. And it happened quite

18:00 often, like you'd go in, you might be in there yourself in later life and the Forbes train would come in, you'd go down and see who'd come off it.

**What - the battery factory that you were working in, what sort of batteries were they making?**

They were making car batteries and also mainly the batteries for the army, which I think it was

- 18:30 called the Associated Battery Factory which made Exide and the old Century I think it was, I know they used to make two or three, but it was my job to put the lead plate into the casing, which was some sort of a compound casing and that. But you became an expert at it, you know, flicking it in,
- 19:00 we used to put about twelve or thirteen plates in each battery. And it was a very dusty, dirty place, you had to have a shower before you left there, and of course in those days you never thought anything about covers over your face or anything like that. And as I said, I didn't stay there any longer than about
- 19:30 six or seven months, mainly because the old chap where I was staying advised me to get out of there, because of the chap that died, he was in the next room to me at this boarding house, and he'd been there for two or three years, and he maintained it was - he was only a young chap in his thirties. So that was the reason, and then I thought, well I was old enough to join the militia part of it, I was
- 20:00 seventeen, a bit over seventeen, and I joined the militia part of the army, which allowed me to go, and that's what the 62nd Searchlights was - really a militia area.

**So the other guy in the boarding house, probably died from some sort of industrial disease, you reckon?**

I did not find out, but according to the old chap and his wife that owned

- 20:30 it, he maintained it was, because he did tell me that he said he wasn't feeling too good a few days before, but whether it would be - I suppose when you look back on things, these days you could hardly feel that most problems which come out of those sort of things is cancer, so you couldn't see in a matter of two or three years that he was there, that
- 21:00 that would cause his death.

**Why was it that you started to want to join the forces?**

Again, I suppose it was another experience that you were looking for, it was, like as I say, the brother and some of the mates, older friends and that I knew, were in the army, and the chap at

- 21:30 Newtown, Neville Parker, he was just a little bit older than me, he joined up too.

**Did you follow the war in North Africa, with the Aussies?**

No doubt I followed the war, like Tobruk and - of course you were always interested in that. I don't think the coverage was anything - the coverage was

- 22:00 nothing like what you get today on these things, and that. But what little news you got, or what news you did get in the papers printed and that, I think it was more genuine to what was actually happening than what you see today. Yes, we did, and I think this was one of the reasons that Australia had supported
- 22:30 the Empire I guess, and I thought, "Well, I suppose I'm able, I could look at doing a little bit, do whatever you can for it, join the army," and this was I suppose a semi-unskilled person's ideas of getting out and getting - I guess again too many would say, "Oh, you'll get to see the other side of the world and all this business," and irrespective to
- 23:00 what was going on. Youngsters, you became so blasé about these sticky situations that you got into.

**If you were working in a factory that was providing equipment for the military, that would have been a reserved occupation?**

That was true, but fortunately for myself that never - I don't

- 23:30 think I mentioned that when I joined up, I just mentioned that I was an apprentice butcher, and that, so I'd say that because of my elder brother, he joined the army, and he was in for only about nine months training and that, and he was in flour mill at Forbes, which was one of the industries there, Harris's Flour Mill, and because he'd worked there for many, many years, they took him out of
- 24:00 the army and put him back into the flour mill. So he was in the essential services there. He was disappointed in one sense, that you know, they pulled him out of the army, but that's what they had the power to do.

**So how did you come to join the militia? Where did you go to and what process?**

Firstly I went out to the Showground,

- 24:30 that's where most of the recruiting and that was going on, and of course when I told them my age, they said, "Well you're not available for the AIF?" And I said, "No, I want to join the militia," which you could do at I think sixteen and a half, I think at that stage, you could join the militia forces. And that's how I

25:00 became involved in the forces there, and I went to Clarendon which was an area that they trained, and from Clarendon after I did my rookie training, I went to the drill hall at Mosman where 6/2 were, mainly a militia unit – were a militia unit,

25:30 and had searchlights and protection around Sydney.

**So from the showground you were just posted into a training company or something like that?**

Yes, yes, I didn't know where I was going or what type, it could have been ack ack [anti-aircraft fire], it could have been many others.

**So what did that initial training involve at Clarendon?**

Well mainly at Clarendon was your rookie training, which was field training, you learned to – you were

26:00 exercising and bivouac work, and learn to use a rifle, mainly it was the .303, we did have a few Lewis sub-machine guns, you had to learn a bit about them, but mainly your training, your physical training and learning to pull a

26:30 .303 to pieces and put it back together, and it was the same with the old Lewis sub-machine gun.

**And how did you fancy your .303 after your .22 efforts as a child?**

No, well I certainly got a few sore shoulders out of it for a start, but we – at Clarendon we only had one, no, we had two, two days

27:00 at the rifle range, and they took us out to – I think it was one at Moorebank or somewhere like that, you know, around Liverpool or out that area. But no, I had it – on my pay book I was a fairly good shot, as far as that thing – so probably I had good eyes in those days. But the

27:30 training there was that we had different parts of the searchlights to work on, and there was the operation of the searchlights, but also they had a dark room there, and we had to have a spotter too. Any rate, they'd

28:00 bring this figure across to a lighted area. Any rate, I had pretty good eyesight, no doubt, and I was selected to be a spotter. So I just lay on the chair and guided the lights, you had to pick up a bit of sound too eventually, not that I stayed in that for a great deal of time, but that's what I finished

28:30 up in the 62nd Searchlights as a spotter.

**How did you feel about being posted to a searchlight unit?**

Never thought anything of it, because you know, you were in the army, I didn't know what other was involved, in other respects. But now when I look back on it, I think that it was a pretty good move, I

29:00 think, you know, it was something that you weren't just like infantry, just learning to fire or march or exercise, and that sort of thing, there was more to it. But then later as I got into the – away from the 62nd and into the 73rd, well that's when I became into headquarters with the thing. But around Sydney I

29:30 had a little time at Mosman, the drill hall, then I went to the Harbour Bridge, I was on there for about six weeks, on the pylons, you know, you were spotting. Our main aim there was to report any American planes that tried to fly – or any plane,

30:00 fly under the bridge. That was one of our jobs, you know, to keep an eye generally, and then –

**Who was flying under the bridge?**

The trainee pilots, from Richmond, and you had to report the number and that. You know, they were all daredevils. And of course when the Americans came out here, early part, they used to try – it was the big thing apparently with the air force blokes, to fly under the Harbour Bridge.

30:30 But I was only there for about six weeks.

**Can you tell me, Ted, what the crew is of a searchlight and who does what?**

Yes, I can tell you. There's usually about – there are ten or twelve on each location, and of course you had your sergeant and corporal, which were just directors.

31:00 You had four operators on the searchlight, there was one on the arm, one on the light, which was to set the light going, and there was two on the generator, they had to have a big generator to run it, and your spotter.

31:30 But they also had – they were your operators, but there was always a couple of spares, so mainly the one on the arm, there was two, that's three, four on the generators, your sergeant and corporal, which is six, and well, naturally you had your cook too, you had your cook and a couple of spares that could



32:00 generalise. Most of them on a location as they were called, could do all jobs, you were trained to do all jobs. So as I say, there was usually the ten or twelve, that's all there were.

**And how many lights in ...?**

Only one light, only one light, most of them, which was a ninety centimetre searchlight, that we had around Sydney in the

32:30 old days, but then they modernised when we went to the islands, with a 120, which was an English - and also an LC [?] radar equipment with it, see where in Sydney well we had to depend on sound and you might pick up a little spark or a little light that came off - they used to have,

33:00 you know, planes just going over, training too, of a night time, we used to pick them up and that.

**How much light did those things throw out?**

They were powerful, yes, they were powerful. The ninety centimetre I think we could keep the planes up over the twenty five thousand feet. But with the one twenty, and this is

33:30 one thing that made the Japanese so inaccurate around Moresby and Lae and that, that they were much more powerful and we could keep them up around the thirty-five thousand, forty-five. But see this is - see the ack ack could not reach to that extent, but they weren't far from it, but they kept them high.

**Did they throw out a lot of heat**

34:00 **as well?**

Massive heat, yes, yes. You could not put your hand on the front glass of the searchlight. Quite warm to work around in the winter months.

**You wouldn't want to look straight into that light either, would you?**

No, they'd be blinding, yes. They could nearly blind you, particularly the stronger ones, yes.

34:30 They were never set to come right down, they were always on that angle, so that there was no fear of anybody getting them in their eyes or anything like that.

**And so what was kind of the procedure for operating these - obviously they weren't running the whole time?**

Oh no, no, well see, mainly in the training. The most you could run them for would be about an hour,

35:00 an hour and a quarter, because then they'd overheat, and that.

**So in the case of a theoretical incoming enemy aircraft, what was the procedure for turning them on and guiding them and reporting them?**

Yes, well there was a lot of search done in it, like your spotter would direct it, direct the light to the sound,

35:30 yet your sound would be probably two or three or four seconds behind, so you were sort of putting it into the front of it, more than anything.

**And so how does then the light - once you've picked up a plane, how does the light get moved and - ?**

Well see, that's what the operator on the arm - he's got a little wheel, like a car wheel, a steering wheel,

36:00 and the arm is about - I think they're about ten feet out from the searchlight. This was mainly for protection too I suppose, like if you got strafed, like they did in Darwin and that, quite a few of the searchlighters were strafed and that, of course they're all out in the open. Some of the infantry blokes reckoned you were mad, because you had no protection.

**And which pylon of the**

36:30 **Harbour Bridge were you working on?**

I was working on the southern side, this side. But we had to - mainly all our camp down underneath the roadway, was where our actual camp was. So some days you were on the south side, and other days - nights too, you were up on

37:00 the northern side. And mainly only on the eastern - mainly the two that were on the eastern side of the Bridge.

**So the Opera House?**

Yes, the Opera House where it is today, yes. It was an old tram depot in those days.

**Yes, I realise it wasn't there in those days. So the south-east and the north-east pylons?**

That's right, yes. They were the only - I don't know the reason why,

37:30 but I don't think there was any - I'm not sure of the other side, whether they had their steps and that to it.

**And if you did see a naughty allied pilot flying under the Bridge, what did you have to do?**

Well, you had to report it to your sergeant, and there was an operation room at North Sydney, one of the hush-hush ones, if you could get the number

38:00 or whatever, they didn't have numbers on them, or if they did they had them under the wing so you couldn't see it anyway, you'd just report it because they'd probably know what time that bloke left Richmond. They were mainly trainee pilots. I think, if I remember rightly, I don't think - I think we reported two Aussies and one American in the six weeks I was

38:30 there.

**And after you left the Harbour Bridge, you were at South Head?**

Yes, I was out on location out on South Head there.

**Why did you get pulled off the Bridge?**

I think they thought, well they'd shift you around, which they do, because - I think more for training, different locations, we had about

39:00 six - or five or six different locations around Sydney, and even over on the St Ives side and that, dry ground, that was the section from 6/2, there was another lot out around Ramsgate and that way too. But I think the main idea was that you know, you'd get to know different personnel, you wouldn't become too

39:30 pally with them or something like that, but I think the main reason was to shift them around instead of getting bored with being in the one place, because there wasn't much to do of a day time, all you had to do was clean your equipment and do a bit of general exercises and training, you were still training all the time, but mainly regimental stuff and that sort of thing.

**At**

40:00 **night then, what sort of level of alert and stand to were you on?**

Well you're on stand by all night, so you know, the operation room, which was then as I said, at North Sydney, if they had anything that came in from the radars from the air force or elsewhere the navy would pick up that sort of thing, they would let you know and that,

40:30 and of course every station would be on alert. There had to be somebody on duty, or two on duty I think it was, all night, not that you were up all the time, you'd do I think a two-hour shift, two of you, and of course if you were called out they'd put on these mock raids as they'd call them, it might be two or three o'clock in the morning. But a lot of it didn't happen because -

41:00 it didn't happen too often because you know, there was a lot of calling out and that, with residents, they weren't that far from houses in some places, but yet a lot were out in the bush, mainly over the St Ives side, and Killarney Heights or something like that.

## Tape 4

00:33 **Ted, you found yourself in the middle of this searchlight caper, was it something you sort of enjoyed, were you sort of happy that you've sort of found your way into that part of the militia?**

Oh yes, yes, no, I was quite happy with the situation that I was in, it was enjoyable that part, there was, you know,

01:00 very interesting in the training in that respect. But after I'd left North Head, South Head I should say, I went back into headquarters, we shifted from there from Mosman over to Warrane Road, Willoughby, and that's when they brought me back into ... but I did enjoy what I was doing

01:30 on the searchlight, and also the Sydney Harbour Bridge section of it, and it was interesting, we were in the city, you know, we'd get around, there was plenty of activity around us. But yes, I did really enjoy what I was doing there, and I mean I suppose I was lucky in that respect that I was put into that unit. The

02:00 locations, you know, as I said, there were only ten or twelve of us, mainly chaps around my own age, except your corporal and sergeant, and ...

### **Were you making some good mates?**

I made some quite good mates, yes, through even the 62nd and that, we were all good friends and used to knock around a bit together. But you know,

- 02:30 when you did get leave, nine times out of ten you were on your own, because there was only – on location there was only ten of you, and you might get the weekend leave which would be not very often, you know, because there was only two or three off, you might get a day off, but you had to be back before dark, and that sort of thing. So most occasions you went out on your own,
- 03:00 on leave on your own, they never allowed any more than a couple out in the day time because there was always a lot of work to do in keeping those – particularly if you lit up that night, you had to pull nearly every piece out and clean it. And not that you really rushed into it, it was always made a day's work
- 03:30 or something like that.

### **Why was there such a necessity to clean so thoroughly? What sort of ...?**

Well you had your carbons, and the carbons used to – could sort of corrode around different areas, like around the light and mechanism what you'd call it, and that. So that was the main thing. But I think it was just army, general army

- 04:00 regulations, to make sure everything was operational, the same with your rifles and that, you had to have an inspection nearly every morning, to make sure that it was clean, so that it was serviceable and that. And that was the same with all your equipment. The generator was spotless, but there was a lot of work, cleaning your plugs and other parts of the diesel and
- 04:30 that, but as I said mainly I was doing all sorts of work in that respect when I was with 62, and out on location. It wasn't such on the Harbour Bridge, we had no lights there, we were only just keeping an eye on things, and we found out – we had a little sub-machine gun, and we found out later,
- 05:00 the sergeant which was Mac Hartley had sent it back to ordinance, and they reckon if we'd have fired it, it would have blown up in our face, so we were lucky in that respect. But there was never any fears, we weren't in that position, and I think it was just a training exercise or something, or just to keep an eye on these youngsters that were learning to fly.

### **So when you were there at the**

- 05:30 **pylon, and that was considered a location –**

Yes, yes.

### **– were you camped down there?**

Oh yes yes, our camp was down under the kitchen, and all down underneath the eastern side of the bridge, that's where – if we went to go to the northern side, you had to walk over, right across the bridge, and walk up. But on the

- 06:00 other side, the eastern side, where we had our equipment, meals and that, down below, you had to walk those two hundred and eighty odd steps. So we were quite fit. No, there was always two of us, we'd play cards and that sort of thing, if we heard any planes we might get up and have a look around. But I thought myself, I think most of us did, that it was a
- 06:30 pointless exercise.

### **So how long would your watch be?**

We'd do two hours, two hours yes, very rarely you'd do more than two hours on that, in any of them of a night time and that, and that allowed you to go through the night with everybody gone on location would do their turn. And as I say, the Harbour Bridge, well we could wander around The

- 07:00 Rocks area, like in the daytime, if you weren't on shift, or you weren't doing – because you had no equipment to – we didn't even have rifles there, we were just there doing some sort of a job as they saying goes. But as I explained that just to keep an eye on the planes and that.

### **And how many per tent were you, when you were sleeping?**

- 07:30 Down at – you're speaking about the harbour ...?

### **The pylon.**

Yeah, no, we were in – there was no actual tents, we were just in that big opening that was there, and we were all along the wall. We had our palliasses, which was just straw in a hessian bag, I think we did have, we did have boards underneath us, I

- 08:00 forget the name that we called them, but they were bed boards, just made into a little dip that the palliasse and that fitted on, because we were on the concrete and that.

**Did it take long for you to feel like you knew your way around the lights pretty well?**

Yes, yes, it took quite a bit of training and that, yes. To

08:30 get familiar with all of it, you'd be six or eight weeks before you could say you were able to do all jobs and that. Even though it might seem pretty mundane to the average person and that, but no, there was quite a bit there in the operational side, you know, getting to know all your equipment and that, and it used to take, I think

09:00 four of us to take the back off, it was like a handle on it, and you had to turn it, but you needed two on each side, and that was your main part, you'd very rarely take the glass out, but you'd have to get in there and clean both sides. And they weren't - it wasn't as if it was one piece of glass, they were only widths about that size, because it was made out of special

09:30 heated glass and that.

**So you just have known your way around the generator.**

There wasn't a lot, no, there wasn't a lot to do with the generator, but you know, you had different switches to arc the light, to - just when to throw it, there were two switches there for different sections of the light.

**Why don't you just explain to us the procedure just**

10:00 **to activate the lights, just from the very beginning.**

Now, that's testing my memory. The main thing, like that switch, your first switch was for, it'd put the power into the arc light, into the candle, we'll call it, it was - I just forget what fixture it was, but

10:30 into the candle, you'd put the first switch would be into the candle, put the power into the candle which would heat it up and light it, and then you'd throw your main switch, which was a much bigger thing, taking all the power from the generator into the light itself. Carbon, I'm trying to think of, into the carbon, and the carbon was a sort of a -

**It will act as a filament as such?**

Yes, yes,

11:00 into it and that.

**Those two switches, were they on the actual light, or - ?**

No, no, they were on the generator, they were on the generator, yes, they took the one - I don't know what it was made out of, it was a lower power from the front part of it, or not, I'm not too sure about that now, but it was - you had your two switches, one up each end of the generator, which would -

11:30 seems to give you an idea - I think the whole outfit of that, which was the mobile with your wheels and that, I think they weighed nearly a ton and a half, so they were fairly big units.

**And initially you'd get the generator going? That'd be the first step?**

Oh yes, yes, yes, probably take two of you to turn it over, it was hand started, and it'd take two of you

12:00 to turn her over, it was an arm about that long.

**Were they reluctant starters?**

Pardon?

**Were they reluctant starters?**

No, generally if you maintained them pretty well, I can't remember us having a great deal of problems with it, because you know, you made sure that you kept everything in first class working order. But no, we could turn it over, two of you could turn it over reasonably

12:30 easy, before you got your power and that going.

**So you get it turning over, how long roughly would you have to wait before you'd be ready to power up the light?**

I think you had to really warm it up, and this would happen a couple of times through the day too, you'd sort of keep the warmth - I'd say -

13:00 it's really testing my memory here, but it'd be at least ten or fifteen minutes before, and this is why like around getting towards dark you'd be starting that up and letting it run, without power, you know, without throwing any switches.

**You'd be on stand by?**

You're on stand by all the time with it. It wasn't so necessary around mainly that would happen

- 13:30 in the islands more than around the city, because things never got to a stage that they could say they were going to aircraft. They did get them across, but that was only just one occasion.

**The generator and the light, were they separate units, or were they combined?**

Oh yes, your generator was at least a hundred yards away from your -

- 14:00 from your searchlight, and your spotter, your generator was about a hundred yards, you had to one side, and your spotter would be about forty or fifty yards - no, well away from it - at least twenty-five yards, you know, because mainly your generator was so noisy, and you

- 14:30 had to keep it well away from where your spotter was, and not only your spotter, your - those that were operating the searchlight too, so they could make sure that they could hear orders that were being thrown out, because the sergeant, they were in another little area, what they called their little operation room and that, and they had no phones or anything like that,

- 15:00 it was all by mouth. But as we got up into the islands and that a bit, they did have phones and that directly to the operator, or one operator that was like your sergeant would probably be in your operational section, and the corporal would be taking orders and getting the orders and that.

**Would**

- 15:30 **your sergeant or corporal be using binoculars or anything like that? Any sort of instrument to help them look at the sky?**

Yes, well they did have them there, but they weren't much help to you, you know, with the spotting and that. I think through the day, you know, if they had raids through the day they'd use them then, but it wasn't for the searchlight's benefit or

- 16:00 anything like that, it was only for the operational room, they'd be sending back to the operational room. Yes, they did have binoculars and that.

**The spotter would be just using the naked eye?**

The naked eye, yes, yes.

**What - so in your training you all learnt the various roles?**

All learnt the various roles, yes.

**But then you became a**

- 16:30 **specialist in one particular role?**

Yes, yes. But you were still able to move around if necessary, somebody might go on leave or something like that. Everybody was trained to do everybody else's work, even your sergeants and your corporals, they would get in and do their section or whatever, through the day, through the nights and that. And this

- 17:00 was just the way of keeping your training and that going, and your knowledge of the lights and that.

**Did anyone ever get burnt when they were training?**

Mainly hand burns, or you might happen to - if you pulled the back off it a bit too soon, but it was only carelessness more than

- 17:30 anything if they did get burnt from the heat of the - see, sometimes you might break your candle, the - I mentioned it there, the carbon would break, it could break, it all depends if they set it up too high, and they'd have to pull the back off and put a new carbon in, and that's when you'd get

- 18:00 your occasional burns and that. It's always done in training, and these were deliberate training exercises if it had to happen, even though the carbon may not break, you'd still go through the exercise of training, because around that area is just absolutely red hot.

**How much of a hazard was electrocution?**

Nil to my knowledge, I mean even though that -

- 18:30 that generator threw out a hell of a lot of power, I can't remember any sort of risk of electrocution being brought up, because they're very thick cables from the generator to the lights.

**How thick would they be?**

Each cable would be

- 19:00 at least that size, and very well insulated, you know, about three quarters of an inch across. They were heavy, they were very heavy.

**How many cables would there have been?**

Two, two, two coming across, one from the – not there wasn't, there was one to set the carbon alight, no, there was only two,

19:30 yes two.

**So was the generator and the light both on wheels?**

Oh yes, yes. Mainly, mostly the searchlight was dug into a pit, but the generator was usually out in the open. Most cases you'd dig a bit of a pit for your searchlights and that, it'd have to be a good

20:00 one, because you had your operator on the handle which we had to move around at times with the light, because the light was actually a fixture in one sense, as far as turning, but up and down it was OK, it used to move up and down.

**What roughly would be the dimensions of the base of the units?**

Well the – I think what we called the

20:30 ninety centimetre – I think it'd be about two foot six [inches] across, in old figures. But the one twenty would be close to three feet, that was a bigger line, yes, I'd say two foot six across, easy, something like that.

**And**

21:00 **both units would be a good weight, I would imagine?**

Extremely heavy, yes. I mean to get it into the pit we used to have to use the truck to get it in, and get it out, and of course that would come from headquarters, we had no transport there. But I'd say that the searchlight

21:30 would be nearly as heavy as the generator, around about a ton and a half, they were very solidly constructed of steel and that.

**Do you know where they were produced?**

Yes, the ninety centimetre was Australian-made, somewhere here in Sydney, but

22:00 the Sperry we got out from England, they were manufactured in England, they were the one twenty centimetres. I have heard it through Don, who is really doing a lot of research and getting this searchlight going, but the engineering place that manufactured them has gone out of

22:30 existence, so it's been – that's what he's found very hard to get – he's looking for a manual on that centimetre, but now he's been in touch with them in Canberra, and the chap down there is looking out for a manual for him. But I do know they were manufactured here in Australia.

**When they weren't being used, say, during the day, and you weren't cleaning, was there**

23:00 **a particular way that you would shelter the equipment?**

No, not really, not down here, up in the islands we used to have camouflage nets thrown over them. But we never had them down here, but I do believe those out in the Frenchs Forest area did do some sort of training in the early part with these camouflage nets over them.

23:30 But it was only the two in that area that were – that used them. But not a great deal around the city area, that I can remember, but I think that was just a training exercise, whether it was for the future or if it happened, I don't know.

**How was the equipment with rain?**

It never worried it, no. They were out in the open, rain

24:00 never worried them at all, your lights and that were pretty well sealed up and that. The generator had two big doors on them, and of course that used to come out when you'd stick them up, and you'd be working underneath them, because they were about six foot six high, from the ground to the top of them, so you know, you'd lift your doors up, there were four doors on

24:30 them and they were fairly heavy, but you had arms there to – and if it rained and that you were underneath the actual doors.

**How high would the searchlight itself stand?**

Your searchlight would be close to ten feet around, easy ten feet from the ground to the

25:00 top of it.

**So with 62nd company, you had round about how many lights you were responsible for?**

I think we had six locations around the North Shore area, and some over on the southern side, South Head.

25:30 There was one at South Head, I think the next one was at Rose Bay somewhere, I think it was on the golf course at Rose Bay.

**And would the idea be, if you were part of the crew of one of those particular locations, you would be stationed there, that's where you ...?**

Oh yes, yes, that's where you'd camp, you'd set up camp and all there,

26:00 your kitchen, not that the kitchen was much more than out in the open in those places, and your tents, well you'd usually have about - there'd be three tents, usually four in a tent, so there'd be three tents, and you'd have your sergeants and corporals, and then your kitchen. And the cook used to probably

26:30 sleep in one or the other, you know, with the operators and that. So, you know, you had quite a bit of gear there to keep under cover.

**And did you have - did 62 have a base as such?**

A base? Oh yes, that was our headquarters at Mosman Drill Hall, and also later

27:00 on we were moved to a bigger place, which was Warrane Road, Willoughby.

**And the various locations would be stocked?**

Oh yes, yes, from headquarters, yes, and that's where I came back into it, at Warrane Road, they decided they'd have a butcher, and I was one, and I came back in and that's where I started in the headquarters, and we used to - I used to help,

27:30 there was a rations sergeant, he was a corporal I should say, and I used to help him, there was only the two of us, we'd get the rations, set them up in boxes to each location, and deliver them out each day, mainly fruit and vegetables.

**And how did that opportunity**

28:00 **become available to you?**

Mainly for some unknown reason they decided to get a little bit of meat in there, and they had a little room there that we set up to butcher, and the meat would come in in boxes, boned out, boneless meat and that, and used to just cut up or mainly if it was good enough I might

28:30 cut the boys some steaks, but a lot of it went out as roasts, as roast pieces and that, and that's how I came to come back into headquarters.

**So they realised that your background was ...?**

Yes, well I was down in the first place, I was a specialist as they called me, a butcher, and I had earned an extra shilling a day for that, but even though they

29:00 didn't have the provisions then, we were getting very little fresh meat, until we moved to Warrane Road, and then they started to bring a bit of fresh meat into it.

**How did you feel about that change, no longer being a spotter?**

No, I enjoyed that, I think I had a little bit more freedom, I could get away without a great - if we didn't have any meat, once we did the rations and that we could - and

29:30 if the sergeant OK'd it, that we never had anything to do. But quite often we'd help in the kitchen too, if we weren't going on leave, or didn't want to go on leave, you'd help around the place and help in the kitchen. We were all mates, so you know, we all got in and helped each other, made whatever work you had to do easier.

**So how many blokes were in the company all together? How many blokes were you feeding?**

30:00 I think at the very most with officers and that, around 6/2, around the Sydney area, I don't think we had any more than a hundred personnel around Sydney, might have been twenty or thirty in headquarters doing different jobs, but that included your officers. There was an officer for each

30:30 section, I think they broke them up, even though we had six lights out there, we had Venn and Bullen, no, there was only three officers, the major, Woodham and that, and they used to - probably each officer had a section which would consist probably of three

31:00 lights, and they'd look after those and do all the paperwork or whatever was necessary to do. But I don't think 6/2 had any more than the very most, a hundred personnel, and as I say there was six, twelve, seventy-two, no, there wouldn't be a great deal more than that, even at headquarters we had different there and there's only be twenty or thirty there doing different jobs at

31:30 headquarters, and most of them like your sergeants, sergeant major and that, he had a job to do and that. And of course we had transport, I think we had four or five trucks. Yes, it would be about a hundred, now that I've realised that we had the transport and that in there too.

**What impact did Japan entering the war with**

32:00 **the bombing of Pearl Harbour have on your company?**

I think it made us more alert, they had to you know, we had to be more alert in our work and not only that, with the officers and that too. So you know, it definitely made a difference in that respect, yes.

**Were you still a spotter when**

32:30 **that occurred, or were you a butcher at that point?**

No, I was still a spotter then, because when – that was the early part, I had to come down, and I was out at South Head when the submarines came into – so actually I would not have been in the army when the Japs first came into the war,

33:00 because I'd – I would not have – no, because they took quite a few months after they'd hit Pearl Harbour to get down to – the early part of it, I doubt – I'd have to look at my records and that, but I don't think I was in the army when the Japanese came into it, but I was out at South Head when the submarine came

33:30 into the – and of course that was panic stations all over, and we put searchlights – everybody put searchlights up, and yet nobody knew what was really happening.

**Take us through that experience.**

Well, no doubt we were on the – we could not see into the harbour from where we were, out on the playing fields at North

34:00 Head. We had our camp and generator in a cutting there – South Head, but no, it was just general –

**When did you first sense that there was something going on?**

Well we got a call from North Sydney that we had to – of course this was all controlled from there, that once I think the

34:30 submarines were there and let their torpedoes go, and then we heard a few blasts, the blasts from that, we could hear that from – and that's when panic set in, and it would be only four or five minutes, if it was that, that we had to put the searchlights up, not knowing what was really happening, and there were no planes in the air, we could tell that. But

35:00 any rate, we put the lights up there and of course it only lasted about an hour before we got a stand down, and of course they realised what had happened, and of course we couldn't do anything about that. But we were on alert, there was no leave I don't think, for at least a month after that, and that's when they put us on red alert, as they called it.

35:30 And you had your different colours of what alert that you were on, and this was a red alert and of course that lasted at least a month, I don't think we'd had – I'm sure we didn't have any leave for a month after that.

**What were those different levels of alert?**

I know white,

36:00 which was merely stand to, yellow was get prepared, and red was in action, I'm sure that was how it was, white, yellow and red.

**What impact did suddenly hearing the sound of shells exploding in Sydney Harbour have on you? What were you thinking was going on?**

36:30 Well, we just couldn't figure out what was going on, you know, it never dawned on us that there was torpedoes. What we really thought happened at South Head was that they were having an exercise on depth charges in the harbour, and of course that's what was going on, and the explosions, you know, you could tell the difference between a torpedo, they were

37:00 much greater, the damage they did, but then, you know, you had your depth charges going off, and we thought it was just an exercise, until we found out, I'd say – as I say, when the stand down came, it was realised – they got – headquarters operational room got word that there were submarines in the harbour, and that's the only thing we

37:30 knew about it then.

**So you got that news pretty quickly?**

Oh yes, yes. Well as I say, it'd be three quarters to an hour before we got a stand down, yes. And of



course we just thought it was a general exercise, nobody in the world thought at the time that the Japanese were that far down, even with their submarines.

**How much of a shock was it to suddenly**

38:00 **realise that they were really close?**

It really put the army, you know, on tenterhooks, because you know, they were expecting it again, then you had the submarine that shelled out around Rose Bay area just a while later, and you know, it kept us really on alert and that. And

38:30 the officers in particular were really running around keeping us on our toes, and that's what we had to do, keep on our toes, it wasn't only you to report any unforeseen characters that were snooping around, looking at your equipment, or wanted to have a look around, you had to report that, and whether they took it up, I can't - to my knowledge

39:00 we didn't out our way, but it wasn't - I think I was - about three after that I was moved back to Warrane Road, Willoughby. I don't think it was - there was still alert there when I left South Head.

**Did you get wind at the time of an**

39:30 **unidentified aircraft flying over the harbour prior to the submarines coming through?**

Yes, one of our - Mac Hartley, one of our officers, they were on - no, he was a sergeant, but those on the northern side of the harbour, did report that there was unidentified planes in the area, and of course they

40:00 didn't - I don't know if they took notice, but they did prove in later years, or later times, that they were those Japanese seaplanes that came in from the submarines. And of course what happened to them, nobody knows, whether they'd - the only way they could get back to their - was crash, and this was the furphy, as we called it, or knowledge that they had. But

40:30 according to Mac they tried to get Richmond, Mascot, and all those light aerodromes, but they got no knowledge of any Australian planes in. So it was a fact that they were the Japanese seaplanes that were over. And that did come out in later years, that the

41:00 Japanese did have planes over Sydney.

**So that's something that you learnt about after the fact, that it wasn't ...?**

Well, our officers and that questioned Mac about it, I do know this, after the war, when he was at our reunions, and you know, "Are you sure you heard something?" But yes, it was proven, it wasn't only Mac that reported that, it was reported in

41:30 other places too, by army personnel and air force.

## **Tape 5**

00:33 **So Ted, while you were working at Willoughby Road as a butcher in the mess, I think you'd better tell us about your social life in Sydney in those days.**

Well the social life was mainly weekend leave, and we used to get around at different - not that I was a

01:00 dancer but we used to go and listen to music at the Trocadero, and one of the mates that I was with from Willoughby, he had a girlfriend and we decided, like they were going to Luna Park as far as social life goes, so his girlfriend said, "I'll bring a girlfriend along with me,"

01:30 and we had a good night at Luna Park, and that's where I met my wife, she was with this - blind date I suppose you could say, so that was part of my social life and that. But I suppose being a country boy, as I say I used to go down to the Trocadero and I was never a dancer, and there was a couple of other places around in Petersham Road, we'd listen

02:00 to the music. But mainly mates or somebody that was going on leave and that. But I also had my friends out at Newtown, they were ex-Forbes people, Neville Parker, and we were great mates, so I used to go out there, and they always invited me out, and that's where I used to stay of a night time when I had a night or two's leave. It's too far to go

02:30 back to Forbes on the train trip. But no, we got on well and probably we had a few sessions at the pubs or something like that. But mainly like it was the theatre, the picture theatre and that sort of thing, and of course a few more visits back to Luna Park and Taronga Zoo. Mosman -

03:00 we did have a location from Mosman at Luna Park, right in front of Luna Park, and it was pretty good, we'd go down there, of course it wasn't that far on the tram, you had a bit of a break, and they used to

let us in, we got to know – or the boys got to know those at Luna Park, so we used to have a wander around there, free of charge, army uniform. But no, as I say, the boys knew

03:30 them all around there and they used to let us in. Our social life was mainly that sort of thing.

**When you turned up for that blind date and the first time you saw the girl who would become your wife, what did you think of her?**

I suppose like – meeting somebody like that, you know, being a country boy, I was a bit on the shy side, as

04:00 the old saying was with country boys and that. But no, we got on pretty well together and she worked in the city, and I was in there a few times and saw her there, and you know, we became good friends and that, and that's where it all started from. Actually she was the first girl that I really had anything to

04:30 do in taking out in the city, and her girlfriend, my mate – he didn't, but her girlfriend they were good mates for years after, but Marie in later life moved to Melbourne, and we visited them down there a couple of times when we were in Melbourne.

**What sort of attractions were there at Luna Park in wartime there?**

Well, you had the big dipper was one of the main ones, the

05:00 big slippery slide, they also had some sort of gadget that you know, you stood up on it and it whirled around, and the floor went down, that sort of thing. But it was a real fun park, you know, generally speaking. I don't think it changed a great deal even today, except for a few things, well when they did open it, but the main thing was like your big dipper and the spider and

05:30 down the bottom end were the big slippery dips and mirrors that made you look hideous, and this whirly girly, I'm not sure what they called that. But they were the main attractions, and you could spend quite a few hours or most of your night and that, and it was quite good. And the ferries ran across quite frequently, so it was quite easy to get to and that.

06:00 And I think we did walk back over the bridge, explained all about the pylon and that, which I did – I did a bridge walk a couple of years back and had a bit of a talk on that while I was there.

**What do you recall of Americans in and around Sydney?**

Well we weren't really involved a great deal with the Americans, but they were in the city,

06:30 but not to the extent that it was like up in Brisbane and that. They were very thick up there, but in the city a lot of – you could see a lot of Negroes and that, and your white American, those that we had a great – never had a great deal to do with but we all got on pretty well even though it was in – as I say, we went to the

07:00 Trocadero, there were quite a few of them there, but never a great deal of trouble down here. But as I say, we never had a great deal to do with them here in Sydney.

**All right Ted, I guess we'd better move on. How did you come to leave your original militia battery and move on?**

Well, they decided

07:30 like to form an AIF searchlight battery, and this is how it started, they selected different personnel from Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong, where the searchlights were all around in those – and of course different units, different batteries I should say, so they

08:00 formed the 73rd from different personnel, some volunteered and some you know, they did select, particularly in the corporals and sergeants. But they needed a butcher also, and I put my hand up and I was selected. And that's how I started with the 73rd Searchlight.

**Were you old enough to join the**

08:30 **AIF?**

Oh yes, I was over eighteen then, yes. I didn't have permission – I didn't need permission to – I think I was close to nineteen by then, yes, I think I was nineteen.

**And it was no problem to leave your militia unit?**

Oh no, no, they were sort of disbanding in one respect, like pulling the men out and the personnel and they were putting the AWAS [Australian Women's Army Service]

09:00 into different locations, even in the early part, that started first up in Newcastle. No, it was no hassle to get – because more searchlight units were being sent to Darwin, Milne Bay and further on, like as the war –

09:30 but they did form about four, including a Victorian AIF unit. There were searchlights in Port Moresby

when we arrived there, but they were militia personnel.

**Obviously joining the AIF, it meant that you could be exported overseas?**

Oh yes, yes, there had been talk that there was a possibility that one lot would go to the

10:00 Middle East or overseas, further than – and New Guinea, but I believe – I became quite friendly with the colonel, he was the head of the searchlights, John Robinson, and they were disappointed that they did not send an Australian battery to the Middle East or over in that European side of it, but they concentrated mainly on the English

10:30 searchlights and that, then they started to concentrate on around Australia, in the northern parts, as I said, Darwin, Merauke, then Port Moresby, Milne Bay, they were all separate units.

**Did that – being sent overseas appeal to you?**

Again, eventually, yes, yes, it

11:00 did. We believed that it wasn't going to be anything like Sydney, but like all soldiers, you know, they wanted to – the majority just wanted to get in and do something in that respect. And yes, it did appeal to us, even though, not that we'd heard a lot about New Guinea, and particularly when you get up there in the summer months and the

11:30 monsoonal season, that made it a bit awkward, but no, it did appeal to us by going into those areas.

**OK, so this is about July, 1942 that you volunteered for the AIF battery?**

Yes, I looked that up last night, I think it is around July, '42. Yes,

12:00 we were formed in that area, and we were up at Scheyville training, yes, and we left in September, in December I think it was, or September, and then finished up, yes, in September, we left for the north.

**So tell us about that initial training period.**

Well, we trained at Scheyville, which is outside Windsor near Sydney, and

12:30 it consisted again of general training, general rookie work and going through all of what you've learnt, but thrown into that we had to do gas courses, we were put through tents with gas masks and some without masks, which I can assure you, the ones without masks, was quite horrific.

13:00 But that, and a bit of water training and that in the creeks around there, mainly because they had no jungle around here for us to train. But as I say, we weren't trained to fight or anything in the jungles, we were just mainly for around the strategic airports and that sort of thing.

**How do you compare the level**

13:30 **of training and equipment between the militia and the AIF?**

It was vastly different, I mean we were ...

**OK, sorry Ted, I was asking you about the difference between the AIF and the militia in terms of equipment and training.**

Yes, well we had – our general training wasn't a great deal of difference as far as we were put through the rookie courses again and that, but then we had more heavier

14:00 rifles, we trained with the Bren machine gun, and plus we had more fire, like on the ranges, we used to go to the ranges, firing ranges, I think once a fortnight, you know, mainly on the .303 and the Bren gun. So apart from that, and you know,

14:30 having our clothing dyed to jungle green, with a few camouflages or this dyeing in it, apart from that, there wasn't a great deal of difference. The searchlight was a little different, but I wasn't involved in that training. But Scheyville, they only had one searchlight there, a

15:00 one-twenty, and they were mainly for those that were going to operate them.

**Tell us a bit about those gas drills. Give us some more detail about what that involved.**

Well it involved – I just can't – there were three different types, two we did with gas masks, we had to stay in the tent, I think it

15:30 was about fifteen minutes with the gas there, they were quite sealed, I forget the one now that we had to do, but we walked through the tent without gas masks on, it was one of the lesser types, but it really – it burnt our eyes and skin in some places and that, too. But

16:00 that's about mainly what they concentrated on at Scheyville in that respect.

**And when the other blokes were practising with the searchlight, what were you doing?**

I was helping mainly out – we did have quite a butcher’s shop there, so I was doing that and helping with the rations, and seeing that the

- 16:30     cookhouse had all the necessary gear that they wanted and that. But myself and Tommy Buchanan, he was in charge, he was a corporal, and we just had to make sure that everything was brought in from outside, that what we’d be needing
- 17:00     in the territory or up north, but mainly my job there was to do whatever butchering was necessary, and assist with the catering.

**You’d only kind of been a butcher’s assistant up in Forbes, how good were you at this time?**

Well, even though as a youngster, and

- 17:30     I had a good boss, I was still what they called an apprentice then, but I could do nearly all types of cutting, I don’t think I was as good a cutter as the boss was, but I’d get through it. But I also learnt the slaughtering, so that was another bonus in that respect. But no, we got through, because then again as I said, before
- 18:00     most of it did come in in cartons, already boned out from – that used to intrigue me, a lot of it came from Darroobalgi, just outside Forbes. So you know, I’d probably see a signature there and that, but there wasn’t a great deal of cutting chops, I don’t think we ever had chops, it was mainly beef and sausages and mince. But that’s in Sydney, that’s
- 18:30     about the strength of our meat.

**So when you were helping in the canteen to get all these meals together, what was a typical kind of meal to be served up to the boys?**

Well, the old stew, they had that, but a lot of it was the old bully beef was quite used a lot, the

- 19:00     canned corned beef and that, and also meat and vegetables out of a can. I think we used to get an issue of meat, only twice a week at Scheyville, yes, we only had fresh meat twice a week, because the main idea of that, as the officers would
- 19:30     say, “We’ve got to get used to eating the bully beef,” the meat vegetables, there was plenty of baked beans and that too, and the dog biscuits, the hard biscuits that were there, because this is what we’d be on which – we soon found out when we landed in Moresby, that we’d have to be eating those sort of things. And this was one reason that – even the last week or
- 20:00     two there at Scheyville, I think we only had fresh meat once or twice a week.

**What did you do – when I listen to that sort of menu, what did you do for vitamin C and so on, if it was all meat and potatoes?**

Yes well, you know, the vegetables, they had the vegetables and that, plenty of pumpkin, plenty of potatoes, and then it was – most of the boys, if you had to have a parade, a

- 20:30     potato parade, and get the boys to peel the potatoes for the day, particularly out that area where there was a lot of spinach and that was grown. But as far as vitamin C and the talk of vitamin C, I don’t think there was any talk about it at all, it was just what food, whatever they sent in. To my knowledge, even in those days, of course being young you wouldn’t realise it,
- 21:00     I don’t think it came into the thought, as long as we were fed, got something to eat, there was plenty of bread, bread was delivered there every day, and all in all they had quite a bit – plenty to eat. But then as I say, one meal would be the baked beans, that was mainly breakfast,
- 21:30     and the boys used to do a damned good job of cooking scrambled eggs in the breakfast, as I say mainly the baked beans was breakfast food, which later became a meal up in the islands. But you know, around Sydney, around our area there the supplies were quite good, so we were pretty – nowhere near as good as the Americans, but we can talk about
- 22:00     that one later.

**And while you were out there near Windsor –**

Scheyville.

**Scheyville, that’s right –**

Just to outline, that used to be a boys’ prison camp, originally, it was a boys’ home, you know, for wayward children and that, and it’s still in existence today.

**Maybe that’s appropriate, putting army guys in**

- 22:30     **there, if it was a home for wayward boys.**

Oh yes, yes, well it had the buildings to accommodate, I think we were one of the first, and later on

after – Vietnam veterans – we did build a big monument out there for our unit, and departed friends and that, and also when the Vietnamese veterans went out there and saw this, we assisted them and we put corners, posts

23:00 on it, and they've put their plaques on there too.

**Were you able to keep in touch with your girlfriend while you were at Scheyville?**

Yes, but mainly the weekend leave, you know, well I think we probably – if I remember rightly we'd have to ring her up from

23:30 probably Mulgrave Railway Station, you know, let them know that we were on leave, because you know, we didn't – weekends, we got most weekends off out there.

**So from there, how did things proceed from Scheyville?**

On a very, very, very wet day we boarded the train at Mulgrave Station, and that's

24:00 when we went to – started heading north. Our first stop was I think lunch at Gosford Railway Station here, and I can remember that, a few of us missed out on being let off the train, because they did the train sections, but they only had a

24:30 certain time, so there was a bit of a corruption there, but unbeknown to me one of the boys – there was an area where they grew oysters, next thing we know there's oysters going through the train, one of the boys had grabbed a bag of oysters, and I can assure you, by the time we got to Brisbane that train was pretty smelly. But you know, we boarded the train at Mulgrave and I

25:00 think it took us two days, two and a half days to get to Brisbane.

**What were the conditions like aboard?**

Aboard the train? Pretty cramped, because we had all our gear, rifles, and quite honestly, some of the boys would get up in the racks, you know, the part there, and make themselves comfortable and sleep there. But we didn't have –

25:30 I think there was eight in each carriage, like in the section of the carriage, so they didn't give you much room to spread out, most of them were dog boxes as they called it, you only had the opening from the side, no aisles or anything like that. I think they held ten now, yes, five each side. Well you throw that in with kit bags and rifles, you

26:00 didn't have a great deal of room, so it was really an horrendous – but then again we made do, and to my knowledge I don't think there were any blues on the train to cause any trouble. You made do.

**And you were fed just by stopping at railway stations?**

That's right, yes. I think our next stop was Grafton, yes, we stopped at Grafton and had a meal.

26:30 One of the – we did have a mascot at Scheyville, and of course Flip, as we called him, he was on the train.

**What sort of animal?**

He was a dog, and he – I can remember, we were just nearly about ready to pull out and somebody decided to let Flip empty out. Well he got

27:00 against the post there, and the station master or the guard wanted us to get going, and it was like – a quite unusual sight to see, nearly every door of the train opened, and nearly every personnel jumped out onto the station to wait till Flip emptied himself out. It was quite amusing, really.

**Were there toilets about the train?**

No, no, no toilets aboard the train, and of course you only

27:30 had your carriage there. We did have another stop somewhere along the line, Gosford, Taree I think, was our toilet stop. Yes, we did stop at Taree for a toilet stop.

**You had to have strong bladders, didn't you?**

Well, I can assure you, there was quite a few windows open at

28:00 times.

**OK, and was it Brisbane that that journey terminated, was it?**

That's right, yes. And we went out to Tennyson was our first stop there, where we stayed for – I think we were there two or three weeks, which was very interesting.

28:30 **Why?**

It was right on the river, and you know, a bit of swimming and we – I can remember the boys – it was quite cold too, really, and we used to catch the crabs in the river, and of course there was only two, as we called them, two dixies [mess tins]

29:00 which consisted of coffee and that for those that came back late of a night time, so this mate of mine, we had three of four nice blue swimmers, the only thing we had there to cook them was in the coffee, but we were dealing – anybody who came back off leave around that time, including a couple of officers, and wanted to know why we were up so late and that, we cooked our crabs in the coffee.

29:30 And they were quite nice too, I can assure you.

**Did that impart a certain flavour to the crabs?**

I couldn't tell you that, because I didn't try the coffee.

**Did you serve it up to the officers?**

Oh yes, yes, they had their cup full, it made it worse, they were left in there too long, because they stayed there and drank their coffee, instead of taking it back to their tent. But

30:00 that was just one little incident that still sticks in my memory. But then we went out to – out from Eagle Farm, it's one of the big housing centres now, Strathpine, we went out to Strathpine and that's where we trained there, and there was quite a big army camp, there was other army personnel

30:30 around around that too. There was a bit of an airstrip there, but we used to do bivouacs into the different surrounding areas, where they had a bit of scrub and that. But it's all gone. We were at Strathpine for I think about five or six weeks before we embarked to –

31:00 went to Townsville, by train.

**Now at what point, I think it might have been in Brisbane, did you start to have more serious thoughts about your girlfriend?**

Yes, yes, no, we corresponded quite frequently really, I did not realise

31:30 at the time then that things would turn out as they were, through correspondence and that, and it was in Brisbane really that I asked her if, you know, to get married, and she said, "Yes." Well at the time what a lot of us, you know,

32:00 had our five shillings a day, and we'd allocate some home to our – particularly to my mother, you know, to put in the bank and save it up for us and that, and for the engagement ring we had a chap with us called Bill Swinghammer [?], who always had lot of money, he was a good sort of a gambler, and would bet on two flies walking up the wall,

32:30 and I borrowed the money off Bill to buy the engagement ring, with of course, a bit of interest. But by the time we got back to – got to the islands, I was able to pay him back. But I think it was in Brisbane something went wrong and the pay didn't turn up for the unit, and this Bill Swinger [?Swinghammer] had enough money in his two pockets

33:00 to pay the unit. I suppose even though there was two hundred and sixty eight of us, I don't think really it was a lot of money in those days, but Bill had enough money in his pocket to pay the unit. And that is in that history book, that he was able to do that.

**With a bit of interest?**

I don't know about that side, but he was always a popular guy, but Bill would – I think he realised his money,

33:30 I didn't know what took place after that, you know, that was mainly from the officers' point of view. But I did pay Bill, I don't know how much, but it wasn't a great deal, because he was that sort of chap, we were good mates.

**So where did you acquire the engagement ring from?**

One of the jeweller shops in Brisbane, I couldn't tell you the

34:00 name of it, but we bought it there and sent it down.

**Was it risky to send a diamond ring in the post, or an engagement ring in the post?**

I don't think we looked at it that way, we always trusted the Australia Post in those days, or what was it called, the post office? No, I suppose it might have been, if you look at it, but no, it got down there and I don't know how long, because

34:30 mail would take a while in those days, yes.

**So a proposal by post?**

A proposal by post, yes.

**Obviously accepted?**

Oh yes, yes, it was accepted.

**Why do you think it was that you wanted to get engaged before you went away?**

I don't think I ever gave that a thought, I thought, you know, we were good friends

- 35:00 and things were – the months and that that we'd had down in Sydney, when we got together, and I think for one reason, just after I'd met her, only a matter of a few weeks, her mother died, and of course that – she had another younger sister and a younger brother, the brother in that respect came first, and
- 35:30 she went to live with an aunty, her father was left there, and it sort of broke the family up. The brother went up to another aunty up in the Blue Mountains, at Hartley, Little Hartley, and the daughter Lee, stayed with her father because he'd – I'd say they were only renting, and the house was probably too much cost, I
- 36:00 don't know, but that's how the family broke up, when she went to live with the aunty. I think that was the main reason, that you know, when she came back. And I thought then at the time, well I may go back to Forbes, but I didn't, I didn't do that. I settled in Sydney, mainly because after we came back we were married, and we
- 36:30 were boarding or Adele was boarding with an old family, an old lady and her crippled daughter at Lisbon Street, East Brisbane. And with another girl they won the Golden Casket, twelve thousand pounds, and that was three thousand pounds, and with that – which sort of no doubt set
- 37:00 us up, although I did go away after that, to Morotai, but we were able to come back and buy a home at Arncliffe which I mentioned earlier, or Turrella, that had the other two families in them, the mother, the grandparents and the daughter and a
- 37:30 baby and a husband, so as I say, it was a big home and we were able to set up home there. And I worked in Sydney for a while after that before I bought a butcher's shop at Bexley North. So you know, that was the thing. But as far as I think probably what prompted me to ask her to marry me was that she'd lost her mother, and was with an
- 38:00 aunty that she wasn't too happy with, but she settled in all right.

**So Brisbane, what was the scene like in wartime Brisbane, being a much bigger base for the Americans and a lot of other things?**

It was quite chaotic at times. In the first instance we did all right with the Americans arriving,

- 38:30 we were at Eagle Farm at the time, sorry, Albion Park, the sand track at Albion Park, and the Americans were coming into there also. For what reason we were there I do not know, but some of them were out on locations
- 39:00 training too, but mainly the headquarters. So we were able to make a little bit of money out of exchanging American money for the Australian money, with Bill Swinghammer with all his, and we'd get a loan off Bill and pay it back once we cashed in. So that was it, but with Brisbane it was very tense all the
- 39:30 time. Firstly there was the Battle for Brisbane as we called it, where it started in the American canteen at the end of Quay Street, I think it was, or one of the streets there, Queen Street, where there was a bit of a blue and an
- 40:00 Australian bloke threw an American through a window. And that was on for young and old. Fortunately there was – one American had a – there was an old lady shot and killed in just random firing, but there was several thousand troops–

**Were you involved in that, Ted?**

Fortunately no, I got out of that

- 40:30 one, I was lucky in the second one though, in one sense. It went on nearly all night before you know, the police and MPs [military police] and that got control of things. But there was this old lady shot, and there was many of both Americans and Australians were sent to jail over it. But
- 41:00 we were banned from going into Brisbane, that was what they called the Battle of Brisbane, and I believe in just recent times somebody had written about it, to find out from ex-servicemen that were involved in that, for more information, he was writing a story on it.

**We're at the end of that one Ted, so we'll**

## Tape 6

00:36 **All right, so things were a bit tense in Brisbane here and there?**

Yes, there was – I suppose the American soldiers outnumbered the Australian soldiers by about five to one or more, could be ten to one, and of course with the

01:00 Australian soldier on five bob [shillings] a day, and the Americans always had plenty of money, this caused a lot of the problems. I suppose you look at it this way, but the girls or the women up there in those days weren't interested in the Australians because they never had the money to take them to where they wanted to do, or take them wherever they wanted to, and that,

01:30 and there's no doubt that was a bit of the tension. But as I said earlier, that Battle for Brisbane was an epic time, as I say, I got out of it luckily, and kept out of it, but we were grounded for over a month, no leave for Australian soldiers anywhere up there. The time

02:00 after that, there was about five of us drinking in the hotel opposite the Brisbane Exhibition Hall, I don't know whether they call it the Town Hall, they called it in those days, and all having a quiet drink, and a friend of mine, he went to the – he went to the toilet actually,

02:30 and left his beer, he was on the end of us. And when he came back his beer was gone and he said, "Where's my beer?" And the girl who was sitting next to him said, "I gave that to my American friend." And of course Alf, with a few beers, he just hauled off and jobbed her, down she went. And of course then it was

03:00 on for young and old again, there was a lot of Australians there, and a lot of American soldiers. So by the time it got out onto the street, there was something like two or three hundred brawling. It was a hectic twenty minutes, I can assure you. But we were all picked up, the MPs, they came in droves and we were all picked up there, and we were

03:30 taken, there was five of us, and there was another chap too, there were six all together, taken to Roma Street Station where they had the lock-up. We were lucky that Jimmy Fields, who was in our unit and left us to join the Provos [provosts - military police], he was in charge there on his own, and he said, "There's a back door there and it's open, get out," and we took off

04:00 over the Roma Street Station. So in a sense we were lucky that Jimmy Fields was there, or we'd have been really in trouble. But they quelled that one in about two hours, but there was quite a few others that were there in brawls, but only in minor ones. They sort of stacked of a night time, they sort of stacked

04:30 the city, really, with MPs and assistants and police and that. But then we went away and I don't know what happened after that, but that was my lucky story there. I finished up with a few bruises, I don't think I had a black eye, but quite honestly I was trying to keep Frank and Alf – and I can remember one occasion, this American

05:00 MP was whaling into Alf with his baton, and he was such a tough man that it just bounced off him, he just turned round and flattened him, he was an unbelievably strong person, and hard.

**Did you get a couple of good ones in yourself?**

I think I did, but I also received a few, but luckily not around the face. But no, I –

05:30 I was trying to get them out of it more than anything, because I could remember the consequences of the other. I only had to do what I had to do with anybody and that, with Alf and Frank, they were the two, and Allie Graham, we were trying to get them out of it because we knew what the consequences were, but we got caught, and luckily we got out of it in the way I

06:00 mentioned. But there was always a lot of tension there in Brisbane, between the two forces.

**Had you personally taken a dislike to the Yanks?**

No, not really, no, to me they were – those that I spoke to at Albion Park and other places and that, no, I never ever took a personal dislike to

06:30 them. I suppose like a lot of the others, but they were human beings and I never took that attitude. I suppose, just getting back to what I said earlier about my mother and what she taught us, everybody's the same, and the same today, we hear a lot of talk and dislike of the Americans, but when you're

07:00 in the islands and that, and particularly – and it was mainly, not so much the Coral Sea Battle that we were there, but if it wasn't for them and the Bismarck battle the Americans were in, there have been hundreds of thousands – all the Australia troops – the Japanese aim was to cut the troops off from the mainland, and if they'd have got around there, it would have been hell. And we were there, and that is my attitude to that, and as I say to

07:30 others, "Well they had the strength, but I mean I always look at it what they did to us, or help for us."



And we got on pretty well with them in the islands too, because we were with the air force and camped near them and that, so there was always that – and that was my attitude to the Americans. But even in Brisbane and that, I wasn't that type that liked to look for any sort of trouble.

08:00 **At this stage were you and the boys getting pretty keen to get up to the action?**

Yes, yes, I think we were, I think this is it, apart from what I was talking about the Americans and that, but things were starting to get stagnant as I say, you know, we'd just been trained for it, and there was always these little hold ups, we'd get the rumour that right, we're moving tomorrow,

08:30 I played first grade football for Eastern Suburbs up there, and we never knew whether we were going to be there at the weekend, and that's what did happen, we just disappeared overnight, they said, "Right," and we were put on the boats, our equipment was loaded, not to our knowledge, but it was there onto the boats, and we just sort of disappeared overnight.

**After being in**

09:00 **Brisbane for around about how long?**

We must have been there at least – Tennyson ...

**A couple of months?**

Easy, easy two or three months, I think it was about three months. Some of them were – the rear guard was, I think they were there about a month longer than us.

**So where did you depart from?**

We –

09:30 we got on the train at – I think it was Roma Street from there, and we went to Townsville by train, which was a hellish trip, it was much worse than the Sydney one. Mainly a lot of it was the heat and that too, and the crowded trips, we were sitting – one of the chaps was sitting in the door with the door open,

10:00 as the train was going along at Proserpine, I think he finished up in Proserpine Hospital, his leg hit one of the stanchions and made a hell of a mess of it, you know, mainly fleshy-wise, he did come – Chip did come back to us at Port Moresby, but he spent quite a few weeks in Proserpine Hospital. So that's how hot it was, but it wasn't a good trip, a slow trip, I think it took us about

10:30 something like three and a half days, I think, four days, with stops along the way, you know, unnecessary stops, that we just couldn't believe it. I mentioned earlier in this interview the old saying was, 'the boys up the front are planting the tomatoes, and you down the back, pick them', it was that slow, but the stops along the way, and you know, you just had to get out and relieve yourself,

11:00 whenever they stopped, no matter where it was. And you know, places that – God, there was nothing there. I'm sure it was three and a half to four days, that trip to Townsville.

**It must have taken a fair toll physically?**

It did, in respect – even though we were keen to get to the islands or get out of what we'd been stagnant in

11:30 what we were doing around Brisbane and that, just waiting, and – it was, I do believe there was a couple of blues with the boys up further, but nothing serious. But it got on everybody's goat, you couldn't sleep because of the heat and I think there were smaller carriages up there, because it's a smaller line, but I think there were still eight or

12:00 ten in a carriage, in a compartment I'll call them. No, that was no bed of roses, as the saying goes.

**So what happened at the end of that trip?**

Well, at the end of that trip we went out to a camp just outside Townsville, one of the army camps there, I just can't put

12:30 a name to it, and we were only there for – I think they gave us a rest and prepared us more with jungle training in the hills, and with our clothing, you know, getting khaki – more the green but camouflage type, which you had to do yourself,

13:00 boil them in coppers, tied up, and that sort of thing, with the jungle green dye in the coppers, which some of the boys did get some quite serious rashes from the dye. Of course you'd put them on, you wouldn't wash them until it rained, you'd come out and your body was all green.

13:30 So that was – and then we – I think it was the Duntroon that we loaded on in Townsville, and we were parked just out, and of course all the slush and that was going over the side, you know, from – I think we were there overnight and the middle of the morning before we moved out, and the sharks were jumping around just

14:00 as though they were just – what do you call it, fish, unbelievable, the sight, looking down to see the

sharks fighting over what muck came out of the bilge of the ship. They're things that stick in my memory.

**So how long were you held in the harbour before you finally got going?**

14:30 Mainly till dark, I think we set off just after dark, we were loaded on at night, I think it was five o'clock in the afternoon they started to load us, we weren't the only troops on that one, there was quite a few others, the air force and that, so it took quite a

15:00 while to load personnel and that, they had several thousand on it. And we took off after dark, I think it was only about a full day, two nights and a full day across to Moresby. But we had two corvettes with us, one on each side,

15:30 and we all had to do watches, each unit had to supply, if we saw any lights or anything like that. But we had no problem getting there. The corvettes were each side of us, within a few hundred metres, a hundred yards, and no doubt they had all the equipment or whatever equipment was available to them in those days.

16:00 But we made the voyage quite safely.

**How'd you go with seasickness?**

Sorry?

**How'd you go with seasickness?**

No, no, I was pretty good, no, it was - luckily it was nice and flat. Not the one into Lae, that was a little bit different.

**And you enjoyed your voyage?**

Yes, it was my first, and I did enjoy it, you know, but the conditions weren't all that - weren't all that bad on that one,

16:30 there was a bit of room to move, we weren't in any area that had cabins, I think we camped with what equipment we had upstairs, up top, which wasn't too bad, and for that reason those on top had to do all the watches. So we enjoyed the trip, yes. Well, I did, I think most of them did, but it wasn't - it

17:00 was like a mill pond that day.

**How long did that voyage take?**

I'm sure it was the two nights and the full day.

**So tell us about arriving.**

Well we arrived in Port Moresby with a lot of other ships in the harbour, they didn't take a great deal of time to get us off, but I've never

17:30 experienced - because it was wet season too, getting that way, the rain, you can hardly see your hand in front of you, so that was the welcome that we got to Port Moresby. And I suppose all in all it only took about three or four hours to get us out, but as we were coming off, they had trucks there to take us out to Murray Barracks where they staged

18:00 us, it was a bit dry there, but pretty muddy.

**What did you make of Port Moresby as you were travelling through?**

Well, in those days Port Moresby was more like a big village, with around the waterfronts where you could see the native buildings and that, they were built on the side of the water, they were still - even though some parts of it had taken a bit of a

18:30 pasting with bombing and that earlier, there was still - along the foreshores there was still a lot of their buildings and that. There was two boats that had been sunk there, I believe they were in the wharf area and that, but got out far enough to get away and sank without causing a great deal of trouble

19:00 to ships that would eventually come in. They would have been in trouble if they'd have gone down in the harbour area, or where they disembark, because it wasn't a very big area at all. It was quite impressive, what have we got here, a boat sunk over there and a few villages blown to pieces over there, and that, but they soon knocked them

19:30 up again, they were built on stilts and used the grass or whatever it was.

**So you travelled through to Murray Barracks?**

Yes, to Murray Barracks, we went to Murray Barracks first up, and then I think we only had a couple of days there, I think we only had a couple of days there before they

20:00 started to put us out on location, we went out on one of the main roads, more towards Loloki I think it

was, where we set up really firstly headquarters. And one of the unfortunate parts of that was that the army catering corps hadn't budgeted for us, or hadn't allowed for any food, so that's where we – for the full week we just lived on bully

20:30 beef and dog biscuits, nothing else, they didn't have the stores to supply us, and you know, even when we set up camp we just had to make do in our tents and that, which was pretty hard, we were on the side of a hill, so it was pretty sloppy, even with the tents and that, and you had to get in and build your latrines and

21:00 get your kitchens and that going. There was much work in the kitchens for that first week, as I say, we just lived on bully beef and biscuits. And I think that the first time after that, I think they sent us out a few cases of baked beans which were very welcome.

**So I guess that wouldn't have been the greatest start for morale, as far as ...?**

No, not at all, no, no, you know,

21:30 it – you wondered what in the hell's going on. I think about the third day, third night I think it was that there was half a dozen Japanese bombers came across, but I mean we weren't in any way involved in that, and fortunately they were more after the harbour area than the areas that we were in, and once we started to

22:00 get settled with headquarters, we found that there was a petrol dump just the other side of the hill. But you know, we were lucky there that they didn't attack that in that time. They did in one of the raids, they put a hundred and ten bombers over Port Moresby, but they were too high with the ack ack, and their accuracy was

22:30 very poor. A lot of it fell in waste areas and–

**It must have taken a bit of getting used to, the raids?**

Yes, we had I think about sixty-eight all together all up in that, but I think there was only about fifty something, once we got settled, between Port Moresby and Lae, of a night time. But when we saw that

23:00 big one, we thought we were in trouble once, we could see what we thought was a bomb coming straight towards us. And it did hit the side of the hill, the opposite side to where we had our camp, but really it wasn't a bomb, it was a belly tank from an Air Akubra, they carried spare petrol, to get up to the heights and get to – and luckily that's what it was. So you know, that was – in that raid was

23:30 really the only scare, it really frightened us, and we were on top of the hill, we had nowhere to go, we could go down, but our tents were up there, so, all the blasé, you know, you just hope for the best.

**So why had the battery been brought to that area? What was the strategy?**

Mainly to relieve the 6/7, the militia unit that had been there for about twelve months before,

24:00 and they copped a bit of a pasting as far as – well they were lucky they didn't lose any personnel and that, but they had a lot of raids and that to contend with in that early period, because the Japanese weren't that far over, they had Lae, they had Wewak, and they were up on – Wewak's up on the top of the hills, so they were there and they had a bit of an airport there,

24:30 so it wasn't that far for them to come to attack Port Moresby and areas there, and that's where they used them to hit Townsville, the time they hit Townsville, too.

**So were you taking over the operation of lights that were already stationed there, or you took some lights up with you?**

We took – see they only had the smaller lights, they only had the ninety centimetres, and we had

25:00 the bigger lights and that, one twenties I think they called them, yes, one twenties, but they were much bigger and much more powerful in as far as their lights went, better reflectors and generally much better, and they had more of an LC, like a radar system on it too, and you could nearly use –

25:30 the spotter was still used, but the equipment they had on your motor notice there, all that wiring and that, that's what they call the LC equipment, and that would pick up the hum of the planes and that too. So you know, that sort of made it a lot easier, we were more modern, as the saying goes. But we did for those 6/7, a lot of those 6/7 came to us for a

26:00 start, we did not take – we only took a few of their locations, we went into different areas and that too, but some of their personnel stayed behind and sort of helped set up and gave us the rundown of the whole system there.

**So were those locations mainly around airports?**

26:30 Strategically yes, they were strategically set around the airports, only within a couple of kilometres at the very least, or very most I should say, of the airports, but right around, it protected the – gave the three of them, you know, the three

- 27:00 airports at Port Moresby and that. But one of the – well, at Port Moresby one of the most dramatic parts, or traumatic parts that we experienced there was – we’d only been there
- 27:30 five or six months I think, when one of our boys was killed in a road accident, he was one of our DON-Rs [motorcycle dispatch rider].

**Could you just quickly explain what a DON-R is?**

A DON-R is a motorbike rider, he – a DON-R would deliver the messages from station to station or

- 28:00 from location to location or around as I say, earlier there was no telephones, and that’s where they got their name, the DON-R, I don’t know what the – I just can’t remember what the R stood for really, we used it as a – and Joe Lonegan, he was killed in a road accident there
- 28:30 and that morning at the Seven Mile Strip a Liberator, there was the 2/32nd battalion, full crew, were lined up across the front of the – or the end of the tarmac on the Seven Mile Strip,
- 29:00 and it had two one thousand pound bombs and two five hundred pound bombs on it, and it crashed into them. And we buried Joe, and we had to start digging the graves, they got us there,
- 29:30 and we were mostly headquarters, there was a few from outer stations that knew Joe, and we started to dig the graves. I have heard the story, two friends, friends of my brother, they were in it. Those that were close to where the crash
- 30:00 was were burnt, but those on the outskirts copped the blast. I’m not sure, but the total that were killed was between a hundred, and a hundred and sixty, I’ve just heard the stories there. And for a young bloke like myself and
- 30:30 others, like you’d be digging for a while, you’d have a rest, and you’d go and lift the bodies out of the – out of the ambulances, and that went on from about ten o’clock, the crash happened about seven, just on daylight I should say, just on daylight. And
- 31:00 they started to bring the ambulances in with the bodies and that, they were just placing them there until we had enough graves, there was only about thirty or forty of us for a start, then after lunch a few more army
- 31:30 personnel came in and helped. And we were still there burying them until midnight, when some of the air force personnel came and took over from us. That was one of the most traumatic parts of Port Moresby, it’ll always live in – but the part was that those that weren’t injured in that crash, they had to get them over to Wewak
- 32:00 by the DC3s to relieve one of the – I’m not too sure what unit it was, or battalion, it was a company and it had had a hell of a time up there, and they were shot to pieces. And the rest of them got on that plane and went over to Wewak. Only about
- 32:30 fifteen years ago was a dedication that we’d set up on the Memorial Drive at Bass Hill, and Bill Halder’s brother-in-law came there and we started talking, and somebody mentioned the 2/33rd, and his eyes lit up. He said,
- 33:00 “Were you the people that helped bury them?” We did. And even to that day, he thought they were buried in a mass grave. But no, every one, to my knowledge, from the time that we were there, was buried in an individual grave. But you know, lifting bodies
- 33:30 out and movement and that, and you know, even after that it was one of the things that got to us. We never had counselling or anything like that, there was nothing involved in anything like that. I’ve never got out – and I’m the same every time I think of it, not only that, I had five weeks in the hospital as a walking
- 34:00 patient with tropical ear and that, and they couldn’t send me home, and I used to help the ambulance go down to the – being a walking patient you never – you had something to do, even around the place, and I was helping the ambulance crews and that. I used to go down to the planes, down to the – near the ward strip
- 34:30 mainly, which wasn’t far from where we were, and help bring the wounded out of the planes. That was another traumatic part of Port Moresby for us, and they’re things that people just can’t believe, and you
- 35:00 never talk about those things, any time, like now, because you know damned well the same thing’s going to happen to what’s happening now. And Matty Finlay and I, we were going to go and have a look – we’d heard about it, I was going into Murray Barracks for the rations at the time, and that was only about eight o’clock, but
- 35:30 fortunately I didn’t get to see any of that, for the simple reason they turned us back as we got near the airport.

**So you didn't see the situation ...?**

I did not, no, I did not see the situation of that. I think now, from what I hear from the

- 36:00 boys that were on location near that, and the few little stories that they've told me, I'm pleased I didn't. They were mainly near the early part of it. But it was an horrific part, and that chap, Bill Halder's brother-in-law, he was one of
- 36:30 those that was in hospital and sent back to Australia. But I did visit Neville Crawford and Billy Drane, who were my elder brother's - not my older brother, the elder, friends of him back in Forbes, and they were badly burnt. But they, as I say, as Bill said, they weren't that far from the plane
- 37:00 itself. So those two parts of Port Moresby were the traumatic parts of my time there.

**It must have brought a very different feeling to the battery?**

Well yes,

- 37:30 but as I said, it mainly affected the headquarter boys, we just - I think there was what you'd call an air of silence around headquarters for some time. I mean, as I said, you become - you're young and that, you become blasé and accept those sort of things. I suppose in that
- 38:00 zone that you know damned well, or you knew damned well it could happen any time. But you know, most of us were youngsters, a few of the older ones, I suppose they had a different feeling of it, but it was the first time that I can say that I came in contact with death, from anywhere, apart from
- 38:30 animals. And as I say, I don't think those that were there and the ones that were out on location that saw it, will die with those memories, because they're parts of things that - you look a lot on the humorous sides of things that happened, and try to get what I was just talking to you about out of your mind.
- 39:00 After my wife died I saw a psychiatrist, and he got that out of me, he got things out of me that I can never explain the feeling of talking to him about it, I
- 39:30 just - and I think talking to him, and the way he got me going, it has helped, because I was one that could break down very easy at anything, and I suppose I've got to feel that by having that conversation with him, I thought I'd see him twice, my doctor sent me to him and I thought, "I'll have a couple of visits." I went seven
- 40:00 times, and I don't think I've cried so much in the first three. But when I left there I felt I was walking on air as I was walking out, and he did have a hell of an effect, an outlook on myself. But Port Moresby, that sort of thing, we never got into any of the real action, we weren't in that position, we weren't that sort of troops,
- 40:30 but what we did see couldn't have been any more traumatic than being there.

**When you spoke to the psychiatrist, was that the first time you'd really spoken at length about that incident?**

It was the first time, it was something that you tried to get out of your mind, to get to the back of your mind or anything like that, but

- 41:00 you'd still have nightmares, and that's forty, fifty years after, forty years. I've got to admit now, since I did see that psychiatrist ten, twelve years ago, I'm not having the nightmares that I used to have. I don't say that they were regarding that, not always
- 41:30 in what I saw there or went through when I was in hospital, the same in the dysentery ward when I was there, I just haven't had the same - and I think that would be the same with many soldiers, I'd say, that have had psychiatrists to them, and it certainly helped me, and as
- 42:00 I said, I thought I'd only have two or three visits to him, I had -

## **Tape 7**

**00:31 Ted, what were your living conditions like there in Port Moresby?**

Not too bad, in dry weather. We had tents which had four in it, four in each tent, Port Moresby headquarters were up on top of the hill, and so was the

- 01:00 operational room and that. But living conditions were what you made them in the army, that they were - the tent life. One we got set up with all our buildings we were quite comfortable. But conditions in the wet season were

01:30 quite uncomfortable, particularly walking up the hill, there was quite a bit of sliding and falling done, because it was quite a big hill that we had our tents and that on top of, and the kitchen, Q-Store [quartermaster's store], and all the officers, they had a nice little area down below.

02:00 But tent life, that's what it was. And conditions, once we got it organised, we were pretty well set up, for the set up that was needed in those areas.

**What about the heat and humidity? How did that affect you?**

It

02:30 was pretty steamy and hard, you know, it certainly sapped the energy out of you, and it wasn't comfortable to sleep with it of a night time, even though you tried to - your tent would be open, but in all those areas we had mosquito nets, to keep the mozzies out, which were quite

03:00 prolific, and it would stop a lot of the breeze, you know what mosquito netting's like, you were still very uncomfortable underneath that, but you had to sleep there. Most of the time you slept in the nude, or just with your underpants on. We were never issued

03:30 with pyjamas, but I don't think they were necessary up there. But no, the heat and the rain and the storms, you could nearly set your time of a night time, not so much in Port Moresby, they were a little less, but Lae, you could nearly set your watch on the times that they were going to start.

**What about the hygiene aspect round the camp in Moresby?**

04:00 Hygiene had to be first class, you know, we had plenty of areas - like disinfectant and that, whatever they used I'm not sure, I think it was a lot of Lysol-type things. But the latrines which were built away, I think that ours at headquarters, which was down below, not up top,

04:30 we had - what was it, a four-seater thunderbox [toilet] and we used to use dieseline down it most occasions, I don't think there was any of the disinfectants put into those, not like

05:00 at Lae, Jack Wilson, they'd only just put the dieseline, or no, they used a bit of octane this day, unbeknown, and of course Jack lit a match, and that caused quite a story. He wasn't badly burnt but he did - apart from getting a hell of a shock and that, and blew the lids

05:30 off the other side of the latrines and that. But those that used the octane got into trouble, I can assure you.

**That aspect of privacy, you said it was a four-hole thunderbox, how did you cope with that in the army?**

You just took it for granted, you accepted - whatever you did - I think the showers, we had to fill a bucket of water up,

06:00 like a shower that had a little stem on it, and they'd be our showers down there, there was four or five and that, so the privacy never came into it, you never worried about that, you were just all men and just accepted it as it was. You never thought anything about it.

**How much butcher work did you get in Port Moresby?**

06:30 Next to none. One of our chaps always argues with me when it comes up about the fresh meat in Port Moresby. I reckon we had it twice, and he reckons we never had any, and he always blames me for keeping it for the officers and that. But no, we did get two lots in the whole time in Port Moresby, wrapped in a sort of a greaseproof paper, just little blocks,

07:00 and there was more for roasting and that. But whether I forgot to put some in that location where Don was, but he reckons, he maintains he never ever got any. But the worst part of meals and that in Port Moresby was the dehydrated mutton. It - no matter what the cooks tried to do with it, it even smelt - it stunk, when you opened the bags they

07:30 came in, in bags like rice bags and that sort of thing, and many a time I tried to knock it back at Murray Barracks, but no, you had to take it. I was just telling the story there that the cooks could not make it palatable to eat, it was just dreadful stuff. And there was a lot of it and that was

08:00 supposed to be our fresh meat that we got. But I - handling that sort of thing I started trading with the natives with it, but they soon woke up that they didn't like it either. It was vile, and stunk. And as I say, in the history, in our history book there, when we could leave Murray Barracks I couldn't do

08:30 anything with it, I used to throw it into different parts of the jungle around where we'd pass, and the story goes that all that area died off after a short time. But it was terrible stuff, the dehydrated mutton. But most of it was tinned meat, tinned meat and vegetables, and the bully beef.

**What's your opinion then of how the Australian Government supplied and looked**

09:00 **after its front line fighting men?**

Well, if we've got to use a comparison with the American troops, we always had plenty of food, not a lot of fresh vegetables and that sort of thing, because the humidity and that up there, you could not - you could get carrots, potatoes were plentiful, they were your main substance, but at Port Moresby we had an American

09:30 supply depot near us, and we used to raid it, and we'd get tins of really nice ham, tins of pineapple, we lived quite well in headquarters for that reason. But that was the only reason that we got reasonably good food, is what we got out of - even their potatoes and that that they

10:00 sent over in tins, it was very good too. So we didn't live too bad, but asking for an opinion, just around our way and like being involved in it, the food was substantial and there was a lot of good in the - well as we called them, the dog biscuits, but they were just hard, compressed flour and

10:30 water and other things like that. They were quite OK. But I suppose like the facilities, and to get there, and the risk, I suppose it made it hard, and they had to have transport for more - even though food and that was essential, but they concentrated

11:00 mainly on the basic things that kept us going. Even those up in the - to my knowledge that were up higher, they had to concentrate mainly on their baked beans, meat and vegetables and bully beef and biscuits. But for me to post an opinion of

11:30 it, well we survived, we survived well, not many of us, or any of us put on weight, mostly because of the heat that we lost it. But no, we were fed reasonably well, for the situation that surrounded us.

**As far as the supply to troops in New Guinea goes, were you aware at the time of things like wharfies going on**

12:00 **strike in Australia, and not loading supplies?**

Yes, and that happened to us in Brisbane, they didn't want to load, the red ragers [Communist agitators], that was the saying, that were on the wharves there, and so the boys, some of them, I don't think they were from our unit though, decided to load their own stuff. Some of

12:30 our chaps did, yes, the lighter stuff, and of course they were up in arms, so they had their rifles and bayonets there, and they did not think twice about loading the bayonets, they'd have used them if they had to. But we did eventually get loaded. But yes, we did hear of several occasions, and we did know of several

13:00 occasions where the army personnel were prepared to use their bayonets on them in Brisbane.

**What are your feelings about that sort of strike action?**

Well, it wasn't good, under the circumstances, no. But we had a red ragger, or a Communist sympathiser as we called them then, or mainly the red ragers, they got their name as, in our unit,

13:30 and he tried to stir up some trouble, but he was soon put down, many a time. And I was in the tent with him at one stage, and it was unbelievable. Half his kit bag was filled with Communist literature, and he tried to pass it on to us, and read to us. So they were in the army, there's no doubt about it.

**And what did you know about Communism at that stage?**

14:00 I didn't know one thing at all about it, only just what the older fellows would tell us about these red ragers. In the country, you know, you never come across anything like that, in the younger days. But it wasn't until, you know, that I got into the army and heard these few incidents of not loading, even in Sydney, they wouldn't load ships. So that was the

14:30 only thing I knew about them. And I was quite ignorant to what their purpose was, never realised until I got a bit older and realised what they were all about.

**You said before that you raided the American supply depot. What do you mean by that?**

Well, we -

15:00 four of us mainly, they were right on a - not the jungle, but right on a thick growth area, and we knew - sort of behind one of the sheds they'd built or the holding areas they'd built, we'd surveyed it before, not so much myself, Bill Swinghammer and Allie Graham, they saw a

15:30 spot where they could get into easily. Not only that, they had trucks, we had a good sort of a hill, we'd get on the back, and might get a back of rice or something like that, half the time they knew about it, but they never stopped - the American Negroes were most of the drivers and that. But I'll never forget, Bobby Andrews jumped on a truck and he pulled off a nice big box, and it was a box of mustard.

16:00 Well, that certainly created - we had mustard, I think all the troops got plenty of mustard too. But that was one incident that did go wrong. But quite often we'd - not only that, we made a few bob out of it in the same area, was where they stored their cigarettes. I never - I was only involved in one of those

raids, but I was in a

- 16:30 position to sell the cigarettes, to the incoming troops in the Murray Barracks, and they used to take them in – Matt Finlay and myself, or whoever was the driver, there was only two or three, but we'd always get a cut out of it, and I think it was about nearly twelve months I hadn't touched my pay book,
- 17:00 and I got hauled into the office about it, and I said, "I've got no reason to use it," and he said, "Well you'd better draw something out and make it look good, they're asking about it down in Sydney," or wherever it was. So I had to draw a few pounds out, just to make it look good. But really, you know, we did have a little bit of a store there that you could buy a few things, cigarettes
- 17:30 and not much else, condensed milk, or what was it, not so much coffee – condensed coffee and that sort of thing, they were in there, they weren't issues, we just had a little place. But you know they were sickly sweet, so if you didn't have a sweet tooth you never worried about it. And I didn't smoke myself, so I don't – but the boys did all right out of
- 18:00 raiding their cigarette depot, never ever got caught, so we were lucky till we got moved away.

**So you had a bit of a black market tobacco thing going?**

Oh yes, yes. With Murray Barracks most of the cigarettes – it was quite easy, they had one section there in the barracks, and there was always thirty or forty in there, and they were homosexuals that they were getting ready to send back to Australia, and they were pretty good

- 18:30 customers, because you know, they could take them home too, put them in their bag, put the full box, I think there was twenty or something in a carton, I should say, of cigarettes, yes.

**So you were aware of homosexuality in the army?**

No, not at all, no, it never involved me. The first time I ever struck it was in the toilet in Wynyard,

- 19:00 and a bloke affronted me there. But the boys had told me about it and that. So I let one go, and I think he let three go, so I thought, "I'd better get out of here." But that was it. But in the army and like in our section, it wasn't till Murray Barracks that I knew more about it from Matt,
- 19:30 he was much older than myself.

**So these men had been charged with homosexuality and were being ...?**

Yes, being sent back to Australia, they didn't approve of any of that then. Of course it's a different story these days, but you know, there was no discrimination, they were a menace, I believe, the story goes, mainly from the guards that were looking after them,

- 20:00 you know, some of them were coming out of the front lines.

**So what did you think about them?**

Being ignorant to the fact a lot, I never thought much about them, I thought, "Well, we can make a sale here," and as far as the cigarettes went, that was it. No, honestly I could

- 20:30 say I was very ignorant to the fact then, being a country boy, never been involved in it and probably never read about it because it was – in those days there was very little in the press about this sort of thing.

**You've talked a bit about your cigarette selling, I guess in a lot of armies and a lot of units, the headquarters troops have the reputation of**

- 21:00 **feathering their own nests a little bit?**

That's what we used to get blamed for, yes.

**And one of your mates has accused you of not passing on enough meat?**

That's right, yes.

**What's your version of HQ [headquarters] troops looking after themselves?**

Well I always believed that myself and Tommy, the corporal, we were pretty fair with it. I will admit

- 21:30 we were a little bit favoured of a few things for the officers, because they could make you or break you. So if you kept on the good side of them, you were really made in one sense, but no, I believe that we were pretty fair, except Donny and a couple of the others with their fresh meat lot. But not
- 22:00 always we could be fair in this respect, that some supplies that we'd get, we didn't have enough to send out to each location, so this time you'd have to send it – might only get enough whatever it was, a bit of fresh vegetables and that, you'd send it to one or two, and the next thing they'd be on phone to so-and-so, "Oh boy, we've got some



22:30 cabbages," or something like that, "Oh, we didn't get it." But see, we'd only get a few, so we had to be fair in that respect, that some got it but next time if we got something and could remember where we sent the others to, because we never used to make a note of it, we'd say, "Probably section D, we did A and B last time, we'll give it to C and D this time." And this would happen, particularly in Moresby,

23:00 not quite often, but often that would happen, yes.

**So there was an understanding that if you looked after the officers, they'd look after you?**

That's the way the privates looked at it, yes.

**OK, I'd like you to tell us about your little aeroplane trips that you used to take to pass the time in Moresby.**

That was a common -

23:30 like troops had the day off, and if you knew somebody that was to do with the supply section, which we did in Murray Barracks, they make these aerial drops to troops in remote areas and that, like mainly up on

24:00 the Wewak and that area, and they'd have the troops and we used to fill in the day, quite often there were two trips, that we'd go over on the biscuit bombers as we called them, the old DC3, and help - and drop the supplies to these areas. But those that were in charge made sure that we were

24:30 right up the front, out of the way, we were tied on, strapped in, but our main aim was to just push it towards the end of the plane, they never allowed us - several of the boys had trips like it - but they were pretty good, they were trained for what they were doing, but they - we were just there, pushing the stuff, the supply

25:00 stuff down to where they were dropping and getting it out as quick as they could. But we were strapped in just in case there was any lurch or anything, they had these straps on the side of the thing, and you know, that was quite interesting in that respect.

**Did you like flying?**

I've got to tell you, that was the first time I'd ever flown. And I enjoyed it, yes, I

25:30 do, I love flying, I love flying, I've been in light planes and helicopters and that since the war, I never had any fear, I've been trekking in Nepal and did trips across Nepal in the planes and that. Yes, I love flying. But they were - we just took that as a day off, you know, if you had nothing else to do and that, you were lucky to get just the time. I knew

26:00 most of the time when they were taking the supplies down, because of going into Murray Barracks and they used to tell us all when they were going down.

**What sort of things, besides going for a ride on the biscuit bombers, what other things were there in Moresby to entertain yourself with?**

There again, the officers, if there was enough of us, they'd allow the driver,

26:30 a driver, a truck, even to go round the locations and pick up anybody who had the day off, and we might go up to Bellamy Falls, which was right up on top of - not far from really where the Kokoda Trail starts. But it was just a drive there, the roads weren't the best, but it was an experience and a half. Not only that, mainly for headquarters they used to supply a truck most nights,

27:00 because either the air force just down from us, Australian Air Force, or the Americans at the 'dromes had a picture on, and in Port Moresby I have a folder there of Gracie Fields, entertainers and that. Ray Bolger, saw Bob Hope, as I said, Gracie Fields, quite a few of the

27:30 American entertainers. I can't remember you know, any names that came from Australia, but you see they were mostly flown in by an American, so we had the films, one place each night, and not only that at Port Moresby they had a terrific boxing turn out, and there used to be some fantastic fights. So you know, as far as entertainment goes, we had plenty in

28:00 that respect, yes.

**How did the level of enemy air activity decrease in your time there?**

Well, the early part of Port Moresby, even day time mostly, we were quite frequently getting air warnings and you know, they might only send over two or three bombers, and they'd have an escort and that with

28:30 them. And I suppose in the first six months it was quite frequently we'd get warnings and that, sometimes it wouldn't even happen, they'd probably get turned back by the American fighter planes and that, but they still put out a warning. I'd say most of the time, towards - in the last

29:00 six or eight months there at Port Moresby, you could notice the decrease, because they were getting

pushed back, and pushed back, all that time. Then after that, well then we went to Lae.

**How did you move up to Lae?**

That was a good one. We went on

- 29:30 an American Liberty ship, it was one of those they used to build in a matter of days, the Charles King. I don't know when people talk of hell ships, but that's what it was. There was all of us, all of our unit, plus a lot of Americans, both white and Negroes, this was going into Lae.
- 30:00 All the equipment was on it, no accommodation, wherever you could get to sleep, or try to sleep, you took that, so we spent of our times underneath our trucks, or some of the boys got in amongst the equipment. The drivers were lucky, they were in the front seat, and then you used to
- 30:30 share sleeping and that in there. But it was just a hell ship as far as we were concerned. The latrines were over the side, so you know, you had to hang on the rails. We had
- 31:00 a sort of a kitchen up on the top, I'll never forget, we had some American - I think they called them sardines or something like that, but they were in oil, and it wasn't long that you had a dozen or two Australians hanging over the side as sick as a dog. So we reckon the fish was still alive, but you know, it was very uncomfortable.
- 31:30 We were overnight in Milne Bay Harbour, and the furphy - well there was, there was a submarine underneath us but fortunately it was an American one, but they knew it was there, as the rumour went, and the panic was on, because they didn't identify themselves apparently. But that was the only thing, the
- 32:00 trip to Lae and the seas weren't all that calm either, and I think it was four days, and I think most of those four days we just lay in the one spot, didn't worry about food, the food - we were lucky, one of the
- 32:30 American trucks had supplies on, and there was this great big drum of fruit cake, and so we were able to prise the top off, this Abie Barrett did most of it, it was really a bit risky, but we got into it, and we had this fruit cake, it kept us fed for at least
- 33:00 two days, it was two days from when we found it. But that's another thing, that every little wave, all you could hear was the rivets squeaking, it was quite frightening when you realise it, but you know, young and blasé, we accepted it, we had to because we were being moved to another port.

**How long did that voyage take up to Lae?**

- 33:30 I think it was all together, four days on it, but about three nights there, but we didn't leave Port Moresby till again, night, I think we made, no we didn't make - it's hard for me to remember.

**That's OK, so roughly about four days?**

Roughly about four days.

**And this was in sort of early '44?**

- 34:00 Yes, it would have been early '44, yes, '44 that we were there.

**So whereabouts in Lae were you stationed?**

From the wharf I think we were about five or six mile out of Lae on what they called the Malahang Strip, which was where the Japanese had it as a Zero strip, there were still quite a few Zeroes

- 34:30 which had been shot up by Americans and that still on the strip there, or to the edge of it. But we had just one end of it where we had our headquarters, and most of the others, you know, one of the officers or our officer had previously flown out to Lae several weeks before,
- 35:00 and mapped out the locations of the units, and most of them went really straight from the Malahang Strip within the next day or two to their locations.

**What sort of - sorry, what sort of facilities were waiting for your arrival there?**

Next to nothing, really nothing,

- 35:30 we had to set up our tents, we fixed up a surround for showers, for washing and that, and set up a tent for the mess, we had the tent there with flies as we called them, covers over them and that, before Bill Swinghammer and his group, which were
- 36:00 carpenters got into the jungle, and got enough small timber and that to build a mess, and then finished up building a - a kitchen, I should say, and then added later on when they could scrounge enough timber, and thatch or whatever it was, to cover it with. So that took some time,
- 36:30 because naturally the offices had to be built too, they built temporary offices and that, and sort of

covered it – mainly frames, and then covered them in with the tents and flies.

**So sorry, the guy with the surname Swinghammer, was actually a carpenter?**

He was, yes, yes. They were a very well known family in the Grafton area,

37:00 So, but Bill lived at Double Bay after ...

**Sure.**

Yes, he was a builder after the war, but he was a pretty rough diamond, and a pretty rough carpenter, but we made do.

**So how did life in Lae compare to Moresby?**

I think Lae,

37:30 in the early parts of Lae it was a lot easier and that, because when we went there, it wasn't in the wet season, so you know, that did make the early parts of Lae a lot easier, but it was not so much immediate jungle around the area, Nadzab Road was fairly clear and a few other areas there,

38:00 and it didn't have the inaccessible areas like Moresby did. There were a lot of swamp areas around Moresby and unfortunately two or three of the locations they had to put them into those areas. One of them it took them three days to get there, which was only about four mile away from the airport,

38:30 and we have photos, and Don's got photos of them, they just bogged and bogged, even the big four-wheel drives had no chance of getting through.

**How did the climate compare at Lae to Moresby?**

I think Lae was a little bit cooler in you know, well as I say, it wasn't the wet season so we're getting away from the – but it was still fairly

39:00 hot, I mean night times and that you still – and still get some of your showers which you could nearly set your watch by, they'd come up. But still the heat was still oppressive, even though I felt it, it was a little bit – but we were a little bit getting out of the real wet season there.

**What about the malarial**

39:30 **situation up in Lae?**

Yes, well that was in both places that we quite a bit of malaria through the boys, particularly those out on location, and that. I was pretty lucky in that respect, but it wasn't till I really got back to Australia that I finished up in an American hospital at Ipswich, with malaria, and that's just as we came back

40:00 the last time, after Lae. But you know, we had some stinking stuff and that we used to rub on us, you went anywhere near swamps and that, you used to have long sleeve shirts and that, so you tried to do your best to protect yourself from the mosquitoes.

**We'll stop there.**

## Tape 8

00:35 **So in Lae, how many lights were being run?**

We had the usual six sections, the same amount of lights that were in Port Moresby, we took them with us from Port Moresby to Lae. And in Lae

01:00 we never had a lot of – in the first month we may have had a few exposures for the enemy planes, but they were getting pushed further and further back. One of the major uses was those particularly around the aerodromes, two of the sections that were near the aerodromes,

01:30 were able to assist planes, bombers, mainly bombers, that had been over the Japanese area and been shot up in some way or other, and lost their radar and other things, and from quite some distance away they could pick up the searchlights, and when the boys could hear

02:00 a plane coming in, and they could tell by the sound that there was something wrong with it, and of course you did not know whether it had lost its radar or what, or just an engine, something like that, they had to put extra thrusts on the engines that they had left. They would put their searchlights into the air, and that would give the pilots a guide to where they were, because they knew in the

02:30 daylight that if they came in probably straight above them, and they damned well they were going to hit the strip. Quite often, particularly in Lae, I think there was an odd occasion in Port Moresby that the American pilots came over to the location and complimented the boys in their help of getting them down onto the strip. But

- 03:00 Lae more often than they would – they had commendations from the Americans, probably their commanders and that, for the help that these searchlights were able to assist planes to land. I don't know on what side, how the pilots used them, I never got around – I never had the opportunity to speak to any of them, I never even asked the
- 03:30 boys on location what questions they'd asked. But they used to be able to assist planes that were shot up some way or other, they'd either lost their radar or to some extent help them get in back to base. The American commander had complimented them several times in Lae.

04:00 **That was obviously one of the important functions that the lights carried out. What were some – ?**

At the time, because we didn't get a great deal of raids, you know, in that latter part, it was only the odd one if I can remember rightly, at Lae, when we were there, that we were put on red alert.

**So would the lights only go**

04:30 **on if there was an alert, or would they systematically be turned on each night anyway?**

No, they'd only be mainly switched on in red alert, that there was a possibility that there were planes coming over, but the same as Port Moresby, if the American – mainly the Lockheed Lightning, the fighter planes,

05:00 they may get there first and turn them back, which quite often would happen. But there's still a red alert, but if they got into the area, they were over the targets they were looking at or coming towards it, that's when the searchlights, through their radar, would know they were in distance, that they could have the chance of picking them up.

05:30 When they did pick them up, it was just like a little shiny thing, they were up that high, just a shiny object in the lights. But that still allowed the anti-aircraft to fire in that direction and keep them up in there. To my knowledge, I did not see any of them,

06:00 that they were shot down, the enemy planes. But through the searchlights and the ack ack they kept them high, which didn't allow their accuracy.

**How reliable was the radar connected to the lights?**

I think it was pretty reliable once they came into the distance, within range, I should say.

06:30 It was like what they called – it was an English invention, the LC, it does stand for something but I just can't tell you, it's probably in the history book there, or in the expose that we – The History of Searchlights. But not having a great deal, or not having anything to do with them in those areas, I'm not too sure about their

07:00 accuracy, but I do know that the boys were quite happy with their performances.

**So was there much change to your daily program in Lae, or was it pretty much ...?**

Pretty much the same in my daily routine as what was in Port Moresby, still get around most times I think in Lae

07:30 there was – for some unknown reason there was three of us in the Q-Store – in the ration area, and I never got around on the trucks a great deal, I suppose I became a bit lazy or got sick of it, one of the two.

**And meat was just as scarce in Lae?**

No meat whatsoever, no, we only had that

08:00 lot in Port Moresby. No, we didn't see any there, they never had the refrigeration vehicles, like the ships never had the refrigeration, the type of ships that were in the area, I think they still had ships that did have refrigeration, because part of the war they used to still send a lot of frozen meat to England and that, and being in the meat industry

08:30 I knew that there was meat being shipped overseas, but for these areas I think a lot to do was – well I'd only be guessing but you know, the tropical heat and that would soon thaw any sort of meat out.

**Were the blokes getting a bit fed up with the diet at this stage?**

Yes, yes, I

09:00 mean the comments that used to get going at meal times, "Oh God, not baked beans again!" or "Not this or that," "How about a change of something different?" But yes, you could say that the boys were getting a bit – headquarters and that, because there wasn't a great deal of variety there, and less of those varieties that if we had any special, extra special, because

09:30 you had nearly – as far as transport you'd go for fresh food and that, you still had that extra three or

four days from Port Moresby, and of course that would make a lot of difference and that, and unfortunately there we didn't have the American dumps quite happen, but I will admit a few times

10:00 we went over to their messes and that, and we came back with tins of ham and the butter that we used to get up there was just like oil. But they had some really good stuff. So they gave us some of their supplies and that, and being in the kitchen area I always went and spoke to the cook and that, and of course they were very generous, they never worried about - like Australia, we had to acquit for everything, they were

10:30 just given it to - and did whatever they wanted with it, they had plenty.

**Were there any other options, like you know, getting fish or any other sort of beast that could be killed for the meat?**

No, not as far as all the troops, myself and two or three of us, we were able to get onto the lakatois [small South Pacific water craft] with some of the natives, and go out fishing, but our fishing was hand grenades,

11:00 and luckily one day we just happened to get one of the natives who dived in to retrieve the stunned fish from the previous grenade, and one of the boys let one go from the other side and never noticed him, but luckily he got his head out of the - and got him out, most of his body out before the thing had

11:30 gone out. He realised, or we realised what had happened and we just sort of - before he went too far into the water, grabbed him and pulled him out. So that was a near call, but I think that only happened twice, that we were able to get out with the natives, and their lakatois. But around the rivers there, like the Markham River at Lae and that, they were very

12:00 fast flowing, and I just forget, not far from that there was a bit of a stream where we used to swim a little bit, but there were still crocodiles and that in the area, we always had one or two keeping watch. But you'd only be in and out, and I think if I remember rightly, it was these sort of streams, they were still water, but there were still fish in there, and that's what we used to go out in, they were fairly wide, and do a bit of fishing with the hand grenades.

12:30 I think most of the hand grenades, I don't know where they came from, really, we did have some, but to get them out of Jack Neil it'd be next to impossible, so I don't know where they came from.

**How did you find the natives?**

We found the natives very good and that, even Port Moresby we played cricket against them,

13:00 we had a game or two of cricket against them in Lae, but most of our entertainment there, like once it got known that we had a softball team, we had a game late in the afternoon with nearly a different American unit at least three or four times a week, and that was most of that, I mean apart from the films, and you could still go to the Americans, they always

13:30 had the set up for films and that. I remember once in Lae there was a raid on, a night raid, and most of the Aussies - the Yanks just disappeared, and most of the Aussies are singing out, "Keep it going, keep it going," but luckily there was nothing happened there.

**I believe at**

14:00 **that stage there was still some Japanese in the jungle areas?**

There were still Japanese around the outskirts of the areas that we were near, but in a matter of a few weeks most of them were rounded up. But you know, we had to be - the first, I'd say month or six weeks, we had to be on the alert with where - like

14:30 headquarters would probably only have one guard, we used to have two or three at night, wandering around all the time with their rifles and that. And the same with those that were out on location, were actually in areas where they were. And I think what drove most of them out, I think the one on the Nadzab Road, two or

15:00 three came out unarmed, they were that hungry, and they're the only ones to my knowledge that we had any - our unit had anything to do with.

**So you were station in Lae for about a year?**

Yes, it was only around about twelve months that we were there, it may not have been quite that long,

15:30 I just -

**But thereabouts?**

Thereabouts, yes.

**Did anything else important or significant happen during that time that you want to tell us about?**

No, not really, our biggest problem there was the kunai viper grass, which affected two or three of our chaps, and one, Tommy Ford, he nearly died

- 16:00 there with it, it was something they got out of the grass, it was around there, he was out on location, but apart from that, a few snakes around most areas, but it didn't involve us a great deal, we were always fairly careful.

**So what impact did the grass have?**

It was a very high grass, and you know, if the boys

- 16:30 went into it, I don't know why it was called - yes, kunai viper, but it was a snake more than anything, the snake was the kunai viper, but they still for some unknown reason they called the grass that too. And Tommy and Mac Hartley were affected by it, whether you got a prick from it or something like that, I'm just not sure, but I know they were very,

- 17:00 very sick. And Tommy Ford, till up to - he lived at Naremburn, and he just would not - he was just a nervous wreck, and that's how it affected him, and Mac - it affected Mac Hartley, but not as bad. They were both sergeants.

**So by the time you were just about through**

- 17:30 **your time in Lae, how were you feeling, were you feeling like you were ready to go home for a break, or were you coping OK?**

No, no, we - because of the Japanese being put further forward and out of the range of most activity that was going on there, yes, there was a lot of - it was a boring time really, towards the finish at Lae.

- 18:00 I think if we didn't have our little bit of a sporting time, the headquarters, and I do know the boys out on location were getting pretty fed up with inaction as the saying goes, because they were pushed that further back and you know, they never attempted to come down and bomb or strafe anything, they just kept going north.

- 18:30 So that did affect the boys a lot, the boredom of the whole thing at Lae, and I think this is the reason that they decided, well we've had enough there, we'd been up there long enough. And they called it a day in respect of searchlights, because there were a few - a unit at

- 19:00 Balikpapan, I think they were H7, and that's about as high as the searchlight units went. Merauke was another one, but that was more over to the left of the top part of New Guinea. So there were still two searchlight units in that area, 6/7 had gone back from Milne Bay, and

- 19:30 I think they went back before us, they were a Victorian unit, mainly Victorian unit, 6/7, but I think they went back before us because that was more down to the peninsula, we went to Lae, which was around the other side of New Guinea, and then as they went back they brought other units up from Australia,

- 20:00 like the one that was in Balikpapan, and Merauke. But that was as high as any searchlight unit went. After that, apart from Morotai, Borneo, a bit of Borneo, it was nearly all American fighters and that that were in that area. Apart from Borneo I don't think there was many Australian troops went much further than that.

- 20:30 **So eventually the news came through that you were heading back to Australia?**

Pack up and yes, and come back to Australia. I think most of the equipment, I know we didn't bring the equipment with us, so that was probably eventually sold off as war surplus stuff. But we just sort of packed up within a few days, I think the boys left -

- 21:00 I'd have to check on that one, but I think most of the lights and that were left on location, because we moved so quickly. I think though they did take - now I remember, they did take them into what they call the ordinance area, where all the heavy equipment was, but I probably believe that they were left there, like a lot of other gear that was pushed in.

**So how did you feel to be heading home?**

- 21:30 I was quite happy really - to be heading home - because through letters and that we'd decided to get married when I came home, and of course we didn't know what our future - we had heard that the unit would be broken up, but they gave us our month's leave after we came back to -

- 22:00 yes, we came back to Brisbane, offhand I just can't remember the ship, Orion I think it was, yes, but we came back to Brisbane and went home on leave, by train. That's when I got married there in Marrickville, and so it was quite a relief to get

- 22:30 home. But when we went back to - I think we had to report back to Brisbane with our rail passes and that, and we went out to - we did Canungra, the jungle training really, after we came back from the islands, and then from -

- 23:00 I just can't remember where we went to, but then we mobilised again after leave, and then did

Canungra jungle training course. But then we went – after we did that, which was a two week course, I think it was, which we couldn't figure out why they put us in there to do jungle training when

- 23:30 we were – had already been up there, they took us back to Strathpine, and that's where they decided to disband the unit. We all went different ways, as I say, I went to the First Advanced Reinforcement Depot, which was actually a Victorian unit, but they wanted a butcher there, so I had a few weeks there.

**Just before we go further there Ted, could you just give me a**

- 24:00 **quick idea of what scale your wedding was?**

Very small, well the mother came down, there was my cousin, the elder cousin was there, a school mate, Jimmy Booth, and Dell's friend Marie,

- 24:30 and her uncle and aunty that she was living with.

**So just a handful of people?**

Just a handful of people.

**And was there anything like a honeymoon possibly?**

Yes, yes, the reception was back at Marrickville at her aunty's place, but the way the cars would work in those days, they'd drop a wedding at a wedding, and go and

- 25:00 pick somebody else up and drop them at the wedding, come back and pick you up, and that so happened the same, we had a lot of waiting around with the photographer that we had, he'd do us, go away and take somebody else to a photographer and come back and pick us up. But yes, there was a honeymoon, and it was at Katoomba, and when we got up there, you wouldn't know it, we ran into five of our other unit friends that got

- 25:30 married, like, my unit members. So our days were quite laughable in a sense, and when we got back to our unit in Brisbane there was quite a lot of mud-slinging and that. But yes, that's where we went on our honeymoon.

**How did you boys feel about being disbanded?**

We were a pretty close

- 26:00 knit lot, and even though as I say, most of them were out on locations, but when we got back together, we were pretty close. And like myself, we were all broken up about it, we were all disappointed with it. And I know it was pretty hard to say goodbye to different ones and that. But amazingly after the war, when we got going with our reunions,

- 26:30 just after the war like in the 50s and 60s, we used to have terrific roll-ups with those that lived around the city and country, and to this day, as I organise it, we can still get – the last Anzac Day reunion that we held at Rose Bay RSL, still get what was there, fifty-six there, but there was only fifteen of the original

- 27:00 members, most of them then we decided that some of the older ones that are not too good on their feet, they could bring – we decided to bring the wives, grandchildren come into it. And this is what's happening today, a lot of the grandchildren, on the one day a year, and their families are turning up at our reunions. So that shows the respect

- 27:30 and the camaraderie that was in that unit. And other units, we're the only one that has really – some of the others have completely disbanded their RSL, 6/7 and 7 – I just forget – they don't hold a reunion now, they still have three or four of them get together, but we still send out around about seventy circulars, and

- 28:00 very rarely we don't get a donation back from members that are not able to make it or are living up in the country or anywhere else. No, it did hurt, but I think the writing was on the wall after Lae, because they had no actual use for us, as we'd put it, they had no use for searchlights.

**So what was in store for you with**

- 28:30 **1st Advanced [Reinforcement Depot]?**

Well they were in camp at Strathpine the same time when I moved across there, and of course their main aim was to relieve other reinforcement depots higher up when we went to Morotai. I don't know, there wasn't a depot we had to set there, but

- 29:00 this was more like a staging camp for soldiers that were coming through, to going into action, that they would come into this reinforcement depot, and that's as its name is, and they'd be sent to wherever they were going, to different parts of Borneo and that. But we were only there about six months when the war ended, and as you can see by those, I have the

- 29:30 surrender documents, every soldier on Morotai was sent after the war, these surrender documents that

I still have. So Morotai was pretty quiet in a sense, as far as troop movements, it was getting less and less after the first few months and

30:00 that, because the Japanese were being pushed further and further up, and I think they were restricting the distance of the Australian troops going in there. We had a Japanese POW camp near us, which was quite full. Had a few problems there, not with myself or the others, you know, they were let to roam around free and that, they'd just come into the mess and grab a handful of food and that, and some of the boys took objection to that.

30:30 **Some of the POWs?**

Yes, the Japanese POWs. But it was sort of an open gate, but they kept to themselves because I think they were a bit frightened of what might happen. But two of the chaps did knock them down and that, and they were supposed to have been court martialled for it, but that was wiped when the war ended. And I was - the major

31:00 wanted me to go to - asked me if I'd like to go to Singapore and help bring the POWs out and that, and I said I wanted to get home because I knew my wife was expecting then. And I suggested they take one of the offsidiers that I had there, Ken Tobais [?] from Melbourne went,

31:30 and I think there were two or three others from the reinforcement depot, they flew them into Singapore. But any rate, not realising that it was only going to be a pretty quick affair, Ken beat me home by six weeks. I did find that out later.

**What did you think of the Japanese at that stage?**

32:00 Well I think we still treated them as not to be trusted. I mean there were a lot of stories that I don't know were written - it would have been in later years - that came out from some of the chaps that I pulled out of the ambulances in Port Moresby. Cannibalisation and that sort of thing, of

32:30 Australian troops, so you still treated them and not trusted them, and you just had no feeling for them, if you probably had the opportunity to put a bullet through them, you wouldn't think twice about it. I mean the stories that

33:00 were told, and you heard about up there. So no, I had no sympathy, but that's all gone, I don't look at them that way now, I know a lot of people still have the animosity against them, but it's over and done with, they were pushed into it just the same as we did - were, but some of them took it more seriously. And of course as we know, their

33:30 kamikaze and stories that you've read about their dying of the Lord and that. But apart from those two occasions in there, they were walking around fairly freely at Morotai, we just kept away from them and just made sure we didn't - because I suppose those that had been up into

34:00 the areas that really got in contact with them would have a different feeling to what we did, and most of those in the reinforcement depot that I was in, had not been to the islands before, so they were new troops from Victoria, and a lot of younger ones coming through too, and they probably only had their feelings from what they read in the papers and that. So you know,

34:30 they - I don't know what their feelings were, but I mean it was different to those that had been in the islands before.

**Did you get a chance to make new friends in the reinforcement depot?**

Yes, yes, I got on pretty well with the Victorians, until I out kicked them at Australian Rules, I wasn't too popular that day, but no, I made some - Ken Tobais and

35:00 two or three others that were in the Q-Store, our Q-Store was part of the supply depot and that, there was eight or ten of us, and even the sergeant and the officers, we got on exceptionally well, and even though I copped it with our rugby league,

35:30 the wrestle, and I used to give as much with the aerial ping pong as the Victorians or south used to cop their ... But no, apart from that we were all soldiers, we were there for a reason, and we accepted that and we got on very well together.

**So you ...**

Once, but I mean not like we got back together with our

36:00 73rd Searchlights and that, but as I said, the others were a Victorian lot. I did contact Ken Tobais, he and I were about the same age and were friends and that, but that never lasted long, I think I might have sent him a card at the finish, and I just happened to - he gave me his home address or family address when we broke up, and I did the

36:30 same, so we just had a couple of cards, but that all fell apart after about twelve months. Bob, the other chap, he was a nice chap too, I heard from him a couple of times. But as your family - you get with your family and your lifestyle changes, and everything like with my old mate that was in the reveille, this Alf,



- the chap that I was telling you about in the brawl, we were great friends for four or
- 37:00 five years after, and family and that, but then it all disappeared, same with Stan, Stan and Alf and I were known as 'the Three Musketeers', and that all - well with Stan we kept in touch with him through the reunions, and even his wife, after Stan died, he died reasonably young,
- 37:30 so you know, you set into your own family, and things fall apart, and unfortunately - not like Don and most of them now that I've got back - as I say, I run the unit reunions, and they all get in touch with me, I'm Ned to everybody, and phone calls around Anzac Day is just unbelievable. So that's how it is with this unit.
- 38:00 **Were there many Americans around you in Morotai?**
- No, no, not a lot, there were very few really, of course we were just involved in a smallish area there. But I think we were more to the south of Morotai, and they were more onto the north, but there weren't many troops, to my knowledge that were
- 38:30 there. But no, around our immediate area, I can't say that we had many, or any.
- Not a problem. Can you tell me about the day that you were told that the atomic bomb had been dropped in Japan?**
- Yes, that's when I was in Morotai, because that - we did hear about it, well
- 39:00 mainly through the officers, that they'd dropped, and of course we never knew anything about what damage or anything that was done, that really to us never came out till after the war, and it wasn't long after that that they decided to surrender - started, but what we heard about, they had dropped an atomic
- 39:30 bomb, there was no radios, no wireless, the only little bit of news we got was out of our Guinea Gold [newspaper for servicemen in New Guinea] and that, naturally you get all the rumours that are going around and that, but to the extent of the damage, we never knew anything about that. I don't think even the little Guinea Gold printed a great deal about it, because I don't think they wanted it
- 40:00 to get out, the Americans at the time would not have wanted that to have got out to the extent of the damage that it did. And I think really some time after the war that they started to let out just actually what damage it had caused in both areas that they dropped them. But in Morotai,
- 40:30 no, we just knew that there was an atomic bomb dropped.

## Tape 9

- 00:35 **When you heard the war was over, Ted, how did you celebrate?**
- As I said earlier, I did not drink, but somehow or other there was a free issue, and they were the big 750 ml bottles of beer, and I don't know where they came from in the first place but they were in the Q-Store, and
- 01:00 of course no ice or anything like that, except to put them in a bucket of water for a while, I think, but I can remember we did - most of us in the Q-Store and that, we really celebrated. I don't know now whether those outside got any of the grog, but yes, they did. We had an issue of two bottles to celebrate, and I think somehow it must have been
- 01:30 organised somewhere along the line, prior to that. But two or three of the others didn't drink, like myself, but that day I did, and the majority of us really ironed ourselves out on three or four bottles of - I think - hot beer. But no, we did celebrate, it was quite an occasion for us.
- By this stage you would have known that your**
- 02:00 **wife was pregnant -**
- Yes, yes.
- you would have been fidgety to get back?**
- I was looking to get home, and I think it was only a day or so after that that the major came and asked me if I wanted to go to Singapore. But as I've told you what happened there, and ...
- How did you get back to Australia then?**
- They loaded us onto a barge, one of the big English landing barges that had been used
- 02:30 up further, they were in the Morotai area, and several hundred troops that were loaded onto it with their gear and that, and makeshift kitchens and that on it, so that's how we came home. But luckily

most of the way was a mill pond. So we got back, it wasn't until

03:00 we got into Moreton Bay that they had a cyclone there. But it was quite a boring trip, you know, you could not get up on - there was no really top deck, there was a little sidewalk around it, but they had a landing barge, so they had some sort of a canvas cover over us from the heat, and it was quite

03:30 stifling and that too. But at times you'd get a puff of fresh air, but it was - and then a few days out we had a chap that had a burst appendix, and they didn't have the facilities on it to do anything for him, and myself and another chap, we looked after him, hardly got any sleep, he was really - and I don't know, but I

04:00 do feel that, you know, he was the first off when we got to Brisbane, they had an ambulance there for him. But I slept through the cyclone because I read all about it in the paper the next day, but I was that tired from looking after him and trying to keep him - bathe his head and doing whatever I could to help him, because he was in a bad way. But whether he survived, I don't know, I never ever got to find out.

04:30 **As a butcher, you didn't feel qualified to operate?**

No, not really, I - and not only that, I didn't have my pocket knife with me, or a knife. But no, there was no - even the first aid bloke, he didn't have the facilities either to help him, whatever pain tablets they - maybe the old Aspro, that was

05:00 about all that they had.

**So from Brisbane, what was the procedure then?**

I caught a train down, we went to - somewhere at - a staging camp out around Kedron I think it was, yes, Kedron, I think, had a staging camp there. They took us out there and

05:30 put us on the train and we finished up at Marrickville, and we were only there a day or two and that's where they demobilised us, you know, we had to go through a process they had there, and we were given transport passes and different things like that. But that's where we finished up, at Marrickville, to be demobilised.

**How would you describe**

06:00 **Edward Kelly's war?**

I suppose you could say mundane in a little bit of a part of it, traumatic in other parts of it, but all in all, summing it up overall, it was a fascinating or - not a fascinating, that's not the word, just

06:30 an experience, that it's hard to describe some of the things and the mateship that was made, really, you keep that in your memory, in your mind, the rest of your life. So I'd say, you've got to say then, it's been more than a fascinating part of a life.

07:00 **You joined up the forces as a fairly inexperienced teenage boy, at the end of the war you were a husband and a father. How did you go settling into that life?**

I think fairly well, really, because as I said, we were fortunate enough to win that money, we were fortunate enough to - I did spend a few hectic months

07:30 really, at Marrickville searching for a home that we could buy, that we could go into, because we were fortunate enough to have the money to do it, and I settled in - we settled in pretty well, it was one of those things that you had to make do, do what you could to settle

08:00 yourself back, I think like a lot of soldiers we were very unsettled in many ways, because of probably that freedom or whatever you'd call it that we had. And I do know a lot who found it very hard to settle down. But no, my frame of mind, and probably my younger days and the parents, the way they taught us to respect

08:30 and accept things, because you had to in younger days, just as they were, and I was lucky enough after a few months to get this home at Arncliffe and settle in there. And I had my work, I worked in the city for about twelve months before, and got more actual butchering experience, but a lot of that was helped by the army, they gave

09:00 us our equipment and also they paid the employer a certain amount of your wages, even though it wasn't that much, I think the full wage was something only about three pound a week at the very most. But the army did do a lot of good in that respect, and help us settle down as far as employment

09:30 went.

**Do you ever resent the fact that kind of your years of youth were taken away by the Second World War?**

Well when you look at the youth today, you've got to say, "Yes." I mean, we certainly did miss out on a lot. But then again, I've got to say that the army today is still helping it, like with our Gold Cards, our Disability

10:00 Allowances and that, and I think they too accept the fact that they did take a lot away from the young today, and I think we do more, the same with your Vietnam veterans, they still help us. So it's made it a lot easier in that respect, to be accepted the way they have in that way.

**I thought I'd ask you actually, how you since the war,**

10:30 **how's the retail butchering job changed and the way that supermarkets and so on have affected that sort of business?**

Well as I continuously say, it has changed considerably. I'd be lost in a butcher's shop now, and looking at some of the butchers working, you would not employ, you could not employ them in the days of our days, because you had to cut, you had to cut for profits,

11:00 because there was very little margin in butchering in those days, I don't know what it is, I think the big supermarkets and the other bigger butchers work on a pretty good margin compared to the butcher in our days. You had to put in the long hours, that's where the meat industry has changed. It was nothing for me every week, I'd leave home at six o'clock in the morning, I wouldn't get home till six o'clock at

11:30 night, and Saturdays and Sundays you'd have to do all your books to get ready, because you were going to have those long days, and three or four o'clock in the morning it was nothing for me to go in Thursday and Friday. And I've worked nearly all night on holiday weekends, if there was a holiday weekend coming up, nine times out of ten you'd nearly have to work all night to get your orders ready,

12:00 a lot of the orders, and get your meat prepared and that, because – and then your next week was a short week, and you still had all your preparing to do in four days. So even your long weekends – your weekends off, you probably had to go over, with the shop closed and that, and do a bit of work and get ready for the next day. But it has changed, long hours have gone, they don't work the hours that butchers in those days did, and it was the same when I was a

12:30 youngster doing my apprenticeship at Forbes. Butchers work long hours, it's changed, the way, the selling, these marinated businesses and all that, and so many different cuts have come in, and your pork was only pork chops and that, but when you look at it today, as I say, I'd be lost in a butcher's shop, yes.

**What's been your**

13:00 **sort of record of attendance at Anzac Day services and marches? What has it meant to you?**

It means a lot, since 1964 I was – like we had an odd reunion, I think three or four, or four or five at Rowe Street in Argyle Place, I think we had one or

13:30 two at the Railway Institute, and then of course as the families grew up it just got away a little bit, and we were – most of the Searchlighters, when I say most, there was eight or ten of us going into the 2nd ack ack in Ultimo, joining their reunion. One year there was twenty-two of us, so that's when I decided, not only myself, but Bill Swinghammer and Chris Mitchell,

14:00 myself and Bobby Andrews, we decided to set off, and we held a couple at the Carlton Rex. But in 1975, I sold up in Sydney and travelled around for a couple of years in a caravan before settling up here, so for about four years, while I was away – it was the only Anzac Days that I've missed, in that, since 1964,

14:30 was when I first started the reunions as we have to the present day. And we were able to get the names and addresses of most of our members. Some we never – that had moved on and never contacted us or been able to. Some have got back in when they've seen our ad in the paper over the years, come back and contacted us,

15:00 and we've held our reunions. But I have not missed, only those four, since 1964.

**And how do you feel about the increasing attendance at Anzac Day services and marches these days, as far as the public goes?**

Quite frankly, it is very touching. I mean particularly in the last four or five years, when more of the younger people –

15:30 and as you walk down George Street and that, the amount of thank yous: "Well done – thank you, thank you," and it is quite touching. And to those that were – I feel that to those that were really in the thick of things as we'd call it, it's got to be more touching to them than it is to ourselves that it is, and no doubt it's a great thing,

16:00 that – and I think that through the schools and that, that it's helping it a lot. And what's happening in Gallipoli and that each year too. But it is quite a thrill to walk down George Street and march on Anzac Day, even though our numbers are getting down and that, but to see the crowds they get there and the

16:30 reception that they give to you as you go by.

**Have you ever wanted to go back to New Guinea, to have a look around?**

Yes, I have, liked to have gone back but I never have. Don, one of our mates has, he's been back there to

Port Moresby and Lae, and also one or two of the others.

17:00 But it's nothing like - the whole thing has disappeared, for where we were, so there's really - to visit the cemetery, we had three chaps buried at Bomana in Port Moresby, we've got photos, and I just recently put in - the three families we did not know of any addresses and that, so in the search section of the [Sydney Daily] Telegraph I put

17:30 an ad in trying to find the families of those three, and we found two. And I will put another ad in shortly and try and find the other one. Mainly because we have a certificate, over at North Head they have what they call a Memorial Walk, and we put our unit in it, it's done in a rubberised walkway,

18:00 and we've paid, which it cost us only a couple of hundred dollars, to put our unit's name in it, and the three members that died in New Guinea, and I have certificates for that, and I have one left, and I'm trying to find it so that I can present it to - the strange part of that, Lonegan, and the woman rang me from

18:30 Castle Hill about it, and she mentioned a Linburn, and Linburn was in our unit, and we never knew till after that he was a cousin of Joe Lonegan, and he never knew that until not many days before Joe had died, and Linburn had never mentioned it. So when we went into it, we found that he was a closer cousin than the lady from -

19:00 when she told us that, so Lyn has that certificate.

**How does it make you feel that searchlights are no longer really a part of military life these days?**

Well, I suppose you know, I've never given that sort of thing a lot of thought, but we still have four of our members that are restoring a searchlight at the North Head Memorial, and they have

19:30 put that searchlight in the air, twice last year and twice this year, June and May. The anniversary of the submarines in the harbour, they exposed the searchlight. They are restricted to what they can do, they can only put it in the air, and they have to get quite a few authorities, mainly because of the

20:00 aerodromes and that so close to Sydney. But the navy has helped us restore that. But no, the 73rd hasn't got away from particularly Don, Rex, Bobby Andrews and Les Blakeley, they're just about got - with the help of the navy to restore the generator and the searchlights. But as I mentioned earlier about the arc lights and carbons,

20:30 they're nearly non-existent, and what they've got is very old stock.

**What's your feelings, or what are your feelings about war, and maybe in reference to the conflicts that Australia's involved in at the moment?**

Naturally nobody would like, nobody likes wars and that, but unfortunately with the way the

21:00 world is, it's happening, and I go along with the Australian troops being there, they've been a part of every other campaign that has taken place, but I think with all the publicity about bringing the Australian soldiers home, I think if you ask the Australian soldier, the man that's trained to be over there, I

21:30 bet he'd say, "Leave us here till we do the job," and that's what it was like there. As Rommel said, one of his statements were, and Hitler, said about the Tobruk Rats, "Why can't you knock those soldiers out." He said, "They're not soldiers, they're Australians," he said, "Give me a garrison of them and I'll conquer the world."

22:00 And I feel that would be the opinion of the Australian soldier. Whether he still thinks the same as the soldier of Gallipoli or the soldier of the Second World War, but I feel in my own opinion he would do the same thing, let's finish the job and get it over and done with.

22:30 **Well, I think we'll get our job over and done with, but I just wanted to ask you one last question. Given that the material on this tape and the archive will be around for we hope many decades to come, is there any message you'd like to leave for future generations, perhaps about serving country, or anything else you want to say?**

Well, Australians have always been proud of their war

23:00 records and that, and I feel that - I hope that the youngsters don't have to go through any wars, but again as I say, if you have to, just accept what you want to do, and keep up the work of Australian soldiers, I think that's the

23:30 one way of putting it, Mat [interviewer], I probably could do it better with a bit more thought, but no, I feel that unfortunately these wars will always be, and unfortunately today the majority of it is religion, and while ever we've got that, I think we'll always have conflict. So Mat,

24:00 thanks very much for this, I feel privileged now that the day is over.

**You're happy to end it, are you?**

Not in one sense that I'm happy to end it, but it probably won't end till I end, but I feel privileged now that these will go into the archives, because

24:30 I've always been with our unit, one of the workers that have kept it going, so I know now that the 73rd and that will be in the archives of the War Museum. Thank you, Mat -

**No worries, mate.**

-and I'm pleased that

25:00 I've done it, I am pleased that I've done it and if anybody that does pick it up on the archives, on the internet, maybe somebody might know me, I don't know, but it's there now, and I've been more than privileged to be a part of it.

**Thanks, Ted.**

Thank you Mat, and Sean [interviewers].

**Pleasure. No worries.**

**INTERVIEW ENDS**