

# Australians at War Film Archive

## Henry Pooley (Harry) - Transcript of interview

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<http://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/1020>

### Tape 1

00:50 **Okay Harry, let's get an introduction to your life story, so if we could start with where you were born?**

I was born in a little town called Tenterfield in New South

01:00 Wales on November 13th 1930, and actually I came from there but I was born in Brisbane. I'll correct that. I was in Brisbane at what was known as Lady Bowen Hospital then, and now it's Anzac House. I was taken from there back to Tenterfield where my Dad worked at one stage as

01:30 a ganger for the Tenterfield Shire, and Mum used to cook for shearers...making brownies and that sort of caper. While Dad was working on the bridges there he ran across a chap that everybody knows now, Errol Flynn. In those days he wasn't a famous actor of course, he was just someone from New Zealand and he was working his way around Australia,

02:00 and Dad then went on to become...he was cooking on one of the stations. I think it was Pikedale or Eureka near Stanthorpe, then he went on somehow and got into being a motor car salesman with a garage in Tenterfield...I don't know their name...Chrysler Corporation, That's correct. He was involved in these

02:30 road rallies you know. He often used to tell me about a chap named Wizard Smith who would do a lot of the rallies in those days, and that was back in 1932 and 1933, I suppose, and that was part of the Depression years. Dad often told me about the people moving from town to town to get their rations and that sort of thing, and they often called into the stations and ask could they do a bit of work

03:00 like, chop a bit of wood. Then they'd only be allowed to stay a couple of days in the town and then they'd move on to another town because they wouldn't give them any more rations until they got to the next town. That was part of the lifestyle in those days. Then after Dad was working as a car salesman he then somehow or other got into growing tobacco,

03:30 and he grew tobacco in the Tenterfield and Texas area. At a later date we came to Brisbane, and if I remember correctly the first place was somewhere around 1933, and we were at New Farm in an old Queenslander down off Brunswick Street

04:00 and we ended up...I think I was about three at the time. We caused a bit of drama one day. The milkman left the gate open and I got out and some chap found me walking down the middle of the tram line. Mum was in a panic but they rescued me and walked me home. Anyway that's some of the things I remember. I do remember then we went from there to Greenslopes. We lived at Greenslopes for a while and

04:30 in the meantime my twin sisters, Kath and Helen, were born, and I remember Mum telling me that they had no money and Dad had to walk from Greenslopes into the hospital and then walk home again when he came in to visit her. Those sorts of things you remember because we get it so easy these days. You know, when you consider it. Then about 1937 I think it must have been

05:00 Dad was coming up in the world a bit. He started importing tobacco...correction, he was making tobacco then and we had a little business in the shed at the back of a house at Nudgee...St Vincent's Road, Nudgee. Still inside the Brisbane area. Later on

05:30 I went back there once to see the house but it had been gone. It had been taken out and a lot of big stores had been put up there when the Americans were there during the war. But what I remember quite clearly was that the house we had was a very modern house for those days. You came in...it had a half circular driveway, gravel driveway. You drove in and on the left hand side you had a beautiful tennis court, grass because

06:00 we used to mow it all the time when we were kids and mark it. And in the half circle there were two golden cypress pine trees and the drive went around to where the garage for the car was on the right

hand side, and in the centre of the driveway was the main entrance to the house which had a cloak room. It was beautiful with mirrors and you went in

- 06:30 there and then there was a very large dining room and the cornices in the house were made up of plaster work with kookaburras sitting on wattle. We had a beautiful fire place and the dining room table was actually a billiard table come dining table. You could wind it out to take six people or fifteen people. It was so heavy that it took about eight men to lift it.
- 07:00 It had a slate top underneath the timber. When you wanted to play billiards you extended it out and took the top off and you had a beautiful slate billiard table. The kitchen at that time was very modern for the day. As I say about 1937, '38. It had one of the first electric ranges in the kitchen. It was really a lovely home with verandahs down both sides. By that time
- 07:30 we had another brother born, Fred, and also a younger brother Jack. We also had my eldest sister that Mum had had previous to her marriage to Dad, Jo. So there was quite a team of us there. I remember at one stage we all had our tonsils out at the same time so Mum was virtually running a hospital.
- 08:00 I often think today when we hear about people having a lot to do. I often think they should take a little visit back. But anyway I think I slept on the verandah at that time, but what I vividly remember is even though I was only eight years old, being the eldest in the family I had to pull my weight as they say. My twin sisters helped occasionally
- 08:30 but mostly after finishing school, Mum would give us a malted milk or something like that and we would have a bit of a play, and when Dad got home about 6.00, we'd have our evening meal and then we'd go down to the shed at the back and we'd pack the tobacco. That involved a big tea chest of imported tobacco and we would have to weigh out 2 ounces at a time on a scale. We were only eight and seven at that time. Then we'd
- 09:00 seal them up in little bags and place them in a packet. The cigarettes were called "Old Chum". The cigarettes that Dad imported were in bulk and we had to put them in packets, and they were called "Signals". We had these huge dummy cartons about six feet high and for years they used to dominate my dreams.
- 09:30 I was working there every night and I didn't get much of a chance to do homework because I had my chores to do being the eldest. And to make matters worse, I don't suppose you would say worse, but it became quite complicated because Mum at that time was Roman Catholic and her Mother was Irish
- 10:00 and she had come from up near Maryborough. She had been working as a waitress on the railway when she met my Father. I'll just have to stop for a minute. As I was staying, Mum had been a waitress on the railways and her Mother was Irish. So we were obligated to attend a Catholic school, and we used to
- 10:30 go by train from Nudgee into Toombul which was very close to a huge convent. Along the line I became an alter boy and I vividly remember the problems we had because on Sunday we had Mass and it was very hard to get there on a Sunday.
- 11:00 The trains didn't run all the time like these days. It was mainly weekdays that they ran and Dad was a Mason so therefore it was a bit of a clash, and Dad was usually busy on Sundays with the car, so I didn't get to go to Mass. And each Monday morning I can remember this Sister...she was quite a large woman and she had a great cross hanging from a
- 11:30 chain and she'd waddle out in front of the class and in a very Irish voice say, "Put up your hands all those who haven't been to Mass on Sunday". Being a good little alter boy I would put my hand up. "All those come out to the front of the class. Put you hand out." A swipe with a great cane.
- 12:00 And lots of times it would leave a bit of a weal on your hand which I was a bit annoyed about even though I was only a kid at the time, because I had no choice over whether I got there or not. And I had no choice whether I was going to get a smack with this cane. For a long time too that was another thing that dominated my dreams sometimes, this huge figure with the gold cross. Later on I thought she probably would have been better off
- 12:30 with a pair of jack boots and a riding crop. That were the way things were those days. Another incident I remember on the religious side of it. We were playing a game, us kids. It was called "Brandy" in those days. You'd throw a ball at each other and if you hit someone it was their turn to throw it at someone else. The priest at the time...I've forgotten his name but
- 13:00 he was a bit of a hell raiser and he was Irish too. Irish extraction I think. He was standing on the top of the church talking to some chap and someone threw a ball at me and it missed and it went up behind the priest, so I went up to get it. I had always been taught manners. In those days you never walked through people or in front of them, so I went behind him and got the ball. And as I was coming down he called me over, and when I came over he just back handed me with his open hand
- 13:30 across the face and told me that will teach you to walk up the steps of the church when I'm talking to someone. So that pretty well put me off religion. The next time I had something to do with religion was when I was in the trenches in Korea but that was later on.

## How did you get on with your brothers and sisters?

Very well actually. Well, Fred was a bit of a terror. He used to

- 14:00 do a lot of things. When Dad came home He'd want to know who done it and Fred would be out of sight and of course me being the eldest, I'd cop it. Probably I should have known better being the eldest. Helen and Kath were very unlike as twins. One was dark and one was fair. One took after the Irish side of Mum who
- 14:30 was fair and the other one she took after Dad. Dad actually...I should have mentioned, was an Englishman. He came out in 1920 and he served during the 1914-18 [First World] War. He joined up at sixteen and he was in the Royal Horse Artillery until he was invalided out with rheumatic fever after which he joined the merchant navy.
- 15:00 He often told me about the times they used to come back from England taking all the bodies...the Americans, in 1918 back to America. They used to come out with all the meat in the fridges for the troops and take the bodies back in the fridges for burial in America because even in those days the Americans always took the soldiers back home for burial.
- 15:30 I'm afraid that never happened much with us. But when I come to think of it, Dad's life wasn't an easy life and in Cornwall where he came from, it was mainly a tin mining area and lots of times there, the boys were down the mines at eight. Later on I did visit his brother and his wife and they told me a fair bit about it at the time too.
- 16:00 I think back and say that he probably didn't think he was being hard on me because I wasn't down a mine, I was just out the back packing tobacco after school and it didn't matter if I missed my homework or not. He always considered himself as a self-made man and that was it. To carry on from there, my youngest brother...we always used to get involved in...because we had such a huge house at Nudgee,
- 16:30 and Dad eventually had these...this was 1938, and he had the tobacco business going pretty well, and he had two late model Morris 25 panel vans running around Brisbane selling the tobacco, and he worked with a firm called Tickles at the time. They were wholesalers and they used to be down near Roma Street.
- 17:00 He bought this 1935 advanced Nash Ambassador and it weighed two ton. The body was so solid, the guards and that, if you hit it with a hammer you would crack the paint, that's about all. A bit different to the cars we have nowadays. It had an eight cylinder engine in it and it had sixteen spark plugs.
- 17:30 Two to each cylinder. It had two sets of points and a rather unusual idea in those days, it had its own self lubricating system which was a glass jar under the bonnet with a hose leading down and a plunger under the dashboard with little one eighth copper pipes...about 2 millimetre in today's language, running to each of the shackles on the car and the lubricant points and
- 18:00 all you did when you wanted to lubricate the car was press this three times. You couldn't start it in gear because the starter motor was hooked up to the clutch. When you pushed the clutch in you disengaged the gear box anyway. So you couldn't start it in gear which was a safety factor even in those days. It was really a lovely car. But the only drawback was that it had a fur upholstery because it came from America; Nash La Fayette made it.
- 18:30 It was very, very hot in our climate and lots of time when Dad had it in 1939...we still had it up until 1940, we'd have to sit in the car after school and wait for Dad to bring us back home and sometimes he wouldn't finish work and then he'd go across and have a couple with his friends and all the rest of it and it would be six o'clock and we'd be just about cooking in
- 19:00 with the fur seats on the car. So we would occasionally go for a drive in the country. I remember one day Mum said, "You know Harry, we haven't had a puncture for a long time." And he said, "Will you be quiet." And the next minute...bang! We had a puncture and of course he blamed Mum. We used to get a
- 19:30 holiday occasionally. Once every couple of years and we'd go down to a place called Margate near Redcliffe and we'd spend a week there. I think Bronty was actually the name of the place. That was quite enjoyable. But that was about the only holidays we did have and as far as toys went...toys were what we got at birthdays and Christmas. Nothing in between. You could shout your lungs out but you didn't get anything.
- 20:00 We were involved in tennis. As we grew up we played tennis in this house at Nudgee with our tennis court. And at the back of the house...it was on two acres...we had a vegetable garden growing lettuce and cabbage and beetroot, spinach and all those sorts of things. And rhubarb. Mum used to make rhubarb jam. And then on the side near the tennis court we had about three mango trees, a custard apple tree,
- 20:30 Japanese persimmon, Chinese persimmon trees. We had a fowl yard with a big black Orpington rooster. I remember when Dad brought him home I wanted to know what was in the case and I put my finger in and I soon found out. Anyway life ran along pretty well there. Then around about 1940 Dad decided to go up to Croydon.

- 21:00 He was gold mining with a friend of his. A chap by the name of Bob Dunlop. Bob was a bit of a character. He apparently was a blood brother to one of the tribes and he used to tell us some stories that were quite good. I remember one particular one, later on in life...when we look at the set up today...and he was saying that he had this Aboriginal chap
- 21:30 Charlie I think was his name. And at one time they had this group of people come up from one of the Universities...I think it was Melbourne. Anyway they were up there to study the Aboriginal legends and law. They did a thesis I think on it when they went back. Anyway Charlie used to tell them all about these bunyips and serpents in the creek and all this sort of things. One morning...
- 22:00 Bob used to get up first at daybreak and make the coffee and get breakfast for these students, and anyway before the students were awake Bob said to Charlie, "You're an awful liar Charlie." "What do you mean boss?" "Well, everything you told those people yesterday, there was no truth in that." And Charlie looked at him and said, "Yes boss, but they don't know." So I often wonder sometimes just who the best conmen in Australia are.
- 22:30 Maybe I shouldn't have said that. Anyway that was a fact in those days. Anyway Dad was mining up there and in the meantime he had struck a low ebb in his life. The business had gone broke and that's why he went up there, to try and get some finance. So it was left to Mum and I to do the shifting; so it came to these tea chests again. And for a long while tea chests haunted me because we shifted so many times
- 23:00 and I was always packing them. Anyway we moved up to Wavell Heights in about 1941, '42, sometime in that era. Yes, that's right. Anyway we were in a house there. It was at a place called Seven Hills, out Carina way now.
- 23:30 The Americans had arrived in Brisbane at that time and they were going to make an airfield and the most logical place they found was Eagle Farm, which we now call Eagle Farm Racecourse. But it was all swamp land. That didn't worry the Yanks [Americans]. There's another story there. I can remember Dad telling me...he had worked on the wharfs for a little while as a gate keeper. He said this Liberty ship came in
- 24:00 with machinery, bulldozers and all that, and they were taking them out through Brett's Wharf and it had one gate. Anyway the Liberty ships were on a quick turnaround. They had to unload the ship and go back. They were only supposed to be built for one trip but a lot of them did a lot of trips and were going years later under Liberian certificates. One of them actually broke in half. That was the Rufus King and part of its tail is still outside
- 24:30 Moreton Bay. Oh yes, I was coming back to this. They were unloading this machinery— the bulldozers and GMCs [brand of truck]—and a lieutenant came up and said to the gate keeper and said, "Look we've got to hurry this up. I've got to get the men and equipment off." The gate keeper being a real wharfie said, "That's the way it goes." The yank wasn't used to this so he turned around and yelled out to his sergeant,
- 25:00 "Sergeant, get one of those machines and see that row of galvanised iron, I want you to knock it down." And of course the gate keeper was livid. So they just got on a dozer and just flattened a section and the machinery and dozers just went out there. So that solved the problem of getting it unloaded
- 25:30 quickly. No mucking about. Anyway the same thing, when they decided to make this airfield, there was a continuous convoy of GMC trucks running from Seven Hills. And their method of moving...they practically move the whole hill...was to dig a trench into the side of the hill and place logs over the top with a small square hole in the middle. Then they'd back the GMC tip truck in underneath
- 26:00 the logs in this trench, and then the dozer would come over the top of the hill and push the dirt down onto the logs, and through the hole and fill the truck up. It was a very quick and efficient method of filling them up. And of course it only took a few minutes and they were full and off. They shifted virtually that hill out to Eagle Farm and built the airfield there. That's one of the things I remember. Then where we were living
- 26:30 at Wavell Heights and the chap along side us...no that was earlier in the piece. His pride and joy was a 1939 Chevrolet Standard Sedan. When the war started up the army commandeered most of the vehicles around, and being new that was a staff car. I think it cost £349 in those days.
- 27:00 He nearly cried because he had just got it. Anyway then we had an American search light battery which came to the house along a bit, and they were stationed there. We got to know them pretty well. They weren't a bad lot but the only thing, Dad introduced them to Aussie beer. The Americans drink light beer and our beer was pretty heavy. One night we had a party and Dad had got a lot of Moreton Bay crabs
- 27:30 and I remember we had them there and they were all running around. We had them in sugar bags with mango leaves and they were running around the garden and we were fishing them out of the geraniums and out of the...I forget the other plant now...and tying them up again to go in the pot. Anyway the party that night was a great success except that beer and mud crabs don't go well together and half of the American search light crew were hallucinating.

- 28:00 They weren't used to the heavy beer, you see. So that was part of my memories there. In the mean time Dad was up in Croydon and Forsayth. He didn't do much good, gold mining. Then we shifted from there to Camp Hill if I remember correctly. We had a lovely
- 28:30 home there. It was a high story home with a tennis court, timber. I can't remember the name of the street but it was half way up the hill at Camp Hill. I attended the Camp Hill State School. Of course when we used to shift...in those days when you used to shift from state School to convent, or convent to state school, they used to put you back a grade, so
- 29:00 by the time I was about 12 I was only in 6th Grade. I passed that anyway, and then Dad took me out of there and I went to work for him. He started up another business in Albert House in Brisbane which was opposite to where the Presbyterian Church is now. The room that we had used to overlook the church so I used to see it everyday. And just next to that was the Tivoli Theatre
- 29:30 and across over...opposite the Presbyterian Church was the CIB [detective] branch in a very old building there that has since been demolished. A lot of the detectives, Dad got to know them and he was an honorary member of the Police Club at the time. They were always calling in to see him. My job then was making...
- 30:00 I must have been about 13 and I had left school and I was making moccasins and leather wallets and then we were packing tobacco again. I stayed there for about six months I suppose.

**Harry, can I ask you...the moccasins and leather wallets you were making, was that part of the family business or was that something you were doing on the side?**

No that was part of Dad's business. He used

- 30:30 to sell them out through Tickles, the people I mentioned before, the wholesalers. The moccasins were like an Indian moccasin. So I learned a bit. We used to use kangaroo hide and we had the curved cutting knives which we used to cut everything out. We made a trick wallet where you'd put a ten pound note on one side and when you closed it, it disappeared and reappeared on the other side. It had elastic rubber bands in it. When you turned it and closed it, the note would appear the other way.
- 31:00 I remember that quite clearly. Then Dad had a friend of his where he used to park his car. This Nash, and that was in Houndsal's Garage. He was an Englishman and that was at the back of the City Hall. I'm not quite sure what's at the back of City Hall now. There used to be a lane way there and we were right opposite the lane way.
- 31:30 And there was one entrance to this building, the garage, and inside there was an earth floor and a galvanised iron roof with skylights and galvanised iron windows at the back which you used to push out. It had a long bench right along where the mechanics used to work. A couple of petrol pumps out the front and opposite that were the Brisbane markets. That was in Ann Street. There was an inward going entrance and an outward going one. You used to
- 32:00 go in right opposite where the pumps were and come out further up. And along side we had a case manufacturing business which was run by...oh, I forget his name. He and his wife used to run it. They used to make all the cases to put fruit in, being so close to the markets. And down the road from there at the Windsor Hotel which used to be on the corner opposite the CIB. It was quite handy. Anyway, I spent nearly 5 years there, and I went in with the idea of being an apprentice.
- 32:30 But Dad said you don't have to worry about being an apprentice. Anyway I virtually spent most of my time pumping petrol and in those days you used to have a long handle about that long and you worked it back and forward like that. And I reckon I must have had the strongest right arm in Brisbane because every time a car pulled up I had to fill it up with petrol. There was petrol rationing on in those days
- 33:00 and we used to have cars with the old gas producers on the back of them. I made a mistake one day and put the petrol hose in the wrong hole which is where the petrol tank used to be and the petrol went down into the gutter and I lost about a gallon. And of course it was rationed so I got in trouble over that. But my main chore was...we had about 30 cars parked in there for the day from around Brisbane. And my job was to dust every one of them over.
- 33:30 That's in between serving petrol, fixing up the punctures when they came in and washing all the spare parts for the mechanics. Ride a bicycle from the...this was progressing from about 13 to when I was about 18. I used to ride a bicycle...he bought me a bicycle. I used to walk around most of the time. But then he got a bit flash and he bought me a bicycle.
- 34:00 So I had to go down as far as Newstead on a bicycle. I remember coming back with a muffler and a tail pipe over my shoulder and gaskets hanging around my neck and a basket with pistons in it...weaving in and out of the traffic. I learnt to drive there but by the time I reached sixteen, Mum said, "Harry, you had better pay to get him some driving lessons". But Dad
- 34:30 was very hard as a teacher or I was very hard to be taught. I don't know which was the case. Anyway I had about four driving lessons and I passed my licence and got my licence, so then I used to park all the cars. The owners would drop them at the entrance and I would have to whip them inside and park them. I'd have to wipe them all. When I had any spare time then I could do some mechanical work. So as you see I didn't get much in the way of mechanical practice.

- 35:00 But I learned a lot from washing the parts. I learned where they went, and by buying them I knew what I wanted and I could often go into those places and I could tell them...they'd bring out a part and I'd say, no that's not it. There were quite a number of motor houses around Brisbane then. There was Escorts which used to be down near the garden in Albert Street. There was Howards and Martin Wilson.
- 35:30 They've since gone. Motor traders. There was Eagers down in Newstead. They were the main ones.
- Can I ask. You ended up leaving school pretty early to do all this work, did you miss going to school? Did you actually want to continue with school or were you happy to leave?**
- You didn't have much choice. I was the eldest
- 36:00 and even when I worked in Albert House making tobacco, I got seven and six in those days, and I had to put five shillings in to Mum and two and six to me. When I went to work in the garage I got twelve and six. Apparently the bloke wanted to give me a bit more but Dad said, no twelve [shillings] and six [pence] is good enough for him.
- What would you do with your money?**
- Pictures used to be threepence.
- 36:30 I was a great reader. I was always a bit of a book worm. My brother and sister used to laugh at me. I used to buy the comics and the books and they'd read them but I would never get any of the sweets that they bought. Helen and ...I got on well with one sister, Helen. We got on well together as kids. I had the occasional fight with the next younger brother, as all brothers do.
- 37:00 I remember once, I wanted a hand to put something in a Bedford utility at home...a Vauxhall sorry, a similar thing. I wanted him to give me a hand and he wouldn't give me a hand. I was about 18 at the time, and all he did was sling a bunch of fire crackers under there when I was working. And of course that was bad enough, trying to lift it with fire crackers going off. I got out and I was going to kill him if I got hold of him.
- 37:30 Fred was pretty wise, he made himself scarce. As I say, I spent most of my time in the garage. I remember having a strike once. There was no electricity. That didn't worry the pumps because they were hand pumps. But the air compressor couldn't work so it was my job...I had to pump up every tyre by hand with a foot pump. And when they brought a truck tyre in, it meant 60 or 70 pound. So I
- 38:00 developed a good set of lungs, as well as a right arm. And I think I was always down to the right a bit. That was the trouble because I was always pumping this way, like leaning over. So it came to my attention later on when I joined the army.

## Tape 2

- 00:33 **Harry, what did you do for fun during that time?**
- Well, there wasn't a lot for fun. The garage where I worked, we used to start at eight o'clock in the morning and that was coming from Camp Hill by tram. And the trams in those days were what they used to call the old toast rack type. It had seats just straight across the tram with a foot board down each side where the conductor used to go along
- 01:00 hail, rain or shine. He had a raincoat on and a Foreign Legion hat, which later on I used to wear myself actually. But sitting on the front of this tram on the front seats sometimes, coming down Camp Hill when it was raining and the rain would be pouring on to you as a passenger and the motorman used to be standing up there in oil skins and winding this brake to slow the tram down as it came down the hill you see. It would go at a rattling good pace.
- 01:30 So I would start work at eight o'clock in the garage and we'd work right through and we use to have half an hour for lunch and lots of time I wouldn't get a full lunch because I might be down at Eagers cycling the bike back. And I would just have time to have something to eat and someone would want petrol. And 5 o'clock, or half past three in the afternoon to 4 o'clock the customers used to come for their cars. So my job was to get their cars, just before they came and park them in the
- 02:00 street. And I got very good at parking cars. I could park a car 15 feet long in about 17 feet because I would just whip up alongside them and come back at the right angle and move forward and top, because I didn't have a lot of time. I got quite good at it because you had to grab the parking spots as you saw them. There was traffic going up and down Ann Street. You had to get out with the car first of all, then
- 02:30 get into a parking spot. And that went on to about 5 o'clock when the last person came to get their car. We had a variety of cars there, Chryslers and Terraplanes. There was one Terraplane that might be of interest to you. It was a 1937 model and the speedo...what was unique about it...as your speed increased the colour of the

- 03:00 speedo changed. It started off at, I think it was light orange, and green. And when you got up to about 40 mile an hour it started to go to red, or pink I should say. And then it went to red and around about 60 it was purple, and you didn't have to look at the needle. The colour of the speedo told you what you were doing. What it was trying to
- 03:30 tell you was that red was dangerous and purple was really, really dangerous. But that car could do...it was only 26 horse power and that could do 95 mile an hour. Miles an hour, not kilometres an hour. So today's cars ...and those cars were built with the chassis. And what I've noticed, like being a mechanic for all these years, the type of car in those days with the chassis and the cross section, the wind turbulence underneath used to have a tendency to
- 04:00 hold them to the ground, not so the cars today. The cars today are built more like speed boats and they have a flat bottom which the result is...I think half the cause of accidents today is the fact that the car is virtually floating because the faster you go you create a cushion of air underneath which is lifting the car and you often see cars which have been hit at intersections, they just roll straight over on their back. And I put it down to the fact that the cars are built a lot lighter
- 04:30 than they were in our day. They've got a lot more horse power, power weight ratio. They go a lot faster and they get off the mark a lot faster, but I honestly don't think they're very much safer. As I said before, "The faster you go, the higher you lift". It's a bit like Donald Campbell when he had his accident on the lake with Blue Bird. The motor boat kept coming up until such time as it went right over
- 05:00 on its back because of the wind turbulence. Cars like Citroen and that are a lot more streamlined. But a lot of the other cars, and I won't mention names...some of them...that's why we drive a four wheel drive. A lot of people say they're dangerous but you've got some weight and so long as you drive them carefully you're not a danger to anyone. They do have that safety factor. Anyway, coming back to the garage,
- 05:30 my day was from eight in the morning...I got up earlier than that, but I started at eight. Five o'clock in the afternoon we would start to close up and I would give a lift home with the boss's son. They lived at Greenslopes. It would be six o'clock before I left work and nearly seven o'clock before I got home. And that was my day's work and
- 06:00 I started that when I was about 13. Then Saturday you came in. There was no Saturday off. And you did virtually the same thing because a lot of people at the markets worked on Saturday and it would be one or two o'clock before you left on Saturday. And when you got home there would things to do like the tennis court had to be mowed so we could play tennis. And there was the garden to do and Dad was always...being the eldest,
- 06:30 Dad was always saying, "Where's Harry?" And Harry would be trying to read a comic, so I wouldn't get far, and I would be down marking the tennis court with my brother of course, if they found him. And the two girls. We used to have Saturday or Sunday afternoon playing tennis. I remember across the road lived some people and he was the manager of 4KQ at the time, and one of his daughters, Gay
- 07:00 it was, she used to come across and play tennis with us. Then some evenings we'd ride a push bike from Camp Hill down to Cleveland. It didn't take long, but if we went to the pictures we'd often walk from Camp Hill to save the tram fare and we'd walk from there into Stone's Corner. A fair hike. We'd go to...I think the theatre was called the Alhambra.
- 07:30 Not quite sure, but the Alhambra Theatre and we used to go there. That was mainly the life at the time. We didn't have a lot of time for fun. We went to the pictures and the matinees at times. At that time, the Americans were virtually running Brisbane, you might say. Macarthur had taken over the main hotel in Brisbane...I just can't think of the name.
- 08:00 Anyway They've got a memorial up for him there. The officers took over one of the girl's colleges. They virtually took over everything, all the big hotels and everything. There was a lot of discontent with our men because they had the money. And our blokes were on six bob a day at the time. Our uniforms weren't elegant like there's were, and
- 08:30 of course the majority of girls used to favour the Americans. They had more money, they were better looking and they had a better line.

**Is this the Battle of Brisbane that you're perhaps talking about?**

No, I didn't see that so I won't comment on that. The only thing I did see...they split Brisbane into two sections, the south and the north. And across the river on the south side was for the Negro element of the American Army, and the white's were on this side.

- 09:00 Anyway one night we used to cross the bridge to go out towards Camp Hill and we were driving down Stanley Street and this American white MP [Military Police] was chasing a black soldier and he just pulled his 45 [gun] out and shot him. Yeah, no trouble at all. The Americans were allowed to carry side arms and our troops didn't. I always thought to myself at the time that our government
- 09:30 was very, very...not knowing the full circumstances I suppose it's hard to comment, but I think in our own country we should have had the right to be equal to the people who were here, or they not carry

arms either. But I believe the Battle of Brisbane happened over an American MP shooting one of the Australian diggers

- 10:00 or something. There was a bit of a fight. And they tore up half the picket fences around Spring Hill and there was a real big stoush I believe. There were quite a number of incidents I believe. There was one at Rockhampton too. There were two trains...most of our blokes were from 9th Division and they were pretty hard blokes and they were going up to New Guinea. They had come home from Libya and those places. And they were going up to New Guinea
- 10:30 and the American troops were mainly stationed in New Zealand and South Australia and so they were well away from the front line. A lot of the New Zealand troops went on to Iwo Jima and those places. But in Brisbane it was virtually taken over by the Americans. The cab drivers wouldn't...if there was an American standing there and digger standing there, the American always got in the cab first.
- 11:00 And the strange thing with that, it was the same in Townsville only about five or four years ago when our boys came home from Timor. I was up there to welcome home the First Battalion which was my battalion. Anyway an American ship was in at the time, helicopter support and aircraft. There were a lot of Americans come off the ship there and I remember one bloke saying,
- 11:30 "We like Australia man, it's just like home." And he said, "We get \$2 for one of ours." And of course a lot of our blokes who came back from Timor, they couldn't get a cab either because the cab drivers and everybody catered to the Americans up there. It was a bit of a sore point. And you see a lot of these young girls, 14 and 15 on the arms of these blokes with Hawaiian shirts on walking around the town.
- 12:00 They thought they were gods I suppose. It just seems strange to me how everybody caters for money. Coming back...I got away from the subject. Coming back to Brisbane and the Americans in Brisbane. That's the main thing I remember. In the meantime we lived at Camp Hill. A funny thing happened one day. The
- 12:30 Americans used to get all the output from the Nestlé's factory and you couldn't buy a Violet Crumble bar or chocolate. It all went to the American canteens and the army. We knew one bloke, he was going out with my eldest sister Jo for a while and he used to often bring us these Violet Crumble bars. We thought it was great.
- 13:00 A lot of the Americans were very generous. I remember some Americans giving a tram driver five pounds. They didn't even know the value of a nine penny fare. They had that much money in their pockets. And newspaper boys. They'd give them a pound or ten shillings for a paper. A lot of them were pretty good. What pulled a lot of the girls in too was their uniforms.
- 13:30 They were so flash and a lot of them found out afterwards when they went back as war brides that back in their own country they were probably living in the swamps in Louisiana or somewhere or Tennessee and it was a rude awakening for a lot of brides. But there were a lot of decent Americans. Don't get me wrong. I don't think anybody should knock a country on a whole.
- 14:00 Everybody is different. Sometimes the government dictates what people do in countries. I found out later on in life that you judge people by how they treat you and how you treat them. If they're treating you okay then you treat them okay until such time as you have an altercation or something like that. Anyway that was the main thing with the Americans. They had a base on Stradbroke Island.
- 14:30 We used to go fishing occasionally. We couldn't go fishing much during the war years of course but after the war years we'd go down with some of the police members and we'd go fishing. I was about 18 at the time then I suppose. Anyway we ended up moving from Camp Hill then. Dad had decided to...this was up to about late 1949
- 15:00 in Brisbane. Do you want to ask me anything more about that era?

**Well, the only thing I was going to ask you there Harry, what did you witness...was it an Australian that you saw shoot this Negro [African American]?**

No an American. I did say an American white MP.

**Because you were saying the Australian MPs didn't have guns, so it must have been an American. So I was just trying to clarify that.**

- 15:30 We weren't allowed...they carried batons. But the other part I mentioned about the Battle of Brisbane. As I say, I didn't know much about it, but since then I've heard the story that it was an American MP who shot an Australian. We had that trouble overseas later on.

**We might continue with your life.**

- 16:00 **You said when you were 19 you moved. Is that right?**

Yes, we moved then out to Inglewood, a little town south of Warwick. Between Warwick and Goondiwindi. Incidentally my Mum and Dad were married in Warwick. Dad had become friendly with a tobacco grower down there who was Yugoslav.



- 16:30 His name was Wosenjak if I remember correctly. They went into partnership and established a tobacco factory in Inglewood and I've got a couple of photographs there because I just got a call from Inglewood the other day. They're bringing the tobacco factory back into the town again and they want photographs and they want people who can tell them about the area see. Anyway to make a long story short, we built this tobacco factory
- 17:00 I came in...because we went into help him . We were still more or less under control. I was there because I was used to machinery, so I looked after all the machinery. The guillotine cutters and a steam boiler. We had a boiler man there. We used to bring the tobacco in from the farm, mainly Wosenjak's farm.
- 17:30 My job was blending it. I remember Dad used to say...we had 100 pound blends that we used to put down into a big square wooden crate. We'd put 25 pound of tobacco leaves that were nice and bright and it looked good. And 25 pounds of tobacco leaves that smelt good, and 25 pound that felt very good
- 18:00 and 25 pound that burnt well. Sometimes one or the others wouldn't burn too well. So you blended them all together and you sprayed them with liquor which was made up of rum, usually over proof rum and glycerine, honey and sometimes a bit of molasses. And the stems used to be taken out
- 18:30 because the stems contain most of the nicotine. So we had to peel the leaf. We had about 10 or 12 girls there who used to strip all the tobacco leaves. And you used to steam it first to make it soft. That was the idea of the steam boiler. We used to have a long boiler with wire netting across the top of it. The tobacco would be brought in and laid on there and the steam would soften it up and the girls would peel them off and put them into boxes which would come down to us. We'd separate them.
- 19:00 And we used to use different other things. Some roots from trees, kumara root and different things Dad used to use. We made a tobacco called HAP which was my Dad's initials, Henry Augustine Pooley. It was in a red packet and it was fine cut, a bit like Log Cabin. Then we made a ready rub mixture and that was called HAP2. We used to get a lot of
- 19:30 sceptics. I remember one night we got in the pub, the Royal Hotel. This bloke was always running down the tobacco and we decided to play a bit of a joke and we got hold of a Log Cabin tin and because I was the bloke who was sealing things up. I used to get the HAP, put it in wax proof paper and seal it up and put it in the Log Cabin tin and tighten it down.
- 20:00 Anyway when we were talking in the bar we offered him a smoke of HAP and he said, "I'm not smoking that rubbish." Then we'd pull out... "Oh, you'd better have a Log Cabin." Oh yes and He'd roll himself up a Log Cabin and that's the decent tobacco he'd say.

#### **Did you tell him?**

No. I remember as a boy, going back to the garage, tobacco was in short supply. We

- 20:30 used to often get an empty packet and just for a joke I'd fill it up with sawdust and seal it up and throw it out in the footpath and wait for these blokes to come along. And they'd look around like this and they'd pull something out of their pocket and drop it and pick it up, and around the corner they'd go and often...I won't tell you about the sounds I heard coming from them when they opened it up and found it was sawdust. Anyway
- 21:00 going back to Inglewood. I was about 19 and I had never had a drink of alcohol in my life then. In fact I had never been out after midnight. I always had to be home. Anyway Fred and Dad and young Jack and myself, we boarded at the Royal Hotel on the verandah you see. The hotel was owned by people named Rabbit. They had about five or six daughters I think.
- 21:30 I don't remember all their names. But I took up football and I played football with the Inglewood team and I went out with my first girl then, at 19.

#### **Who was she?**

She was a sixteen year old and her name was June McGregor, that's right. I believe she's still alive in Inglewood someone was saying the other day. I did meet her later on

- 22:00 after I came back from Korea. I was secretary of the Apex Club in Goondiwindi. But that's another story. Anyway coming back to tobacco, we used to go out to the dances there and we'd go to Oman-ama which was about 15 mile this side of Inglewood. And of course we'd all go out there and most of the men would take a bottle of beer with them and I bought a
- 22:30 motor bike. I had a 1948 Matchless...no my mistake, that was later when I came back from Korea. We used to come out and people used to hide their beer down the rabbit warrens. There was no liquor allowed at the dance hall you see. So they would come out for a drink and they'd have this bottle of beer with a string tied to it down this hole in case the police came along you see.
- 23:00 They were hilarious nights at the dances there and we had a wonderful time. Then back to Inglewood. The first time I rode a motorbike there was ...That's right, I had bought this Matchless. I remember now. I bought it in Brisbane. My memory's slipping. It was a 350 Matchless motorbike, an English make. It had a big Indian head transfer on the petrol tank and I was very proud of this. I could put a set a rings

in that in about one hour.

- 23:30 Take the petrol tank off, take the top off, slip the rings in because I always believed that being cast iron they would wear quicker than a ball you see, so I thought if I let it get too slack it would wear the ball, so I would change the rings about every 5000 miles. I must have been a bit of a wild one in those days. I remember out of Oman-ama, coming back, there used to be a place called ...it was a farm run by a couple of brothers, Charles their name was.
- 24:00 We used to play football anyway. There was a corner there and it was gravel. A lot of gravel there on the way to Inglewood in those days. I used to go around that corner flat out and the motor bike would do 80, and down the gravel track, centred on one of the wheel tracks because when I came back from Korea I went out there and somebody said, "I knew you were back." I said, "Why's that?" And he said, "I saw you go round the bend.
- 24:30 There's only one bloke who ever took that bend like that." And I remember the policeman. His name was Jim Ford and he was a very tall chap. I used to go out and we'd race around the town race course. He would hear the motor bikes out there and he came up there one day and he said, "I'll get you. I heard you out there." And another day I took one of the girls from Inglewood
- 25:00 out for a ride on a pillion seat and he was after me again because I only had a temporary licence, a learner's licence, and I wasn't supposed to carry pillion passengers. I used to go out... I went out to one of the dances on a motor bike. I remember we had coffee pot of rum and it was a cold winter's night and between the two of us, we drank the bottle of rum and
- 25:30 I think the only reason we stayed up right was because I leaned to the right and he leaned to the left. Anyway we survived that. I came back in and someone had an old Rudge motorbike, a 1938 model they used to use for racing. And we went out on the Inglewood race course and at that time I didn't know anything about track racing and all I knew was
- 26:00 the higher the gear the faster you go. So I put it in top gear but of course when I tried to hold it into the contour out I went. And then I learnt that if you want to take a tight curve you change down gears. So I learned a lesson there. Anyway we were there for quite a while, about a year I suppose. Probably about a year. And Dad had a fall out with his partner because the tobacco that came from that area
- 26:30 wasn't suitable to make a real good tobacco and he wanted all the tobacco to come from his area, and Dad wanted to import some Rhodesia tobacco to make the blend up. He knew a lot about it, I will give him that. When it was at Texas...just going back a bit, the day I was born there was a cockatoo, one of the golden crested cockatoos. I've got one here actually.
- 27:00 He fell out of a tree the day I was born and they named him Joey. They raised him and everybody who used to come to the tobacco farm would say to Dad, "Hello Harry, how's the tobacco?" And this bird learned that. He'd say, "Hello Harry how's the tobacco?" And he used to sing a song in those days called "Tra la and boomsidaisy". He'd get on the perch and go from one foot to the other going like this, up and down. And He'd put his tail out.
- 27:30 He was a real terror. He used to get on the clothes line and Mum would finish hanging all the washing out and He'd be walking along pulling all the pegs out. Then he got up and chewed all the lino on the kitchen. But he survived until one day when Dad was planting tomatoes and Dad had just finished planting a row of tomatoes. This was at Nudgee. He straightened up his back and he turned
- 28:00 around to have a look at his handy work, no tomatoes! They were all laying on the ground and he looked down and there was Joey just snipping the last one off. He was walking along behind Dad cutting the tomato plants off. So Dad ended up...he was disgraced. He took off—Dad was after him—and flew up into a big gum trees. So Dad shot the branch from under him. He came down and he had one wing cut. He couldn't fly that well.
- 28:30 He got away and then a couple of days later a young bloke brought him back in a suitcase. A little port. He found him and brought him back. So we got Joey back again and he survived until we went to New Farm of course. We couldn't stand his yelling at half past four in the morning. Dad used to swear at him. He would call him a so and so and the bird must have remembered because one day Dad was talking to him nicely when we had a visitor and the
- 29:00 bird said, "You bloody so and so. He swore at him. Anyway we gave him to some people by the name of Burchell out here at Sunnybank. He was still alive...when I was 25 he was still alive. But going back to Inglewood, Dad fell out with Wosenjak and we went back to Brisbane. I took a job in a garage there. It was called McCorkills Garage
- 29:30 and anyway I wasn't a certified mechanic; I had done a lot of my own work and I had learned a lot, and anyway I was working there for about three months. But there was very little work and I was getting bored stiff trying to find something to do. So I decided to leave and he wanted to know why I was leaving. I said, "I've got nothing to do." And he said, "What's worrying you?" And I said, "Well, I don't like walking around with
- 30:00 nothing to do." So I ended up taking a job at a trucking firm. There was a chap there by the name of Vic Stevens and he had a couple of trucks. He had an old Ford Blitz, an army Blitz and a Dodge, a late

model Dodge. We used to cart timber from Inglewood to Boggabilla in New South Wales and load it on. Or from there to Inverell and I also maintained the trucks.

30:30 I learned quite a bit then. I pulled the transfer cases out and I did a lot of work on them; kingpins and things like that. Anyway our day used to start there...you'd go to the mill one afternoon and you'd load up and we would put about five ton on the three ton Fort Blitz and about seven ton on the seven ton Dodge. It was all cypress pine which was growing in that area.

31:00 It was just coming into its own. Most people wouldn't touch cypress, carpenters because it was so knotty. But the thing about cypress is that the white ants won't touch it because of the aroma from it. And it's very clean on your hands. If you're handling cypress, it very white and clean because of the oil, the cypress oil. The smell of it burning is beautiful. You could often smell the

31:30 tailings at the mills and you could smell it in the winter time when it was burning. You could smell it for miles from the town when you came in if the wind was blowing right. Nice aroma. Anyway we use to load up one afternoon then you'd go to bed. Then I would get up at half past one in the morning and we'd drive from there to Inverell which was about 110 mile I think, over the hills. Then we used to unload it and load it into railway wagons, then we'd come back and get back about half past four that afternoon. So it was half past one to half past

32:00 four. Next day you'd load up for a trip to Boggabilla which wasn't so bad. And in those days you had to have road permits to carry anything. My boss was a bit cunning. Instead of going around the main highway he would go on the stock route you see.

**Did you have to pay for the road permits?**

Yes. So he decided we'd evade the transport police by going down the stock route. We used to leave the road at Yelarbon and go down the route there and come in at a place called Bondi

32:30 which is just in between Boggabilla and Goondiwindi. I spent about 9 or 10 months there with Vic. That was quite enjoyable. I used to play football and play tennis.

33:00 Ride the motorbike back and forward to Brisbane. I go down on the weekends and come home to see Mum and Dad, and I'd drive back on Sunday night. Mum used to always make a hot batch of scones on Sunday night and about twelve o'clock at night I'd leave and get back to Goondiwindi about five o'clock in the morning ready to start work—on this motor bike. Anyway I stayed there and eventually left to come back to Brisbane.

33:30 Dad then started up another tobacco business in the Valley with another chap by the name of Coward.

**I have to ask you Harry, did your Dad smoke?**

Yes he smoked.

**Would he try the batch and say that was a good brew?**

Yes, oh yes. He would try it. I never smoked in those days. Yes he would try it, and as I say he knew a lot about tobacco because he manufactured it and

34:00 he was unlucky in a lot of ways. Just misfortune came his way. At one stage Dad did start up a boot factory too believe it or not. He was very versatile, with another person, and he invented a heel, a plastic heel that had a leather insert. He said women were always breaking off that little leather piece and had to get them repaired. So you could carry the little

34:30 leather insert and all you did was pry the worn one out of your shoe and put the new one in and you had the heel back on, and Dad thought he was made. But unbeknown to him, in those days all the machinery for making the shoes, the soles and all that, were not sold, they were leased.

35:00 from an English company you see. And when they found out that Dad was going to make this they were going to stop the lease. So he couldn't make the others.

**Why would they do that?**

Competition. Because most of the other heels were wooden heels covered by leather with leather on the outside and a leather insert. Life's strange. You find out sometimes that what you thought you owned, even now, you own a flat in a block that's corporate

35:30 and you pay the corporate charges but you can't do anything to the darn place. Here you have freehold to do things within reason...you don't hurt anyone else. You can hang a picture on the wall there, or you can do that there or you can put a shelf in here, nobody bothers. The same thing in those days, they had these rules. So going back to Brisbane. We were down in Commercial Road in the Valley

36:00 and we had a place there and we use to make plug tobacco, and twist tobacco for New Guinea.

**What's plug tobacco?**

Well, plug tobacco is a piece...a square of tobacco about the thickness of a matchbox, and it was compressed by a press up to about 100 ton, and we used to lay it in little steel trays and put all the leaf

in and you press a big slab of it, down to about that thick with a 100 ton on it. Then you would use a guillotine which would cut it into squares.

36:30 And that was plug tobacco. A lot of people you would see, they would cut it off with a knife. A lot of...you might have seen it a lot of times in films where they cut some off and poke it in their pipe.

**Yes I remember now.**

So, just like the Americans. They used to have a little bag of tobacco, a string bag. So we used to use the plug tobacco.

**It's like ladies' compressed powder? For their face. You can have it free or you can have**

37:00 **it compressed when you put powder on your face.**

I didn't know that. Anyway they used to slice it off with a very sharp knife and fill their pipe. I remember my uncle in England doing it when I went over there. Anyway we used to make this, and the twist tobacco which had a lot of molasses and that in it. And we were there for about...that was coming up to about 1951.

37:30 **Can you clarify if the twist tobacco is the regular loose tobacco?**

It's made out of leaf but it's twisted like liquorice, you know a stick of liquorice? And the natives in New Guinea used to smoke it, cut it up and smoke it or chew it. And chewing tobacco. A lot of them used to chew the plug too and chew the tobacco. I always thought it was a filthy habit because in the films they're always going...dong

38:00 into a spittoon somewhere.

**This is in 1951, did you know much about the communist uprising over in Korea at that time?**

No I didn't. The war started in 1950 and I was in Brisbane at the time. I was a bit fed up with being always

38:30 in the family business, and I wasn't apprenticed to anything. I had no real trade. I was a jack of all trades and master of none you might say. Anyway I ended up one day and I thought ...I saw an ad to join the air force, part time. They used to call them citizen forces. And I went in to do a test as a driver.

39:00 I was supposed to go out the next day to Archerfield. As I came out they had this big sign, outside the recruiting office, about their K Force [Korea Force]. Previous to that, about a week or so before I had got to stage where, when I was in Inglewood, I did start to have a drink socially, and I had a gin squash. I never drank beer. The beer used to make me sick.

39:30 Anyway by this time, I went in with Fred and he was in National Service....no, he wasn't in National Service then, he joined after me. Anyway we went in and had a few beers and I was talking to this lance corporal who had just come back from Korea and he was a Bren gunner you see. He was saying how they were hard pushed because were outnumbered by the Chinese. And that was after the Battle of

40:00 Kapyong and it all sounded very thrilling, what he was telling me about the communist aggression against the North Koreans and how they treated the civilians, the children and all that. The atrocities where they would just tie them up and shoot them and throw them in a ditch and that sort of thing. Anyway I saw this sign and I thought, "Well, I may as well do something worthwhile".

## Tape 3

00:42 **Okay we can continue now Harry.**

Anyway, looking at this ad, "Join the K Force". So I went in and started talking to the chap, and what happened then, instead of going to

01:00 Archerfield the next day I was going to sign up. I wasn't 21 at the time. This was 1951, about August, and I wouldn't have been 21 until the 13th November. So I went home with the papers and Dad wouldn't sign them.

**Why not?**

Well, Mum was upset about the fact that I was going to, and Mum and I...Dad was a pretty hard man in lots of ways.

01:30 He wasn't a womaniser and he wasn't a drunkard, but he was very hard and I think he was very hard on me in lots of ways. Not so hard on Freddie but hard on me. But anyway, he wouldn't sign them so I just said to him straight out, I said, "I'll be 21 in three months time." That was August then. I said, "I'm going

02:00 to go anyway, if you like it or not.” So eventually he signed it so on 15th August 1951 I found myself at Enoggera.

**Can I just take you back for a second Harry, what did you Mother think of you joining up?**

Mum was a bit upset because naturally no Mother wants to see a son go off where ...

02:30 In Australia in the past—she had been brought up during the Second World War—The First World War we had lost so many people, so many men, the slaughter was just terrible in the First World War and the Second World War and the command didn’t seem to think too much about life. They lost too many. So she was naturally worried that I wouldn’t come back.

03:00 Of course I assured her that nothing was going to happen to me. We all think that way, and if you think any other way you wouldn’t get anywhere. So anyway, she didn’t say anything more after that and she just wished me luck. Anyway I found myself at Enoggera and I had to laugh. When we left to go out there we went out there in an army bus.

03:30 The driver was crashing the gears, he couldn’t drive. Anyway after we got to King George Square a woman driver, an army driver went past in a Blitz and she’s driving quite well, and he said, “Women drivers.” And I thought to myself, “You can’t even change gears”. Anyway we got to Enoggera and then it started. It was new world. There were voices yelling

04:00 at you from every direction. If you stepped on the parade ground the RSM [Regimental Sergeant Major] would bellow out, “Get off that parade ground or march, one or the other.” And anyway we went to the Q [quartermaster] Store and the idea of issuing clothes in those days; they just got a pile of clothing. It didn’t matter about the sizes or anything. You walked in the door and they would give you this pile of clothing.

04:30 We had shorts and they were like Bombay bloomers like the British troops wear in India. So we got our issue of clothing and the only way you got it to fit was to go and trade amongst the other chaps to try and get something that came somewhere near fitting you. One young bloke his name was Williams

05:00 and he had a pair of shorts and I’ve got a photograph of him somewhere. There’s two blokes in one leg. That’s how big they were. Another big chap he was an ex-seaman, his name was Goddard, I think, and he had a pair of shorts that would have worked out as a bikini . And anyway then they gave us brown boots. I think they came out of the 1914-18 war stores

05:30 or Second World War stores. But they were pretty old and stiff and a bottle of Meltonian [shoe] dye and they said “Go away and dye these”. Well, we went away and I think we dyed ourselves more than we dyed the boot because we all looked like we belonged to some tribe around Alice Springs. Anyway we got through that part of it and then we got allocated barracks, and the first three months we got no leave.

06:00 It was all army training. Mainly telling us the difference between our left foot and right foot, and being able to understand some of the instructors. Some of them were of English origin and Scots. There were a lot of people who came out and joined the Australian army from England. English soldiers who couldn’t settle down after the war

06:30 and they came to Australia. There were quite a lot of them and in fact when you go through the memorial garden out here at Enoggera you can see all the English names and Scotch names and Irish names amongst them there. Anyway the hardest thing was understanding the accent on some of them. I remember one day we were marching and this English lieutenant and he must have said, “Halt.”

07:00 And the next minute the company broke into three sections. The front section went off into the distance, and the middle section went after them and the last section halted. And they couldn’t understand him and he said, “You’ll all be doing extra drill”. And someone said, “Why don’t you take the plum out of your mouth.” It sounded so funny. Anyway and then we had officers who always liked to be saluted.

07:30 So we were learning then and I teamed up with...my number was 1/400239. One stands for Queensland, you’re listed in Queensland. Four hundred was that you were a K Force member, and 239 would be the 239th member in Queensland. Well, his number was 238. His name was Ken Griffith. A nice young bloke and he had a very baby face, but it was misleading. Anyway he and I

08:00 got on real well and anyway this officer, one day we decided to teach him a lesson and we got about ten of us to appear from around the side of a building and salute, and of course he had to salute us back. We used to catch him riding his bicycle with an arm full of books. In the end he came and said, “Look you only have to salute

08:30 me in the morning, before dinner and after dinner.” Anyway we got into training there. We had quite a few funny things happen there. The barracks had polished floors. There were four of us to a room and we used to have four wardrobes back to back, and we had all our webbing and our packs. The webbing had to be

09:00 blankoed; Blanko used be like a greenish substance we had to rub into it and it used to dry off and it had a powder that used to come off on everything. We’d been issued with English battle dress. It was a

blouse and it only came down to here. We used to call them quite frankly, bum freezers because it only came to your kidneys. It had a couple of pockets inside where you were supposed to carry grenades. Anyway we had them

- 09:30 and I never had a shirt because there wasn't any for me that size. So I got Mum to buy me a Pelaco shirt with the nice straight collars. And I used to get in a lot of trouble for that when I was wearing it. And my simple answer was, "You get me a proper shirt and I'll wear it". And the same thing with...they had a uniform they used to give us for fatigue work, for kitchen work and training in.
- 10:00 It was called the giggle suit. And why they called it the giggle suit was because when you looked at it, it looked terribly funny. You reckon the old serge uniform looked baggy but this was a khaki shapeless thing that you put on and the boys nicknamed it the giggle suit. I think they did that in the Second World War actually. Anyway, the training shirts...a friend of mine and myself, we had to go and buy ours from the disposals
- 10:30 because there wasn't enough shirts. At that time the National Service had started and everything went to the National Service. It was very political. All the mummies" and daddies" little boys were in for three months and they had to have the best so there were no complaints. Some people might disagree with me on this but this is my opinion on it. Even the Bren guns we had. We had the old worn out ones and they had the new ones. We had the old worn out heavy ones.
- 11:00 They used to fall apart on you sometimes. Our first introduction: we had a CSM, a company sergeant major and his name was Frater, that's all right. I can mention their names, there's no harm. Because he had a dark complexion a bit like my Father, they used to call him the black prince. He was a fair enough man but he was a stickler. And
- 11:30 it was all to do with discipline. When you've been in the army for a while you realise that everything in life without discipline becomes chaotic. You have to have some sort of discipline, and in the army you need it greatly. Anyway in our room we had to make our beds. We had to fold them regulation style with the three blankets, the sheets, the pillow all squared off and laid on top of the bed for inspection.
- 12:00 Your kit had to be squared off, the packs with cardboard in it, and all blankoed and up on top of the wardrobe, and the place spotless. Anyway he came in one morning and he stepped over the step and he said, "This floor is not polished." It was the only thing he could find. Who was with me? Kev and myself and another bloke...anyway we decided if
- 12:30 he wanted polished floors he was going to get polished floors. So we went and got some wax and we waxed...not the whole lot. We polished it and then we got down the first metre and we polished it and we must have spent about two hours, and we polished it and it was like glass. Then we used to jump across it. And next morning in came Vic, the CSM Frater. And as he went to step over the threshold he said, "I hope these floors are..." and whoosh
- 13:00 and he sat on his backside and he never said anything about polished floors after that. He couldn't say they weren't polished. They were polished but only the first metre. But I got in the habit of...you used to come back at smoko and find all your blankets laying on the floor. It wasn't correct, it wasn't squared off. So once he used to pass it, I used to leave them there and
- 13:30 I used to sleep in the bed with my great coat on and then put them back on the bed. And a lot of us used to do that because it was so much of a hassle, squaring off in between your breaks.

**Harry because you've got such a memory for detail, can you actually talk us through how you would square off a blanket?**

I've forgot now. I think you used to

- 14:00 fold it in halves. Then you'd bring it back again, and it used to have to end up being so long...two foot, yeah about two foot six I suppose and about a foot wide. It was pretty well regulation. I found out afterwards the nurses had the same caper in the hospitals. You'd go into hospital for a relax and you'd find the same thing. And the discipline there is a bit tougher.
- 14:30 Anyway and we went on with our training and we were issued with pannikins [water containers] which held about a pint and we used to have a pint of tea in the morning and a pint of tea at lunchtime, and a pint of tea in the afternoon sometimes and a pint of tea at night. So we drank a lot of tea. It was quite refreshing. We used to be marching and running up and down and doing grenade throwing practice.
- 15:00 When we came to that it was funny. First of all we got issued with rifles and we had to clean them all up and they were all covered in grease. So instead of being covered in dye we were covered in grease. And then we had these (UNCLEAR) and we had to boil the water. You'd pour boiling water down the barrel of the .303 and then you'd clean it out with a 4 by 2. We were taken down to the rifle range and we had to zero them.
- 15:30 By zeroing I mean, they would set up a small target about so big at about 25 metres and the bulls eye was about an inch and it had an oblong white in the middle of it about twelve and a half millimetres long by about twenty five millimetres high. The actual bulls eye was about twenty five millimetres

- 16:00 with this oblong in the middle of it. Anyway the idea was to get a group which meant you got them all together in a group. Well, we went down in different details and by the end of the morning there was about five of us who hadn't got a group. We might have three here and one up here and one up there. Not that bad but they weren't a group. You had to have a group. It didn't matter if it was a group like this or a group like that. Anyway the armourer would adjust your sights. In the end
- 16:30 he said to us, the four or five of us who were left, he said, "If you don't get a group this time you've got guard duty for the next four nights." So I took very, very careful aim and I fired off the ten shots and we walked up toward the target and all I could see was about three or four shots in the group. And as he got closer he looked at it like this and he turned it over. And there were seven shots in the white,
- 17:00 in this twelve and a half millimetre...there were seven shots there and the other three...they were all touching each other. And he said, "That is shooting. Why couldn't you do that before, Pooley?" I said, "You didn't promise me four nights guard duty." Anyway that was the best group I ever got in my life. Then we went down to fire the Bren gun. I remember quite clearly...
- 17:30 in our detail we had Keith Payne, he was a VC [Victoria Cross] winner later on in Vietnam. Keith came from Ingham in North Queensland and had been previously a Citizen Military Force member. He was very keen, he used to always volunteer for everything. Some of us never went in for that much because we reckoned you should never volunteer. The sergeant would come out and say, "Any of you people musicians?" "Yeah." "Right ho, we've got to shift the piano from the
- 18:00 sergeants' mess." Things like that. We had a chap called Smith...two of them actually. One was an ex-serviceman and he used to always get into trouble. He wouldn't wear his ribbons. The sergeant would say, "Where are your campaign ribbons, Smith?" "Oh, left my fruit salad in the barrack, but I've got my knife." The sergeant used to go crook.
- 18:30 The other Smith, I forget his name. But whenever this sergeant wanted something done he would call out Smith. And this one bloke would always say, "Which one Sergeant?" "You'll do!" Every time...he never learned. We had...the sergeant at the time was Jimmy Murdoch and Jimmy's passed on but he was a terrific fella.
- 19:00 He was a regular army bloke and he was always getting busted to corporal from lance corporal, up to sergeant and back again. He was always in trouble. Very good instructor. He wanted to go away with us but of course they wouldn't let him come because he was there for training. A lot of the instructors in the army were used for National Service. It was a pretty big load on us people going to Korea you see.
- 19:30 To make matters worse...just getting off the subject for a bit on the training. What happened was...a lot of people don't realise, but when the Korean War started up, Australian resources were very, very run down. At the end of 1945, '46, we had 9 divisions. That's a 100,000 odd. That's infantry divisions. We had an armoured corp. We had the air force.
- 20:00 We had...for our population I think we had the biggest number of men under arms than any other country in the world. And it was quite an effort. But by 1949 we had run down to practically nothing. When we joined up there was a shortage of everything. As I said, National Service was a priority at the time in Australia. And the 3rd Battalion in 1950
- 20:30 were in Japan and they were part of 65, 66 and 67 battalion. They later became 1, 2 and three of the Royal Australian Regiment. Anyway at that time they were packing up to come home, same as the 77 Squadron who flew Mustangs. They were packing up to leave the British Occupation Forces which they were part of at the time, and Australia was winding down.
- 21:00 And the Korean War erupted and of course the Americans sent in their troops. A lot of them were very, very poorly trained because they had six years lolling around, and a lot of them had Japanese girlfriends. Their training was all neglected. A bit like us. A lot of them that were thrown in, apart from the Second World War veterans where pretty much cannon fodder.
- 21:30 And the North Koreans went through them like a hot knife for a start. We had to get enough to make up one battalion which is about 800 infantry plus ... they were hard pressed to get it. So the Australian government advertised and they wanted men for a six year enlistment. Nobody wanted to enlist for six years so they brought it back to
- 22:00 three years, but with previous military experience. So this turned out to be lucky for us fellas in the future because the chaps that came back in the three year men, the original K Force men, were all mainly veterans of New Guinea, Libya, Syria and all those places. Bougainville and all those places. Some of them...Harry Saunders...he was an aboriginal
- 22:30 but he was the first aboriginal officer in the Australian Army. He was quite a character and he commanded a company in Korea actually. A lot of stories told about Harry. Anyway, the best one I think I remember reading about was, he was...after he came back he was in a pub in Melbourne having a drink, and of course at that time Aborigines weren't allowed to be served. He bought...he wanted a drink for himself and two of his mates.
- 23:00 The bar woman said, "I'm sorry sir, but I can't serve you, you're an Aborigine." He said, "No I'm not. I'm an Indonesian student on exchange." And of course she said, "Well, why didn't you say that in the first

place." She didn't really go along with it either. But how ridiculous set up. Anyway That's just going back a little bit. Coming back to Japan, getting these troops.

23:30 Well, they got a number of these people joined up and they managed to get enough people to form a battalion to go across to Korea. They were short of trucks and everything, and we were lucky we had the American allies, so a lot of the stuff came from them. The Americans are very good. They practically give you the shirt of their back. And they tell you while they're doing it too a lot of them. I'm being quite frank. And a lot of them are very wonderful people. Don't get me wrong. As I said before, there's all types.

24:00 Anyway, we come into the stage then. We were called the Rookie K Force. The Baby K Force that's right. And I've got a photograph in a book you can have a look at later. Baby K Force. Anyway, we then went on...That's why we were short of men you see. And we couldn't even raise...we never had any artillery and yet we had artillery regiments

24:30 before the New Zealanders submitted an artillery unit. The 16th Field Regiment and I think they only had one battery. They were short of men and guns too. We had no anti tank guns. The anti tank guns, the 17 pounders at the time were all used by the National Service. And the anti tank platoon had no guns.

### **How would they train?**

I'll tell you about training in a minute.

25:00 We came to the Bren gun and we went down...Keith Payne was in a detail with us and a detail is six. So there were six Bren guns laid out on gas capes. The old Second World War gas capes. The same as they wore in the First World War, a long cape which went over your shoulders and the water was supposed to run off your tail. Anyway, they laid them on the ground, and we were quite keen. We got in the first detail

25:30 Kev and I...I'm not sure if Keith was in that. Anyway there was a detail of six. We were going to fire the guns first. The sergeant said, "Right first detail, forward over the mound." We looked at him because the guns were laid out like this on a about a two foot high embankment like that. That was the mound. Over the mound. So we got over and he said, "Right ho, sit down with your back to the wall." So we sat down with our backs to the wall.

26:00 And the Bren guns are there, like that, just behind us about that far over our heads. Then he said, "Second detail forward. Load one 20 round magazine. Fire." "Oh," he said, "Don't forget to put your fingers in your ears." Well, the noise that went off from the bred gun just back that far, there was no ear protection but for your fingers. It was supposed to get us used to the fire of it.

26:30 So that was the Bren gun, so that's when we learnt not to volunteer to go in first. Then we went down to throw grenades. A lot of people were a bit nervous because with the grenades you had a 4 second fuse and a seven second fuse which they mainly use to confuse us. It was mainly 4 seconds. The grenade was a 36ml Grenade of a British pattern. It's like

27:00 a small pineapple and the idea was to break in fragments when it exploded. It used to have a handle on the side of it with two holes and a split pin went through the top. That was the idea. That was the safety pin. So you could hold the handle and compress it, pull out the pin...you held it like that. Now if you let the handle go, you've got four seconds.

27:30 So this sergeant was instructing. "Right, ready, draw your arm back." And they had a bucket out in front, 15 metres out I suppose. These weighed about a pound and a half so you couldn't throw them very far or you would throw your arm out of joint. That was the idea, you lobbed it like a cricket ball. You lobbed them over arm. Anyway, my turn came and I misunderstood him or something, or I was a bit nervous. And when he said, "Throw", I just let the pin go you see, like this. And he yelled out, "Throw it, throw it."

28:00 So I threw it and it went up like this, and both pairs of eyes followed it, and we were in this little bit of a pit with sandbags all around and it dropped over about 10 feet down over the slope of the hill where the bucket was see. We were watching like this and he said, "Down!" and the grenade went on the outside and exploded just in front of us half way down the hill. He got up. He said, "When I say to throw it I mean to throw the lot." He said, "You throw the lot. You don't

28:30 let the handle go." So the next time came up and he said, "Right, we'll try it again." So this time, he said "Throw", and I threw it and it lobbed over and landed right in the bucket, blew the bucket to pieces. And do you think he was pleased. He said, "You've ruined our target." So I couldn't do the right thing. The first time I nearly blew us both us and the second I blew up the target. So that was our grenade practice.

29:00 It's strange though. With throwing grenades, a lot of times the striker pin used to come back. The striker pin was a pin that was compressed by a spring. It was held down by a lever and when you let it go it used to come down onto the detonator and then you had four seconds before it explodes the charge in the grenade. Anyway...I've lost the track of what I was trying to say then.

**The striker pin would come back.**



Oh yes.

- 29:30 Lots of times the striker pin would come back. For some reason when some people threw it, it must have...and when it went off, sometimes the striker pin and the base plug would come straight back towards the thrower. And one of our chaps was over the hill sitting on a 44 gallon drum. He was a chap from New Zealand, Bluey Bennett. And next we heard and...twang...and we looked around and there was a hole straight through the tin.
- 30:00 He stood up and he was nearly white. He said, "I haven't had my chance to throw it yet." We had characters in the platoon too. There was another bloke, his name was Sinclair and we used to call him Bat because he flew by night, he used to disappear. And Griffith one day, he was put on guard at the major's wood pile. Somebody had been stealing the wood. Anyway the next morning we said to Griff, or Tracony,
- 30:30 someone called him Tracony because they used to have a show called Search for the Golden Boomerang. It was the Dance of the Flowers. They used to play the music to it and we used to listen to it as kids in those days. Anyway Tracony came off guard duty and we said, "How did you go?" And he said, "Oh not bad. A bloke came up in the middle of the night. I had a good talk to him and I helped him load some wood into his utility."
- 31:00 And he was there guarding the wood heap and he helped a bloke load up the CO's [Commanding Officer] firewood. Another incident with Dutton. He went to sleep. He was the guard at the kitchen. And he was sitting on a chair and he had his rifle laying against him like this you see. Some of us got hold of him and we picked the chair up and put him
- 31:30 right in the middle of the parade ground. He was still sleeping and he was caught out on parade. He never forgave us for that. Another bloke used to sleep in so one morning we got a tin of black boot polish and we put black spots all over his face. We carried him and his bed straight out and put him in the middle of the parade ground. And the same thing happened. They were on parade and there's this bloke sleeping away peacefully. And of course they looked at him with all these black spots on him
- 32:00 and when they took him back and gave him a mirror he thought he had the plague or something. We used to get up to all those sorts of antics. That was quite funny.

**Were there times Harry when some of the instructors or CO's would take discipline too far?**

No, no. I disagree...there was nothing brutal or anything like that. You were given

- 32:30 pack drill if you couldn't march properly or you spoke out of turn. You were given pack drill and you marched up and down. And often...there was a mountain behind Enoggera, and if you did something wrong you had to run up this mountain with a load, and put it at the top of the hill. And then the next bloke had to run up and bring it back down again. It got us all physically fit. I don't remember anyone really worrying too much
- 33:00 about it. I remember one case, one of our lieutenants. He was a lovely bloke too. Lieutenant Moorhouse. He was a veteran from New Guinea. He was a very fair man too. A group of diggers bashed him up one night in the city and the rest of us were very upset about it at the time because we were all about 20, 21. The average age was about 21. Some were from farms and that sort of thing.
- 33:30 We were brought up to think that everybody should get a fair go. If anybody did get out of line sometime, we'd just get a group of blokes to go up to them and say you'd better ease up because You've got to go out on leave one night. That was an extreme case.
- 34:00 We got threatened a couple of times in Japan a few of us. But I don't remember it happening. The major in charge of the 5th Recruit Training Company at Enoggera...there was about 400 people there actually. I'm trying to think of his name now. He was a very fair man. We had one chap who wouldn't wash and
- 34:30 anyway it was decided he was going to have a wash if he wanted it or not. He was going to have a bath. So they got him one day in the hut one afternoon and he was laying on his bed in his underpants. They grabbed him. The underpants were grey, that's how dirty he was. We carried him...we put him up and we carried him across and the CO came out of the office to see what was going on, and as soon as he saw this bloke up top, he just turned around and went back in. So we took him over and threw him in the bath tub and
- 35:00 somebody threw a scrubbing brush at him. Anyway this bloke made the mistake...they ripped his underpants off and threw them in the bath. Anyway he made the mistake of picking up these underpants and he threw them and they hit this Kiwi in the face. So the Kiwi grabbed a bar of Velvet Soap and a scrubbing brush and he got in the bath and he scrubbed this bloke. No trouble with bathing after that. Those sorts of incidents. Nobody took any notice.
- 35:30 We had one bloke who was caught thieving and it was quite serious then because they wouldn't tolerate thieving. You were all in the same thing. You all got issued the same amount of clothing and things like that. It was an unwritten sort of code. You might knock off army gear but not personal gear. You never touched a man's fountain pen or watch. Well, we didn't anyway, and I think most of the chaps didn't.

- 36:00 We had one chap who was caught thieving this gear, and I remember it, they drummed him out. And what they did, the 400 men were brought to open order march position, and this chap was marched down between every man, and the CO at the time said...I remember it quite clearly. It doesn't go along with the books and the army mightn't agree with me with this, but he said, "Any man who wishes to strike this man may do so."
- 36:30 We didn't of course. And then after they marched him up and down so you could see who he was, they took him over to the gate, they stripped anything military off him, took his buttons and anything that looked like it was army, and two MPs [military police] threw him out. They just kicked him straight up the backside and that was...and they had the drums playing while they did it. But the funny part about it, the same bloke believe it or not,
- 37:00 when I got down south...before I went to Korea for training, while we were waiting to go on draft in Sydney at Christmas time, and who should be walking down the street was this bloke wearing Korean ribbons. I don't know how...apparently they said that New South Wales was a bit more lax in accepting people. Whether he joined up again down there I don't know. Or whether he just put on a uniform and wore them.
- 37:30 I don't know. But we saw him. Anyway, coming back to Enoggera again. We did have another incident there again one day. Like your mess meals were always on CO's parades, Commanding Officer. The RSM had the parade ground, he was in charge on the parade ground and he would hand the parade over to the CO. And the CO would hand it back to him.
- 38:00 So he was king pin on the parade ground, other than that the CO was the man. So the three meal times were CO's parades which you have to attend. You didn't have to eat but you had to attend. Anyhow we had a cook who was a bit on the blink and one day we had this fish and it was mullet and it was crook and we all marched up and went straight through
- 38:30 the mess and out the other door. And of course the CO got to hear about it and he came down and they got rid of the cook and got another one. But that was one way of exercising our rights. They could make us go there but they couldn't make us eat. Other than that the recruit training went off pretty well. After three months we got leave.
- 40:30 End of tape

## Tape 4

- 00:33 A couple of things happened at Enoggera. I had a motorbike still and I used to keep it out in the car park. One day it disappeared and I eventually found out who got it. We found it under his house you see. He was another soldier. When he was arrested
- 01:00 he said he had borrowed it and he was looking after it for me. Proof is what you've got to have. It's like you can't say...he said he was going to tell me the next day. Anyway they said to me do I want to go ahead with it, and I said, "What's the point". Anyway I dropped it and I had the motorbike back. This sergeant, Jimmy Murdock
- 01:30 said we were going on leave. It was the first time we had leave. We went into the city and we used to have quite a good time down at the Grand Central. This Saturday, we were going on leave at lunch time and this Jimmy came up and said, "Can you give me a lift to Doomben, I want to get a bet on the first race." And it was twenty to one or something and I said, "What time's the first race?" and he said, "One o'clock." So I said, "Hop on", and so he hopped on the back of the motor bike and away we went. We went down Stafford Road
- 02:00 and I suppose I can say it now...I've never been pinched for speeding, but I was doing 75 miles an hour down Stafford Road. And when we got to Doomben I unloaded him off the pillion seat and he had to wait until he could put his bet on. And he turned around and he said, "Pooley". And I said, "Yes sergeant." He said, "Remind me never to ask you to get me somewhere quick." Anyway
- 02:30 that was the last thing that happened at Enoggera and I survived. We then went down to Puckapunyal and some of us went to Kapooka and some went to 1st Battalion, and our lot was the 2nd Battalion Royal Australian Regiment which was in Puckapunyal at the time. We went to 2nd Platoon A Company. The accommodation down there for the first part was a galvanised iron shed.
- 03:00 The showers...the water came out of the Goulburn River with no heating and it was winter time at Christmas time so it didn't take long to have your showers. When you came out the wind was blowing pretty hard so you wanted to get back and get dried off. Anyway we then went out to a place called Site 17 which was just tents on the Gibber Plains out there and there we finalised
- 03:30 a lot of our patrol work. Night patrols, ambushes and all that sort of thing. Navigation. So we started to finish off the final touches of our training in the hills around Puckapunyal. One of the things we used to do were mock attacks. We divide our company up and call them Red and Blue and that

- 04:00 sort of stuff. You had to attack another company and they issued you with blanks which you fired and you ran around like cowboys and indians. I remember one particular incident. They used to have these artillery spotting towers in around there. Spotting for artillery but mainly for forest fires. One of the things was that if you were captured by the opposition, they used to strip you and put you up the tower.
- 04:30 And it was pretty damn cold I believe. So I was determined I wouldn't be captured. That might be a bit hard in today's army standards. They would probably call it brutality, I don't know. Yes, I was talking about brutality that they talk about today. I would class it as brutality. It was just teaching you the ropes.
- 05:00 I remember one old sergeant saying, "Would you like to have a mongrel of a sergeant who gets you back safe, or a nice bloke who will get you killed? So you can please yourself, . But you've got not choice. You've got me." So we went through pretty rigid training with a lot of live firing. We did have some casualties actually. Some of the things
- 05:30 you had to do was crawl along behind barbwire and they'd have the Bren guns on fixed lines firing about a foot over your head. One chap for some unknown reason put his head up and he got shot through the head. He was killed I'm sad to say. Another young chap he was only about 17. A mortar bomb exploded in the barrel and it killed him and one other of the crew.
- 06:00 So we did have a few casualties. Let's face it; you're not playing with toys. A number of people...I wouldn't like to say how many, but some of us did get wounded in training and some were discharged afterwards. Anyway the training went on and it was pretty cold in the night time crawling around these hills
- 06:30 with the bright moonlight and all the gibber plains. Some of the days were very, very hot. I remember one particular week we were out there and it must have been a bad week for me anyway. We went out range shooting and the first things we had were the Bren guns and we were firing the Bren guns at what we used to call the mad mile. And what we used to do was fire it from different positions leading up your target. You'd have a number one and number two. Number one on the gun
- 07:00 and number two as the loader. The Bren gun used to have a locking handle and when you changed the barrel you lifted up the handle and took the barrel off, put the new barrel in and locked it down you see. That was the number two's job. Anyway you would change over from number two to number one on each position. Anyway it was a terribly hot day with the wind blowing into our faces...red dust.
- 07:30 Anyway, when I grabbed the Bren gun on my turn...I used to carry it by the handle and I grabbed the handle and took off and all I had was the handle, the rest was back there. So I got into trouble over that because I hadn't put the locking lever right down. Anyway when we went to get a drink of water...there was a tank there for the range. We had all been drinking water and somebody said, "That tastes a bit funny that water."
- 08:00 So we lifted the top and there were dead crows and magpies floating around on top of the water.
- Did anybody get sick?**
- Oh yes, that night everybody was galloping around the bush. It sounded like a herd of kangaroos. Yes, we all went down to the RAP [Regimental Aid Post] and they gave us a pill which was supposed to fix it. The RAP had two types of medicine. One lot was white in a jar and the other was a black pill. You got one or the other.
- 08:30 Anyway on this range we slept out this night and we slept in a range hut. There were about six of us. They used to use flour and water paste to paste the targets up. They had these buckets full of this stuff and some of it was pretty old. You know what flour and water's like. And that was on the top bench. Anyway, I was sleeping just underneath and one of the lad's went out
- 09:00 and he couldn't get back in. So he came back in through the window and knocked all this flour and water paste over the top of me, so I stank to high heaven. So I had to go out and have a wash. I went out and had a wash and that was my first misfortune for the day. As I was coming back around the corner after washing all this stuff off, I suddenly got about three gallons of warm coffee all over me. It appeared they had finished drinking...we used to boil the coffee up in a big urn and dish it out to the boys.
- 09:30 We were moving on this morning so they threw out what was left and I walked around the corner just as they threw it out and I copped all the coffee. Before then I broke a mirror. That's what often reminds me, if you break a mirror you'll have bad luck. So those two things happened to me. The next thing was this cat came in and I'm patting the cat and somebody had a dog and the cat flew up and was standing on top
- 10:00 of my head. It's claws dug in and I had long hair then. Or military regulation long hair. So that was the other thing that happened. And then low and behold we went out on exercise and one chap....I've forgotten his name, but there was a show on the radio called Mama Kaki, I think it was at the time. He was a comedian and they always had this, "Cop this young Harry."
- 10:30 My name was Harry so I used to cop it. I had all sorts of things thrown at me from the time I was in the

garage. Anyway I was talking to a friend of mine here, and another chap standing there and we had .303s [rifle] with blanks in them see. And for some reason he thought it would be funny to frighten me and he lifted up the .303, and just at that time,

- 11:00 Van said something and I turned around and the next minute, bang and I got hit in the side of the ribs here and it blew a hole through my giggle [fatigue dress - no pockets] jacket. It was only a blank but there was a hole about that big through my giggle jacket and all my ribs were covered by bits of wadding, and powder burns. That's how close it was. It was only this far away. I went backwards and into a log upside down.
- 11:30 I got up on my feet and I was ready to flatten him. I'm feeling angry when I got over the shock. But he was crying. He was saying, "I'm sorry. I didn't know it would hurt." So he was crying. Anyway, the thing was, if I had reported it and went to the RAP he would have been in a lot of trouble. So anyway I went down and we had a lantern we used to use on the range and I got the kerosene out of the lantern and
- 12:00 I put the kerosene all over the marks and that and didn't say anything at all and nobody was any wiser. It healed up okay. It didn't penetrate very far but it was yellow and blue bruises. I was bruised over an area of about that big. Anyway we went on with the training...and then my nose started to bleed, that's right. So I'm laying upside down over a log trying to stop the nose bleed. I managed to stop that and in between that you go
- 12:30 to have your dinner and it was fly country. And when I say fly country, it was fly country. To eat your dinner you had to put the gas cape over our head and put the dixie [pot] underneath and eat like this, because if you didn't, as soon as you put the meat in the dixie there would be just a black swarm that would come in and if you opened your mouth they would be in your mouth waiting for the spoon to come in. I'm not kidding. We were camped near a dam
- 13:00 and it was just thousands of flies and you'd be walking along on patrol and the blokes back in front of you would be covered in flies. Somebody would brush them away and when you brushed them they would all go around your head, so we used to leave them where they were. But anyway, to make a long story short, we go up to get paid when we came back into camp. I go up and they wouldn't pay me. He said, "You're down as AWOL [absent without leave]." Absent without leave.
- 13:30 Apparently they send the MPs [military police] looking for me back in Brisbane at Mum's place. The sergeant made a mistake one morning. Instead of...he put A for absent...like if a man's absent they put A, and ...I've forgotten how they did it...I should know because I was a staff sergeant at one time. Yes, if you're there they'd put a tick and if you weren't they'd put absent or whatever it was. Anyway, he put the same thing down every morning
- 14:00 for seven days when I was out there, and I had to get my mate to verify who I was before they'd pay me. So that was a bit of a blunder. So that all worked out all right and we came back into Pucka and we finished our training there...infantry training that it. Then they decided they would create some specialists amongst us. So they gave us an IQ [intelligence quotient] test. And I don't know how they worked this out but
- 14:30 they said I was suitable material to be a signaller, a radio man. And I wanted...when I joined I was a part time mechanic and I would have been quite happy driving a truck or a mechanic. But you couldn't because we were actually...K Force were riflemen or cannon fodder whatever you want to call it, and the regular army had the job of truck drivers and all that. Some of our blokes did drive trucks later on.
- 15:00 Anyway I got this job, got picked out and because I had a very poor education, I had never learned algebra and the first thing he put on the board was a triangle with E, I, R and he said E over I equals R and I'm thinking what the devil is he talking about. If he had to explain to me that the R denotes Resistance or something like that, I would have understood.
- 15:30 But he didn't think anyone would be dumb enough not to know that the symbols meant something. Anyway I eventually managed to get through that all right. We used to run around with cable with telephone wires which was a red coloured wire and you had a reel about this high. It weighed a ton and you used to carry it on like a stretcher frame with one bloke in the front and one at the back and the reel in the middle. And we'd go out and we'd pretend we were signallers.
- 16:00 We would lay this wire from the company headquarters out to the company. We climbed up a mountain there one day...I forget where it was now, the name of the mountain, but it was very steep. Anyway we situated headquarters there and I was given D Company, I think it was, and I had to take the line, plug it into the switchboard, take it out and put it in D Company you see. And when I went out to run the line out to the telephone I thought this is far enough. I hadn't gone 100 metres but I stopped and it was sloping like that.
- 16:30 I went and had a look about 30 metres further on and it went straight over this cliff. And we were in a mist when we were doing it, you see. We had a lot of fun in the signals. We'd used to say to one of the other blokes, "You run this wire out" and you'd bare the wire at the end and you give it to him say, "Grab hold of it", and He'd grab hold of the bare end and you'd say, "Don't let it go." And when he took off you'd hook the other end up to the little phone
- 17:00 and as soon as he climbed over a rock or something, you'd wind the handle and of course he would get

an electric shock and He'd be jumping up in the air like this. We used to do things like teeing in between two companies. We'd get a safety pin and we'd break the wire and you'd give two rings for the bloke on that end and you'd give three rings for the bloke that that end. And the bloke on this end would ring up and say, Corporal so and so

- 17:30 and you'd say, "You mug, don't you listen for the phone?" And by this time the bloke on the other end would come on and hear this bloke who would then have a go at me and I was quiet then. And we'd sit there and listen to these blokes going hammer and tongs to each other. So it would sort of break the monotony but it was good fun. Anyway we went out on one manoeuvre and you were talking about how did we train without things. We had...we learned to fire what was called a PIAT. Personal Infantry Anti Tank.
- 18:00 It was a small bomb about that long, like an aerial bomb and it used to lay in a cradle of this firing mechanism and it had a huge spring underneath it like a spring out of a Ford Console of something. It had two handles there and it had two handles there, and you used to pull it like this and pull it back and compress this spring, and when it fired it would have a cartridge in the back of it which used to launch it and
- 18:30 the idea was it used to hit the tank and the first part was a honeycomb charge and that used to penetrate the tank and all the molten metal and stuff would fly around inside and wound the people inside and set it on fire. They used them in the Second World War. Anyway I remember firing this thing, but we had no bombs. We used fire lengths of water piping. Water piping about that long and about an inch and put what looked like a shot gun shell into the back of it
- 19:00 lay it in the cradle and the sergeant would say now aim at that gum tree. There was a huge gum tree about three feet wide, about half a metre and about 100 yards away. He said, "Aim up about 5 feet from the bottom and hang on to that very tightly because if you don't the spring will become uncocked and you'll have to cock it again. And if you're being fired at,
- 19:30 It's not very good to have your feet up in the air trying to compress this." Anyway it came my turn and I fired and when it went off I wasn't holding it tight. The back came up and took all my skin off the back of my ear, but I had the satisfaction of seeing the piece of water piping hit the tree right in the middle. So he forgave me for that. Then we had a demonstration put on and I was put in what was supposed to be a command post and we had a big square
- 20:00 hole dug in the ground with a little bench dug out of the dirt. And I had a note pad and a pencil. I was sitting there and we had a lot of visitors come at the time, New Zealand officers and a couple of Americans, a couple of Poms for this demonstration of us doing this activity. I remember this Yank came up and said, "What are you doing?" And I said, "Operating a 20 line
- 20:30 switchboard. I'm a signaller." "There's nothing there!" "I'm pulling the plugs out." We went on to where...we never had a 20 line switchboard to use. Then we went on to fire...to show them this demonstration of this PIAT firing, and they had a turret off an old
- 21:00 General Grant tank. A lot of General Grant tanks used to be in the Australian Armoured Division. That's where they were based. So we had this old turret and this corporal was supposed to fire at it and it went over the top and missed it. And they had these big speakers around to let everyone know what was happening. And this bloke came up and said, "We'll have to call off the demonstration because we haven't got anymore bombs." And he missed.
- 21:30 So that was how ready we were for everything.

**And yet you all did remarkably well even though in training they didn't have all the equipment that could have possibly helped them?**

Well, the Second World War fellas used to train with broom sticks, didn't they. But I mean, I think where we're lucky is that we use our initiative and we've sort of been renowned for that throughout the world.

- 22:00 I don't think I'm bragging when I say this but the Australian soldiers...we wouldn't say we're the best in the world but a lot of countries have stated that, and I think a lot of it is that we adopt an attitude that even the National Servicemen, that some of the National Servicemen at the time who were in Puckapunyal and some of them after they finished their three months, they joined the K Force.
- 22:30 And served in Korea. And in Vietnam. A lot of them were conscripts of course. They didn't have a choice, and a lot of volunteered and were quite happy, but some of them didn't. They said and had the attitude, "We're here so let's make the best of it if we can". And that's what they did. And between them that's what a lot of people in civilian life cannot really understand,
- 23:00 is the comradeship between a group of men. It's like...there's all sorts of love. There's a love for your daughter, the love for your wife, and love for an animal, a love for a particular thing. But if you say you have love for a particular man, that sounds silly. And you wouldn't really class it as love, it's more of a bond and it's very hard to break away from because
- 23:30 when you're in the proximity of a lot of danger and you're all in the same position, and you're all relying strictly on your mate or other members of the section and there's got to be a constant formula, you might say, where you all work together, otherwise something goes wrong. If you get a weak link...That's

why a lot of times when a reinforcement comes in, for a start

24:00 he's welcomed and all that but he's not really accepted until he's proven that he can become part of that section. It means that everybody...there were ten in a section in those days...well, not always but there was supposed to be ten in a section. You'd find that if you got a reinforcement, the other nine are then looking after their 10%. Like if you've got 100%, you're looking at 10% in each sector.

24:30 They're not quite sure of Joe because Joe has just joined them, so everyone is giving away 1% watching his side. Which means you get a breakdown. But when you're accepted it becomes solid again and then that 10% gives you the 100%. It becomes very effective. And that's why we become...and we look after each other.

25:00 Sometimes men you met in the army you wouldn't like to bring into your house and meet your wife sort of thing.

**But you can rely on him?**

That's right. But it's sad to say that in civilian life, you're missing a lot of things that really make a thing complete. I was back in Puckapunyal.

**Yes, I was just going to ask you Harry,**

25:30 **how long were you training there as a signalman when you got the word that you were going over to Korea?**

Let me think. We got to Puckapunyal in November. We went home on leave at Christmas, and we came back and it wasn't until May...we were all getting a bit tired because we joined in August and here it was May and we had only joined for two years. We didn't think we were ever going to get there. We even at one stage after we had finished this training

26:00 we finished the training as a sig and qualified as a three star private which you're supposed to get extra pay for which we never did and we never got the rank. Anyway we ended up digging up a parade ground. We planted grass seeds and we were there to roll it and water it. Anyway some time in May they decided we'd go on draft...they wanted a draft

26:30 for reinforcements in Korea. As people got wounded or finished their time or got killed, they replaced them you see. Anyway, one battalion had already gone over. They went over in May by ship. I flew out on 3rd May. We went from Puckapunyal to Marrickville outside of Sydney. And I've got photographs

27:00 of all of us waiting around. The army seem to be always waiting. I've got that many photos of groups of men laying back on kit bags and rifles waiting. That was another old moan. People saying there's so much waiting. Until...when we were in Japan, another old veteran said...someone said, "It's all waiting around Sarge. No action." This old bloke said, "Put it this

27:30 way, would you rather have, 5 minutes waiting around and the rest all action." And when you think about it, if you went under shell fire, you'd rather have 5 minutes of shell fire. In Marrickville we eventually went out to the airport. There were about 30 of us. I've got the flight list which I'll show you later on.

28:00 And a number of us went over, and I've even got the list of people who were wounded and didn't come back. But an incident happened then that was rather strange. We were boarding DC6b, an extended version of a DC64, the airliner. They had two boarding ramps, one at the front and one at the back. We were going up that back ramp,

28:30 it must have been the tradesman's entrance. But up the front entrance there was this party going. It was Doctor Burton and the peace delegates to the conference in Peking...they were the communist party. And we were going to fight the communists in Korea. So here we have the Australian Communist Party going to a peace conference and

29:00 they're going up the front and we're going up the back. So we all sat down in the plane...it didn't worry us but there were a couple of major's who were quite concerned because someone booked them and the army troops all on together. I'll show you a cartoon later on. It's quite funny. It shows all the troops getting up the rear ramp and the Communist Party members up the front. And it's got a couple... They've got cloaks and bombs in their hands and

29:30 above it there's two doves called Rhyme and Reason, and underneath it says, "This is no place for us."

**Sorry to interrupt but Harry were you quite political in those days? Did you know that the communists were good or bad. Did you have any feelings towards them?**

At the time I was against communism politically. I didn't think about it much. I was only 20,

30:00 and politically in Australia I wasn't involved in anything. But when I joined the army, an incident happened at Enoggera...I'll come back to this too...what happened was, when we finished our recruit training and before we went down to Puckapunyal, one night we were called on parade and they said we only want single volunteers. No married men. They wouldn't tell us where we were going or what we were doing. We thought we were going up to Townsville to work on the wharves because

- 30:30 they had gone on strike. They wouldn't load the ships that were taking gear to Korea and things like that. The Communist Party again. Anyway I never liked being a ...I was brought up a Roman Catholic mainly and communism was exactly the opposite. Our religion was there and they didn't even mix. Communism to me, now that I think about it was just another form of capitalism by
- 31:00 another name. If you get [Joseph] Stalin [leader of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics - now Russia] or you get the President of America. The President of America gets in a car and he's driven around and he's got a home and everything's paid for by the state. The same thing in Russia. They've got their holiday villas and all paid for. And as far as saying that everybody is equal is in my way rather stupid because some of us were born with brains and some of us were born with
- 31:30 common sense, some were born with little brains or little common sense. Some were born with defects. Some were born rich and some were born poor. So no way in the world can you say we were all born equal. You've got to make the best...as I said before, you're here, let's make the best of it. And be very lucky that you have what you've got. My Father used to say...one of his sayings...he used to say,
- 32:00 "Always remember, if you think things are bad, remember this story. If your shoes are worn out and you see a man with no feet to put into shoes, you're not badly off are you. You've got your feet, he hasn't." So whenever
- 32:30 things are bad, always look at someone who's worse off than you are and that gives you more strength. Not that you're happy that they're worse off than you. You're happy that you're better off than they are. It's a bit like discrimination backwards. Anyway, we ended...oh yes, back at Enoggera. So we get on parade next morning and they get all us single blokes...we volunteered believe it or not.
- 33:00 We all boarded these trucks, open trucks and off we went and we were climbing up Cunningham's Gap and they unloaded us all. And the officers said, what we're doing, we're going to Wallangarra down in New South Wales to load ammunition, 25 pounder shells which will be going to Korea for the New Zealanders, the New Zealand battery to use. That was all right with us because we had never seen a shell in our life. So we got to Wallangarra, and Wallangarra was
- 33:30 basically a lot of army there and the town's people didn't...the girls weren't too keen on the army . I suppose after a long time, and the mothers probably thought the girls could do better than an army bloke. In Wallangarra...there's Wallangarra and then there's Jennings. Jennings is in Queensland and Wallangarra is in New South Wales and the railway line runs down the middle and there were different closing times. Six o'clock it closed in Queensland and it closed later in New South Wales.
- 34:00 So the train drivers always had to watch out for people crossing the line from one pub to the other to get an extra drink. Anyway coming back to loading ammunition, in we go. They had these metal cases and I think there were two shells in a case. We started to load them very gingerly into these cattle trucks. They put them in cattle trucks to disguise it. But anyone with half a brain would see these cattle trucks puffing like
- 34:30 hell to get up a hill. It was more than empty trucks. Anyway we used to put these on very quietly and then one day we dropped one and nothing happened because at the time we didn't even realise at the time that they hadn't been primed or anything and the powder was in a different case and the charges. So once that was over we went like mad on conveyors and the only thing we had to watch out for was getting your fingers jammed between the cases coming down.
- 35:00 So there was about...there was a platoon of us and we loaded 1300 ton in seven days. We worked really hard and at the end of it they gave us leave and we went into a dance. Kev and myself got dressed up really well. It was funny. We went to this dance hall and as usual all the girls are lined up on one side of the dance hall and the boys on the other,
- 35:30 and Kev said, "Look, there's two girls over there. Let's go over and ask them to dance." We went over and I said to the first girl, "Would you care to dance miss?" And she said, "Yes." And Kev asked the second girl see. Of course Kev was very baby faced. He looked only about sixteen . This girl looked at him like this and said, "Oh, I don't dance with children."
- 36:00 And quick as a flash Kev came back and said, "Sorry miss, I was unaware of your condition." Well, you should have seen the face. She went so red. That's what Kev was like. Quick as lightning He'd come back with anything. Anyway that was a funny incident there. I had to mention that one. That was really good. Anyway when we came back from there
- 36:30 we came back in tip trucks, metal floors, rolling around in the dirt and when we got off we were filthy. And we paraded before the OIC [Officer in Charge] and we were told we were going to get leave that night. So we were all getting ready to go off to the showers and get dressed to go on leave. We reckoned we had done a good job and he congratulated us and he said, "I'm sorry, but there's no leave." Well, all our faces dropped down to our boots, and he said, "The reason is,
- 37:00 the ammunition has followed you down on the train and it will be at the wharf tomorrow morning, but we had a problem. The water side workers won't load it because it's going to Korea." So we had to go down and load the ammunition onto the ship you see. So after that, the Communist Party as far as I was concerned, my way of thinking was, the Communist Party in Australia, if ever we were to be taken over by Russia, or a communist country then the first ones they would have shot would have been the

Communist Party members

37:30 because they would have said, "You think you had it hard here, wait until we get here." So their policy is get rid of the wingers quick. And there were...a lot of communists....I don't care what people say, they might have disbanded at the time, but they're still there. And a lot of them have climbed up into very high positions in different places. Education and things like that. I'm convinced of it to a certain extent. Looking at it later in life. But I just can't understand

38:00 their way of thinking. I remember the Communist Party here wouldn't believe that Russia and China had split. I mean, Russia and China were fighting on the border at one time. They reckoned it was propaganda, or that Tito [leader of] from Yugoslavia was a different type of communist party. They wouldn't believe it. I remember looking at a video once of these fellas training with .303's during the war to take over Australia when the communist party came.

38:30 I often wonder sometimes. I often think we went to fight the wrong people. Anyway.

**Did you have any resentment towards the wharfies and the waterside dockyard men who wouldn't load up?**

Yes, the waterside workers.

**Yes, the waterside workers. Did the men have problems with them?**

No we were young at the time. The same thing when we were on the plane with the communist party.

39:00 We really couldn't have cared less. We weren't happy about it. But we weren't going to go out looking for communist party members to thump them, or anything like that. Well, I didn't anyway and I don't think anyone else was thinking that way. We just thought they had something wrong in the head that they couldn't realise that they lived in a good country, a free country. It could be better

39:30 but it could be worse too.

**Were you aware of the American communist campaigns of "there's a red under your bed"?**

Oh yes, with McCarthy [American politician associated with the anti-communist era in America] and that. Yes, they used to talk about communists under your bed. But the trouble is, the communist party... their doctrine is to ...well I met...later on I'll tell you that story. But they...if you can't win a battle outright

40:00 you can win it in other ways. And part of their doctrine was to demoralise the population of the country. In other words, like today...as I was talking before, if you've got a group of men united against a certain threat and during war time people do become united as England did against Germany. And you have a common enemy. A lot of people in other countries

40:30 in the past have used...conquer and divide. Of course if you can divide families and they're the basic concept of your civilisation. If you can start having son against Father and Mother against daughter and daughter against brother and uncle against cousin and that sort of thing, everybody is going off in different ways.

41:00 They're not compact. (I might get lost for words sometimes). I try to find the word to describe it. In other words, the communist party believes in that...say for instance, if everybody is drunk then you've got no worries. You can do what you like with them. If they're on drugs then they're relying on drugs. So you give them the drugs and they're happy. As long as people are getting what they want and they

41:30 think of tomorrow. Like our population at the moment with our lending and our money and our banks. A lot of young people...I feel so sorry for them. I'm getting off the track well so stop me.

## Tape 5

00:32 The old thing was conquer and divide. Divide your people and then it's pretty easy to get them to do what you want them to do. It's a bit like a child. If you promise a child something you should give it to them. But don't promise them, otherwise once you give it to them it's pretty hard to take it away. The same thing with people. The government gives people things and they want to think very clearly and

01:00 strongly about what they're doing because once it's been given, to take it away you have an awful lot of problems as we're finding out.

**What do you mean exactly?**

Well, the welfare and lots of other things. See in our day, we didn't have that. You had to make...I've never been on the dole in my life. And I've done all sorts of work.

01:30 I've been out of work for probably a week or two weeks in my whole lifetime, and if I couldn't get a job at what I was used to doing then I would take another job. I didn't sit around waiting to get the job that



I wanted and go on the dole. What I think about it...someone else...a tax payer has to pay me that money. And I'm doing nothing and they're working. And I don't think that's right. I think...there's an old saying, a minister said this once.

02:00 No man should do for another what he's quite capable of doing for himself. I mean, that doesn't mean you don't have to help people who are sick or not as well off as you are of something like that. But if they're capable of doing it, you're being a fool by doing it for them, if they're capable. If they're not then you're doing them a good turn. Today I think lots of times we're doing things that people should be doing themselves.

02:30 I mean we never had....we've raised four children and there was only one income. We didn't live grandly and anything we've had we've paid for. We don't have everything that a lot of people have and my wife and I have never thought about going into debt. We did borrow \$10,000 when we built this place, but that was the only time we borrowed.

03:00 But the trouble with banks today is that money is so easily available and it's become like a figure, a number. I remember once upon a time, if a bank had assets, you were allowed to lend so many times that asset. You had to have a gold reserve.

03:30 But nowadays the banks seem to be able to lend as much as they want. So the result is it only becomes a paper transaction. And once they have the transaction carried out and because you overstep yourself...a man and a woman or a young couple, and they borrow \$150,000, they're only earning \$40,000,

04:00 or \$80,000, they're actually, when you look at, the first year they're not even paying the interest on that \$150,000. So therefore after a year they still don't own any equity in their house. After 10 years they have nothing, and if they sell it the bank takes it. Now the bank's got an asset whereas before it's just a paper figure. You know what I mean?

**I agree.**

So if you can lend as much as you can...I mean, I could get rich tomorrow if I

04:30 I could work like a bank. If I could lend you money...if I had \$10,000 and I could lend it 18 times at 10%, I'm home and hosed. But you see I'm not allowed to do that. If I did I would be treated like Ned Kelly, I'd be hung. I'm being a bit frank I suppose.

**That's all right.**

I'll probably get sued by the banks. But I think the moneys too easily available

05:00 when you look at the cost. My wife and I always looked at... are you all going to be well for the year and things like that and you have to make allowance. In other words the old saying "Put some away for a rainy day". Not that there's much to put away. But if we couldn't pay for it we wouldn't buy it. There were only a couple of occasions, when we borrowed for that and we borrowed for a car.

05:30 But apart from that, furniture and that, and being a handy man I usually repair an awful lot of things and fix things up. It doesn't cost us anything to get things repaired. I do it myself you see. I'm getting off the track there again.

**That's all right. I think we'll have a break now and after that we'll talk about going off to Korea.**

06:00 **Okay Harry, we're just on our way overseas.**

Well, we just left Marrickville and went out to the airport and I related the incident about the different parties on the plane. As I said, we were all young chaps and for most of us this would be our first flight, well mine anyway. We sat down. They called us "pound a day tourists" at that time because that's what we got. It later went up to thirty two [shillings] and six [pence] per day.

06:30 I won't try and convert it to decimal because it sounds ridiculous. Anyway we were served with lunch by Qantas [commercial airline]. We were in uniform, winter uniform, battle dress, and we had a glass of wine as well so we couldn't have cared less if the communist army was sitting on the other side of the isle. And probably by that stage it became the start of an adventure which it really was from the start.

07:00 Some of us joined because of the principal, a lot of my mates joined because they didn't like communism. They disliked the idea...they thought that if it happened in Korea and they beat us in Korea, then it may naturally move down south through the Asian countries to Australia. And there was no way in the world that I wanted Australia under communist rule, as I understood it at the time.

07:30 Anyway...I'll just have a pause here for a moment. I just have to fix this. So I was up to the stage of boarding the flight and we continued the flight then and we landed at Chillagoe, I think, for some reason or other. No I may be mistaken there because I don't think they had an airport big enough there.

08:00 Anyway we landed at Darwin, I do remember that, in the early hours of the morning and we took off later on that afternoon and we landed in Labuan, Borneo. It was summer time there and of course we

were in our winter uniforms. The plane was on the tarmac for about an hour; we weren't allowed to leave the plane. We were soldiers travelling...and we had to be in uniform.

- 08:30 We just about cooked there for about an hour. I think I lost about half a stone. Anyway we took off again and we flew from there to Hong Kong. Coming into Hong Kong was quite an experience because you fly down in between the hills. We looked out along the wing tip and there was a farmer tending to his fields at the end of the wing basically. So we followed the valley down and we landed at Kai Tak Airport if I remember correctly. They later on put a longer airport in.
- 09:00 Then we went...that actually I believe was part of the New Territories which was actually Communist China, but Britain owned a small area. We went across by ferry to Hong Kong itself where we stayed at a hotel and it was pretty flash for us. It was the Peninsula Hotel. All the floors were marble and the staircase. And the problem we had just before we left
- 09:30 they put studs in all our boots for climbing mountains, and trying to walk up a marble staircase with studs in your boots is quite an experience I can tell you. There was one of our blokes, he was a chap who was returning for his second trip. I won't mention his name because it was a pretty embarrassing incident. We were only given a dollar and we reckoned they wouldn't trust us with any more in case we shot up the town or something. Anyhow a mate and I bought a pack of cards
- 10:00 and had a game of pontoon later. But when we went upstairs to our room, we went along the balcony and down below there was a banquet on. Apparently there was a Chinese person of pretty high standing getting married to an Indian prince. He had this turban on and a big red ruby in the middle of his turban. And Snowy, this particular bloke, He'd had a few too many. I don't know where he got it from with only a dollar, but being an old hand he managed.
- 10:30 Anyway he lost his balance and went over the fell in front of the bride and groom in the wedding party. So that was a bit of an incident there. Anyway we managed to get him out of there and upstairs and next morning we came out and boarded the aircraft again. That's when we were handed the daily paper and on the front page was a photograph of myself with no tie on and everybody else was wearing ties.
- 11:00 And I've got my collar out over my battle dress. There was a reason for it. The officer in charge came up and nailed me straight away and said, "Where's your tie, Pooley? You're unregimentally dressed in the public view?" Or words to that effect. He said, "Get it and get it on now." So I said to him, "Well, if you can get it I'll put it on. I'll wear it." And he looked at me and said, "What do you mean?"
- 11:30 I said, "Well, it's down the chemical toilet. It slipped off my neck last night." So nothing more was said. So we continued on from there and we flew up to and landed in Southern Japan at Iwakuni airport. We arrived there just after lunch if I remember correctly. The next day this is after staying overnight in
- 12:00 Hong King. Iwakuni was the base for 77 Squadron at the time...or they were in Korea. It was their original base. We were taken by ferry across to the main part of it and then by army truck we went down through Kure. Kure was one of the largest naval bases during the war. Two of the largest battle ships ever built, even up to today, were built there
- 12:30 and they sailed away to their ultimate fate. I think the Yamato was one. It was 86,000 or 80,000 ton with 18 inch guns which was a lot bigger than any of the British fleet at the time, or the Americans. Anyway it was destroyed and sunk at Okinawa when the suicide pilots went in as kamikaze. Coming back to Kure, they still had the floating dock there
- 13:00 which I think they took from Singapore to Kure in the early stages of the war. We went down into a little town called Hiro. That was an old Japanese seaplane base. In fact the wharves had been...still showed damage from bombing during the war and this was 1951. We then found ourselves in Hiro. The officer commanding was
- 13:30 Jack Gurk. He won a DSO [Distinguished Service Order] for an action at Maryang San. He was a very well respected officer. Everybody liked him; hard but firm. No mucking about with him. You knew exactly where you stood. So we commenced our training. And the first part was, after we got there they allocated
- 14:00 us a tent each, four men to a tent with boards. They were all lined up nicely in line facing the mountains behind Hiro, which were about 3000 feet high. The reason I mention that I'll come to a little bit later. We then went in and were welcomed to the camp by Major Gurk. It was called the First Reinforcement Holding Unit where they held everybody until they actually went to the battalions where they were required.
- 14:30 We continued our training of course. One of the things....I'll get to that in a minute. When we first went in we got a welcome. Then we got a lecture from the doctor about all the evils of being overseas.

#### **What do you mean?**

Well, don't eat this and don't drink that, and the ladies here might cause a problem, and all these sorts of things. We were young

- 15:00 and we took it in. Then they showed a film on contagious diseases and venereal disease. And then after that the padre saved our souls before we lost them. He gave us a talk too about the evils to the young

man who had just left Australia. So after we got over that and the shock, then we drew our kit and rifles, a tin hat...the old 1914-18 [First World War] type,

- 15:30 or same as the Second World War. Then the sergeant lined us all up and he said, "Right, we're going for a little stroll." Most of the instructors there were people who had come from 3rd Battalion which was our only battalion actually in the line at that time and had been since 1950. A lot of them finished their time or had been wounded and come out of hospital as instructors. They knew their job and most of them were ex-servicemen from the Second World War.
- 16:00 So this bloke was a bloke by the name of Daley. I remember he had short red hair. Anyway we had to show our rifles at the slope and out we marched out of Hiro Camp, down the street, under the railway bridge, out through the township and then straight up the mountain, 3000 feet high non stop.
- 16:30 Their idea was to find out just how fit you were. They weren't believing what our report said from Australia. They wanted to make sure we were fit to be sent to a battalion in the line. So we marched up this mountain and it was the first time I had ever found my lungs weren't where I thought they were. They were under my belt. That was the part of me that was going in and out like a set of old tired bellows in a hospital.
- 17:00 Seven of us got to the top. I was one of them. I got there and my head was down below my mate's back and all I could do was just keep going. The next day we had a rest for a while and then we came back and they reckoned we needed more training, physical training. So that night we went in and had dinner. Low and behold we got a shock because we sat down at tables with white table cloths, cutlery and these Japanese waitresses came along
- 17:30 trim and pretty in their starched uniforms under the careful eye of the warrant officer who was watching them. Anyway they served us dinner which was unusual. We had never been served dinner, we would just stand in a line and get it dished up to you. Anyway the next morning it started. It was a run over the assault course. They had an assault course in the camp just off between the line and the parade ground. One of them was about a
- 18:00 twenty five foot wall with a couple of ropes and you had to go up the ropes and over the top and down to a water jump and crawl through different various things. Anyway then we marched off to our training ground which was five mile away. Nothing was close. Every time we wanted to something it was at least five mile away. If a sergeant suggested, "Anybody like a swim?" Yeah, righto let's go. So you'd get your togs and that and you'd march five mile for your swim and then you'd march five mile back again. Anyway
- 18:30 we went out to a little township on the coast and we were marching along there at a fair clip. We used to average about five mile an hour which is roughly about seven and a half kilometres. I can't be precise on that. Anyway when we first got to Japan we had this strange smell and we couldn't make out what it was,
- 19:00 and then we realised it was the paper factory next door, and you could smell this pulp paper, cardboard. Have you ever smelt that? It's not a very nice smell. And there was another smell. We couldn't identify it at the time. But then we found out very rudely that day what it was. We were marching along and this terrible aroma came down...we were marching up around the cliff. The next minute the sergeant said, "Right ho, double up". So we all took a quick breath and doubled up.
- 19:30 When we got around the corner we saw the reason. There was a Japanese cart with four huge big barrels of night soil on the cart...from all the residents in the city and they used to take it out and it was put into a well, a concrete well and then it was laid out over the vegetables you see. And you've got vegetables. But you never dared go barefoot because you could get poisoned very quickly if you cut your foot.
- 20:00 That was what you had to watch in those Asian countries, that the soil was impregnated with a lot of diseases which we weren't immune to; they were. Anyway it was quite hilarious when we got around the corner. Some of us wet a handkerchief and tied it around our noses. Anyway we marched out to the training ground and we'd do rifle training exercises and what have you. This went on for about
- 20:30 two weeks I suppose. We got a night's leave at the end of that. We had to go to a training school, a battle training which was at a place called Haramura which was about 20 mile, if I remember correct, up in the mountains. Haramura was similar to what Canungra is here. I couldn't make a comparison because I've never been at Canungra but some of the Second World War blokes had been through Canungra and
- 21:00 they reckoned that Haramura was harder than Canungra, so we thought what are we in for. Anyway we had one night's leave before we went up there. I remember Sandy and I used to go out and another chap and we'd come back after hours, highly illegal of course. But we'd hire a Japanese boat and come back by the canal. We might have a couple of bottles left over and we'd sit in the boat
- 21:30 just out of the light shining from the officers' mess and we'd watch all the officers and their antics. We thought it was hilarious. They used to let their hair down when they got to the officers' mess. And we were just out of the light.

**What would they get up to?**

Oh funny games...well, I did it too..., charging around the mess like school boys pretending the other bloke was the enemy, and people used to end up with bleeding noses and

- 22:00 a few other wounds and then they'd be all back to military status again the next day. Anyway we used to sit out from the reflection on the water. This night we came back, it was about 2 o'clock in the morning and we landed, put ashore underneath the coal walls. We used to walk under the coal walls and come up through an old bomb crater that was there, and then find our way under the wire back to the camp.
- 22:30 They had Japanese civilian guards there so we used to just go up to the Japanese and say, "We're back". And they wouldn't dare stop us so we just went in. They didn't do much about it, the guards. I suppose a lot of them were ex soldiers too. Anyway this night we came back. There was Sandy and I; I don't know what happened to Van. I think he went back early. Oh that's right. We had a routine. One of us would go back...you had to sign the book at the
- 23:00 guard post on the entrance. And then they brought it in that your leave pass had to be put in a box. So what we would do, we would give Van our leave passes and he would come in and plonk all three, his and our two in the box and then he didn't have to sign the book then. So we got away with it. Later on they found out what people were doing so they made us sign the book as well.
- 23:30 Anyway we came back and landed and we were crawling along. We got covered in coal dust because our green uniforms were almost white because of the cheap dye they had in them, so it was a light shade of pastel green I think. So with all the coal dust on top of it. And as we got up through this hole, we grabbed hold and both of us came up like this, and there was a dog like Ben sitting there, a German Shepherd.
- 24:00 He was one of the Japanese guard dogs. I'll never forget the look on the dog's face. He looked at us and the next minute his eyes sort of rolled and he took off. And the guard was standing there and he was petrified because he didn't know what it was that had come up out of the ground because we were covered in dust you see. Anyway we calmed him down and gave him a cigarette and that was all right then we sneaked back into camp. We used to often go out actually. So the next night we went out
- 24:30 and we come back in through the front gate. There were about four of us who had come in. Sandy and I were together and the other three we didn't know from buckley. There were five of us. We marched through the gate and we got through the gate all right. The guy on the gate didn't give a damn; the sergeant wasn't there, so we got through the gate. It was 5 o'clock I think it was. We were just walking down
- 25:00 to our lines when the adjutant come around the corner of the building. He was pretty good at ambushing. He didn't come from a line where you could see him. So we all came to a salute and gave him a salute. "Good morning sir." He didn't say anything. He saluted. And as we got about five paces past him, a voice yelled out, "And where the bloody hell do you lot think you're going?" Pardon the expression. Is that all right? Anyway,
- 25:30 he said, "Nine o'clock outside headquarters orderly room." So we got dragged in before the adjutant. And I happened to be the first in the line and he said to me, "Where were you? What happened?" I said, "Well, I had a few too many beers sir and I fell asleep." He said, "Where?" And I said, "A house out the back."
- 26:00 So he looked at me and he looked at my mate Sandy and he said, "And where were you?" And he said, "I was with him." So he looked at the next lot and the third bloke took the cue. "Where were you?" "I was with them." So he looked at the other two and he said, "Don't worry, you were all together weren't you." So we left it for one to answer so he couldn't foul up. And then it was back to me again. And he said, "What happened then?" I said, "I woke up and I came back to camp as
- 26:30 quickly as I could because I didn't want to miss parade." He said, "Right, you lot have got two days guard duty." We got off and we didn't get charged. It was just a funny incident that I thought I'd mention.

### **How did you find the local Japanese, Harry?**

Well, we found them pretty good. Actually, I later visited Germany, later on in about 1970.

- 27:00 It was strange how Japan and Germany were our former enemies. Now I wasn't involved in the war at the time and I know there were a lot of atrocities committed and all that. But as I said before, you can't judge a whole race by the actions of a few or a few under pressure. We found the Japanese actually... there were no acts of sabotage, which we thought there might be. They employed a lot of Japanese civilian guards.
- 27:30 Ex-soldiers. They employed a lot of Japanese mechanics, and the RAAF even had Japanese aircraft mechanics. They were very loyal. They didn't commit one act of sabotage on any of the aircraft. In fact they were very happy to see the pilots come back...the Australian pilots. We were lucky in a way because the Japs seemed to have more respect for us than they did the Brits or the Americans.
- 28:00 I can't exactly say why but that was the way it appeared to me. We got on...they used to call us "Gorshu"...because we had the big hats and we came from the big land. That I believe is why they called

us that anyway. And anyway, we treated them...most of us treated them just like normal people. Some of the young diggers who had brothers and uncles, say on the railway or

28:30 that, they did take it out on some of the Japs. You know, it's a funny thing with a lot of base troops and that. Until you actually get in action, a lot of people don't realise that war is a very terrible thing. You have respect actually for the enemy that's opposing you,

29:00 which we did, the Chinese. They suffered the same things we suffered. They were under shell fire and all the rest of it. We were under shell fire. A lot of veterans won't agree with me on this, but I still say....I found the Japanese very honest. I left my camera as I did on one occasion in a Japanese bar; the next time I went in the girl came up and gave me the camera. If I had done that in an Australian bar I would have had Buckley's chance of seeing the camera again.

29:30 There was more chance of your stuff getting lost in camp than it was getting lost when you went out. We found them...they had a sense of humour. We were on guard one night, the three of us. We had managed to get a bottle of beer from somewhere or a couple of drinks from somewhere. We always managed that. And one of us was pushing the guard around in the wheelbarrow. He wasn't very happy about it but he took it, and the other one was chasing him and we were going round and round the boiler house. That

30:00 was just one of the funny things.

### **Why do you think the Japanese gave the Aussie's a bit more respect than the Brits?**

I don't know. I think...during the way I suppose the first defeat they ever suffered was by the Aussie's in Malaya and also again by the young Australians in Milne Bay, and they were only 18 and 17 year olds. A lot of them had never fired their rifle before.

30:30 That's how untrained they were. I've read a lot of research on Milne Bay and different other actions. And it's actually shocking the way the young fellas were sent in from Australia with virtually no training. A lot of them went to Milne Bay and they were mainly digging trenches and unloading stores and that. I remember one young chap coming up...or I don't remember but someone told me that he had to ask the officer how did he load the .303.

31:00 He didn't know how. Things like that. They had a very, very hard time of it. And a lot of the courage they showed...and they were up against sometimes the best of the Japanese forces which were the naval marines. I suppose you get a respect for an enemy, or disrespect, whichever the case may be. Like us, we never had much time for the North Koreans

31:30 but we respected the Chinese quite a lot.

### **Why was that? What was the difference for you?**

North Korea...I suppose because they invaded a small country. Korea ....when the war was on initially there the North invaded the South, and then the South pushed them back with the help of the Americans and allies. And then the

32:00 Chinese came in and pushed them back down again and then they went North again, and every time they went through the capital city Seoul, South Korea would then round up all the people who had been suspected of collaborating with the North Koreans and they would have their hands bound and shot in lots of cases. In fact there were some cases where our people stopped them. It wasn't our way. I wasn't involved in that. I wasn't there at that time.

32:30 I wasn't there when the fluid war was going on, so I can only speak about what I've read from history. Then of course when the North came down and went through Seoul, they then collected all the ones they thought had collaborated with the South and they shot them. So the poor old civilian copped it from every angle. They were very cruel. We just found...we were up against...when I was there we were up against the Chinese division. I'll come to that later on.

33:00 But in the training in Japan going back to that again. We went to Haramura and we started off to march up to Haramura which took about four hours or something all the way. About four hours. And you weren't allowed...we had a water bottle, the same pattern as the Second World War, just with the felt packing on it and webbing around it...and your rifle and your pack and of course the tin hat.

33:30 I used to hang my tin hat on the rifle barrel because I hated the thing. It used to fall off. I used to get into trouble..."Put your tin hat back on!" Anyway on the way up we weren't supposed to drink any water from our water bottles. It was part of the training. But as we went up through the hills the water used to trickle down the mountains into little sandstone basins. It was cold and clear as anything. Very attractive to someone who's marching and thirsty.

34:00 A couple of us broke ranks and straight away the sergeant, "Right, into ranks again". Some had a pannikin in their hands to get some water. They said, "Anyone who takes water until we get there will be in trouble". So we forgot about it for awhile. I kept my eye on the sergeant and I thought, "I'll scoop out a handful," and

34:30 I took my handkerchief out, we had a bit of camouflage stuff we used to use, so I took that out...a sweat

rag I used to call it. And just as I was reaching out, he yelled out. So I quickly dipped the sweat rag into the water and put it around my neck. I hadn't drunk it mind you. But my idea was that when nobody was looking I would squeeze it and have a mouthful of water. But he caught me and so I just hung it round my neck.

- 35:00 I didn't get into trouble because the order was not to drink it and I hadn't drunk it. That was the next best thing. It cooled me off. We got to Haramura... "Welcome to the Haramura Battle Training School" was the big sign. It was run by an English colonel at the time. It was an English regiment that was running it with Australian and Canadian and New Zealand instructors. When we got there, there was this Australian corporal sitting in the gutter outside with all these
- 35:30 kit bags. Anyway we had to wait for the stragglers to catch up because...you never entered a camp for the first time raggedly. You would come together as a force and march in with your rifles at the slope. Anyway we ambled over to have a word with this guy. To get a bit of lie on the land you see [to find out how things worked]. It turned out he had been sacked. Well, I had never heard anyone being sacked from the army, but apparently this colonel sacked him.
- 36:00 He was the cook. And the colonel didn't like his cooking. So he tossed him out of the camp and he was sitting in the gutter. We said, "Are you going back to Kure?" And he said, "I can't, I'm posted here." When the army posts you to a place that's where you are. If you go some place else, you won't get fed. That's what I found out when I went on leave. I came back early and they wouldn't feed me because I was on leave you see. So I never came back early on leave in the future. So we took this news
- 36:30 in and we all formed up and we marched in. Then we got addressed. We had an Australian captain in charge of our group. He said, "Right, this is Haramura and this is the battle training school to finish off the training you've been going through ready for the battalion in Korea. Now, the colonel is in charge of this camp. You will recognise him quite easily. He wears no rank,
- 37:00 no hat and he wears sandshoes and he carries a small tree,"—like someone cut off the top of a tree with the roots still left on it. This was his sort of walking stick folded under his arm." We all looked at him and thought, "What have we got here". He paused for a minute to let it sink in and we wondered what was coming next. And he said, "He wears long khaki trousers."
- 37:30 We were wondering if he walked around in the nick. Anyway later on we were to find out that he was a bit unusual this bloke. Everybody would get out of his way as quick as they could. He put a horse under arrest because it crossed his parade ground. He got the roof taken off a building because people took their shirts off because they were perspiring. And when he asked them why they took their shirts off they told him, so he got the engineers to come and take the roof off.
- 38:00 Rather than be unregimentally dressed. Oh, and the MO, the Medical Officer must have mentioned one day that he was mad because we all said he was mad. He was referred to as the Mad So and So. I won't say what we called him. The Mad So and So...from the ranks. But the MO must have said something about mad in the wrong hearing, so he got posted to Egypt. And the National Servicemen [those doing compulsory military service] they were dead scared
- 38:30 of him, the Pommy National Servicemen, because they used to receive twenty eight shillings a week and we received thirty two and sixpence a day. We were all going to do the same thing. In fact we used to get more rations than they did too in the English camp. All the rations were supplied from Australia, and that's why Australia came out of the Korean war...a lot of people don't know this...without it costing it much because we supplied all the food and so forth to the British forces.
- 39:00 The Commonwealth Division. And the only thing we had to buy was twenty pound of shells from the Brits and some more .303 shells from India. Our rockets and aircraft for 77 Squadron, but other than that we got out of it pretty well. It was well managed. Anyway when our government suggested...or we told
- 39:30 them that we couldn't work and perform on the meals they were giving us, we got double. So if there were two sausages...if there was one sausage then we got two, or if there was two then we got four. The army there at the time offered the British the choice of...they could have the same rations, and the British said, "No we'll look after them". We felt a bit embarrassed because we would be eating ...
- 40:00 we'd go to the cook and he'd dish out this and we'd come back for seconds. And a lot of the English servicemen, they were only 19 year olds, they used to come down to the barracks afterwards with tins of herrings and tomato sauce. And after a while I hated the smell of herrings and tomato sauce because the whole barracks smelt of it. The English always had this herrings in tomato sauce see. We got mutton, a lot of mutton.
- 40:30 The Canadians got beef, and we used to often get into trouble because the three of us would attach ourselves on the back of Canadian mess crew and eat their mess. They didn't mind. We were supposed to be eating at ours because we were rationed there. One day we were marching up and this captain's walking past and the Canadian corporal salutes him and he gives an eye's right, and we all look at him straight in to his eye like that and he looks around as if to say, "What the devil are you lot doing here".

## Tape 6

- 00:33 Yes anyway. We were saying that the English National Servicemen and the conditions they worked under. This day, we were out on an exercise and we were digging trenches which are normally about six foot deep and then they come up onto a step. You couldn't shoot out of a six foot trench, so you had to come up onto a firing step. They were digging their trench down and they had only got down to about 4 feet, and this colonel comes along in his sandals and his club.
- 01:00 "What are you doing there?" "This is our fighting pit sir." He looked at them and he said, "Give me your pay book." Seven days loss of pay. "That's not a fighting pit. It's got to be deeper. I'll check on it on my way back." And away he went. He came back and by that time they'd got down to...they went really hard at it, and they got down to six feet but they hadn't put the firing step in you see.
- 01:30 The colonel comes up. "What's this?" "Our firing pit sir." They didn't dare tell him they hadn't finished it. This was the way it was. "Pay book!" And again, loss of pay. So this sort of caper and they used to steer around him like mad, you see. One day one of our drivers was taking him down to Hiro. He was driving a bit slow and the colonel said, "What's wrong?" "The windscreen's dirty sir, I have to stop." And he just got this stick and went smash.
- 02:00 "See better now driver." He was a character. Another day someone got out of the boob [jail] we had there. What they call the boob, where they put the people in. The navy calls them brigs. Jail you might say for some misnomer you might have committed. The colonel comes striding down and says to the guard outside. "What's your name?" "Private So and So," he says.
- 02:30 "Right. You're Colonel Monsdale and I'm Private So and So. Throw me in the can. That's an order, throw me in the can." So he put him inside. After about 10 minutes there's a lot of banging going on inside and he could hear a voice. "Let me out, let me out. You must have let him go. I've been here 5 minutes and I can't get out." And that was his way of proving that someone was...as I said he was ...
- 03:00 The tales that went around about him...a lot of them were tales, but one I can swear about the truth in it. I'll come to that later on because we haven't got time. Anyway we did our training there. It was all under live ammunition. You had to go up the hill in a company attack. Two platoons up and one back.
- 03:30 They'd fire Vickers machine guns over the top of you, mortars. The tanks would fire shells over the top of you. Sometimes you'd get drop shorts. One time we had a mortar shell drop in a tree just above me. It showered us but it didn't hurt anybody. We could have got hit by some of the fragments but we didn't. It took about three weeks for that course. I can't swear to that, it was such a long time ago.
- 04:00 So we finished it off and then the last part was marching a cross country route march. It was supposed to be 20 or 25 mile and this ...they kept increasing the load in your packs. We never ran anywhere like they do nowadays. They had common sense and they said, "You march. You don't run into battle and you don't run out of battle. You march in or march out". Therefore you don't do your knees in like the army's been doing for years. Running around on concrete.
- 04:30 They had a bit of sense in those days. The officer in charge of us...the only problem was he couldn't read a map. We marched up so many hills. On a map a gradual descent is shown by wide contour lines. A sharp descent is shown by very close contour lines.
- 05:00 Like high winds and low winds. But he couldn't tell the difference between the large one or a small one because when we got to the top of the hill there was a cliff on the other side basically and you had to come down again. It was a bit like the Duke of Wellington. He marched you up and he marched you down again. We ended up doing about 27 miles. We got back to camp that night just on dusk and we'd had it. We weren't going another mile for the army, not another yard. And then
- 05:30 someone said, "There's overnight leave pass if anybody wants them." So Van and Sandy and I rushed down to the showers and changed into our KD [khaki drill - uniform] and started another 5 mile walk to a town called (UNCLEAR) because there was no traffic there. We were walking along. It was getting dark. Anyway we heard this 'putt putt putt' and Van managed to hail this Japanese farmer.
- 06:00 The farmers there used to have this contraption. It was like a big Harley motorbike. You've probably seen them in the Asian countries. One rider sits on the saddle and at the back he had a flat top tray, like a truck tray. He hailed him you see and of course he's coming towards us. So he said "Yes". We had managed to tell him we were going to Saijo. Anyway we jumped in the back and he had two or three old cows in the back, and they were just about worn out except
- 06:30 their horns. They were lined across the truck and the back had a rope across the back. And the only place to ride was on the back...there was about that much space and hang onto the rope with the side rails. So we climbed up there. I climbed up and got to where the horns were. Sandy was down the back end where the tail was and Van was a country boy so I think he had enough sense to say, "Well, I'll get up in the middle".
- 07:00 Anyway we got going. We were only moving along at about 10 kilometres an hour. The trees come down, the firs come down pretty close to the side of the track. It was a very narrow second class road. Anyway the next minute Sandy thought he would have a bit of fun so he started prodding the cow and it started

tossing its horns. And of course I'm up here with the horns. I've got to pull my stomach in. I've got no where to go at the back.

- 07:30 Tummy tucks weren't in in those days but I knew all about it in about five minutes. Van started to laugh at my antics and Sandy was laughing. They thought it was a great joke. That's what mates are for you see. Anyway, Sandy decided to prod it a bit harder. He got disastrous results from that because the cow dropped a nice big paddy right on his boots and stamped on his foot. What I mean by paddy is... So that took the grin off Sandy's face and made me
- 08:00 laugh and I nearly fell off then. Then we got to Saijo and it became a lost weekend then. I don't remember a lot of it. I remember a hand coming through the wall of the hotel with a bottle of beer and I thought, "That's good room service". The walls were made of a sort of vanished paper on bamboo. If you lent against them you were liable to go right through them and go out the other side. Anyway, I remember at one part we were drinking with a Canadian MP.
- 08:30 It must have been a lost weekend because normally you wouldn't be seen drinking with a MP. A military policeman, and particularly Canadian. They had already been in trouble with our chaps. One got bashed to death with a chain in a Canadian prison. The Canadians sent him back to Canada for trial. I didn't see that but I did see a soldier, a Canadian and he had his arm in a sling.
- 09:00 He'd been wounded. He had come back from Korea before we went and we met him in a street. His mate was crying and he was helping this bloke along with his arm in a sling. And we asked what had happened and he said the Canadian MPs had thrown him in the jail and bashed him up, with a sling, his arm in a sling. So we didn't think much of the Canadian MPs, to be quite honest. Any MP. But anyway it must have been a lost weekend because I can remember vaguely drinking with one. I hope this is all right. It might spoil international relations.
- 09:30 Anyway we finished the weekend. The only thing I can remember about that weekend was there were a lot of coloured spots floating all around the room. And it wasn't until after that I found out it came from like a cylinder in the roof like a circle with all different bits of mirror on it with spotlights shining on it. You would see them in the nightclubs a lot now. You don't know. I hadn't seen them before because as I said, I hadn't been around much.
- 10:00 And then we...what happened then. The next thing I remember...oh yes, somewhere we were told not to eat any Japanese food. You could eat boiled eggs. They were quite safe, but I don't know if anyone gave any consideration to what water they boiled the eggs in. Anyway we decided that after we ate the eggs and had a few more beers that we'd eat everything. We met this English
- 10:30 corporal from the fusiliers. He had a black beret on with red feathers, the Red Hackle they call it. And somewhere in our happy state we decided that we were going to have a hackle. The only thing we could see was in the corner was a bowl full of gladiolus. I remember that part and the next thing I can remember...we got back...I don't know how we got back to Haramura, but we got back
- 11:00 the next afternoon which was a Sunday. We were marching back to Hiro on the Monday. I remember us getting to the guard post and the sergeant looked at us and said, "What do you think you lot are?" We said, "We're the Gladioli Regiment." They could have the hackles if we could have the gladiolus. He told us in no uncertain terms what we could do with the gladiolus. We were in more trouble than you could poke a stick at,
- 11:30 so we went off then down to the ...they had a Japanese bath in the barracks. It would be cool water, warm water, extremely hot water or cold water. And by the time you went through the really hot water and dived in the cold water it guaranteed to make you sober. We were fit for the march next day. Then the army decided
- 12:00 we weren't going to march. I think they had too many walking wounded from the weekend. They had made a mistake in giving us diggers a weekend pass. So anyway we ended up...they had trucks for us to go back in. They were an English Bedford truck and they were called QLs. That stood for quick loading. But the tray was about level with here. It might have been quick loading for a giant but not for us.
- 12:30 Anyway we managed to heave each other and then pull the other one up. We got back to Hiro and we continued on waiting to go on draft then. We spent about another week or more, two weeks around Hiro, marching in and out of the hills every day, over the salt course, and it suddenly came the day that we were on draft.
- 13:00 They took all our uniforms off us and gave us fresh uniforms for Korea. Green you see. We had KDs until then. The idea was we couldn't go AWOL that night because we stood out like cherries on a Christmas tree in a green uniform, brand new. There was about 60 of us I think and the whole 60 went AWOL anyway. So the whole town of Hiro was littered. I've got photographs of myself and my eyes don't look very good.
- 13:30 The other two mates were in KDs you see.

#### **Why don't your eyes look any good?**

I think I must have had a few too many Korean beers or the flash light they took it with might have been reflecting off my eyes.



**Sorry Harry, I wanted to ask you, how long were you there at the camp before you had to go out on your first manoeuvre?**

Well,

- 14:00 like before we went on our first manoeuvre to Korea do you mean? Well, that's what I'm just saying. I've got to make this quick now. What happened was, we were on draft. I got the drafts mixed up then. We were on draft and we went on leave, we came back. The whole lot of us got back okay because if you missed the draft you were charged with desertion in the face of the enemy because you were being posted to a unit in the line.
- 14:30 So we got on board the trucks and went down to a ship called the SS Poyang and we started to board it and the next minute the military police told us to get off. The English military police. And we thought they were joking until one of them drew his pistol. We realised then they were serious so we got off. They'd booked us on the ship but nobody had worried about rations. They had forgot about rations. So back we came into camp again and Major Gurk's on the verandah wondering what all the noise is coming back in.
- 15:00 It was us lot coming back in. He had just got rid of us. So we had another week or more and we got on draft again. They called our names out and then they came along afterwards and the sergeant said there was three ex-signallers who are amongst you lot. He said, "Fall out Private Manotelli; Private Mullens, and the third one is...I haven't got his name right now."
- 15:30 And I thought, well you'd better be quick because I'm gone tomorrow morning. Anyway, Sandy looks at Van and Van looks at Sandy and they both took a step out of the ranks and said, "Pooley's his name sarg." I could have killed them because we had to go back for another few weeks at Haramura, do the battle training course again, carrying radios. They weighed a lot extra and I hated radios.
- 16:00 Anyway back we go to Haramura. So we decided...there were about twenty Canadians, about eight Englishmen and there were us five Aussies. So we decided we'd show them we knew our jobs as signalmen. We didn't need a refresher course. We wanted to get away. So they had an exam to see what we knew. So the five of us came in the first five places. We had a knack...the Australians always seemed to do a bit better than all the other countries.
- 16:30 I don't know if it was our education system, not that I had much of course. We seemed to adapt a lot quicker. But most of the courses you found the Australians topped the courses. Anyway when we got these first five places we got ourselves paraded to the captain you see. He said, "I know what you boys are up to and it's not going to work. You're here for another two or three weeks and you have to finish the course." So we
- 17:00 bet him a case of beer that we would never get away. And he said, "Right." So we went back and we thought, "Well, if we can't get there by doing the right thing, we'll get there by doing the wrong thing". So we always used to get into more strife. We walked off a RSM's parade. Well, actually the English RSM said, "Stand by your beds at 7:15 am." So we're standing by the beds and he hadn't
- 17:30 turned up. Or was it 7:00. I forget now. It was either 7:00 or 7:15. Breakfast was at 7:30. We're waiting and waiting, standing by our beds. The whole barracks. The Canadians and English. And all of a sudden I got an idea and I said to Sandy, "Isn't breakfast the CO's parade?" And he looked at me and he caught on and he said, "Yeah."
- 18:00 And I said, "That overrides an RSM's parade doesn't it?" "Yeah". So we thought, "We'll give him another five more minutes" and he hadn't turned up so we walked off to breakfast see. So the RSM charges us for missing his parade, and we got dragged up before our captain and he said, "You blokes get into more strife than Ned Kelly [19th century bushranger who was caught and hanged]. One of you is up before me every day, what's the problem this time. The RSM's upset because you walked out on his parade." So we told him. "Get out of here."
- 18:30 See we did do the right thing. So every day there were...there were two other blokes by the name of Holly and Jenkins, and there was us three. And every day we'd...we had to do navigation classes and radio work. And we were supposed to go from one point to another point to another point, and when you got there you would give them a grid reference and
- 19:00 describe where you are. And they'd say, "Yeah, right." And then set the next one. So after the first two... and there was a lot of hot marching. We went past this Japanese inn so we bought a straw bag with half a dozen bottles of beer, and I had an old pair of binoculars that Dad had given me before I left home, so we just climbed a high hill and sat on top of the hill. We called back and said we had reached this grid reference, which we could see. They would say, "Describe your surroundings". And we'd say,
- 19:30 "There was a little shrine on the right hand side and fir trees". So they'd say, "Okay, now proceed to grid reference so and so". We never went to any of the others. We sat on the others drinking the beer see. Then when we came back we heard the other team and we said, "Where are you?" and they said, "We're just entering camp. We're about half a kilometre from camp". And I said, "I bet they're in the little inn just near the camp. And they said, "Where are you?"
- 20:00 And I said, "We're about two kilometres down the road," and we walked around the corner and sprung

them right on the verandah there all drinking beer. So we got together and marched back into camp and believe it or not we got first grade passes as far as navigation went.

**Were Sandy and Van also signallers?**

Yeah, they had done the sig course back in Australia with me.

**Sandy and Van?**

Yes, Sandy and Van.

**Are they still your mates?**

Yes, but Sandy passed away

20:30 about eight years ago. Van I still have contact with.

**Sorry, but were they mates that you met when you went to Puckapunyal?**

Yes, they went to Puckapunyal.

**Yes, but did you become friends then? Or when you came over to Hiro?**

I met Sandy down there, Van I met in Enoggera.

21:00 And I met Sandy down in Puckapunyal and we ended up on this sig course as I was telling you before. We eventually completed it but we got into trouble again. This colonel...we got posted out...we had to run around with the next group of soldiers who were doing the assault course and that under fire. So we had to go through a second lot of Haramura with radio sets. And I was lucky this day, I didn't have to go up the hill.

21:30 It was a bit of a pain in the neck because the officer only had a map case and his pistol and binoculars and you had a great radio set...it was one of those big square things on your back, plus your .303, plus your gear and you had to keep running up and down keeping up with him you see. By that time I was as fit as a mountain goat. Anyway that day I got allocated to the tanks and I was the liaison between the tanks firing over the top of the

22:00 infantry and the infantry officers to control the fire. Van went to machine guns and I think Sandy went to mortars and between us we were supposed to control the fire to make sure it didn't hit anyone. And anyway the tank was a Sherman tank commanded by a Canadian, and he was only a second lieutenant. And in the middle of this firing we suddenly saw a figure walking around on the hill in amongst

22:30 all these mortar bursts and shell bursts. So the lieutenant said to me, "Siggy (that's what they call the signaller), get on the blower and get that man put under arrest." Anyway I tried to come through on the air, and the next minute this English sergeant...he was the commanding officer's 'rad' as they called him...he was his radio man, he said, "You will maintain radio silence." I thought he was daft because radio silence always comes in before

23:00 things start. When they start you have to pass commands and what have you. If you start it before they might get an inkling of what's going on. But as soon as it starts you need your radio. That's the whole idea of the radio. So I said to him...I'm afraid I was a bit rude, and I said, "Can't you hear the battle has started, boom boom." And a couple of other words. Anyway he was going to put me on a charge and by that time I couldn't get through,

23:30 we had to stop firing. And it turned out the figure on the hill was the colonel. He was walking around to watch the procedure of the attack up the hill. He had a good view from there. And when people said he was mad he said, "Me mad? You want to meet my brother; he's got nine medals for bravery." Apparently his brother was in Dunkirk or something during the evacuation and he is supposed to have got up and charged a

24:00 German tank with a sword in one hand and a pistol in the other yelling out for his men to follow him. I don't think...he got captured anyway I think the story goes. They probably took pity on him and thought he was stark raving mad.

**Harry, were you, Sandy and Van concerned about fighting? Having to go in and fight?**

Well, in those days...I think about it now...what worried me a bit was bayonet training.

24:30 We had 18 inch bayonets. They were fearsome looking things. The physical conflict. Shooting at someone didn't worry me because I thought we were doing the right thing. And by that time you hadn't actually experienced the horrors of someone dead alongside you or what happens when a life is extinguished. I suppose putting it plainly, you don't really realise

25:00 what you're in for probably. Anyway I was prepared to do what I had to do because they were the baddies and we were the goodies sort of thing. I didn't believe what they were doing and I didn't want it to happen here. And most of us had the thought that if we were going to have to fight anybody it was better to fight in their back yard or their lounge room than in our lounge room or our back yard and wreck everything. So if somebody wants to fight you

- 25:30 fight it on their ground, not on our ground. And that was the attitude of a lot of the fellas. I still think it's right because we're not the aggressors. If they're the aggressors why should we smash up our area? Why wait until they come to you? And that policy was often carried out with the infantry. The Australians never waited for the enemy to come to us. We always went out to them,
- 26:00 as we found out later in Korea. Anyway coming back...I finished the course and the only incident I had there was firing a bazooka, which was a rocket launcher. They brought this bazooka forward and we were firing it...a mate fired it, Sandy fired it, and we had to fire it at a bunker about 600 metres away, I suppose. We only had one round each. The idea was...
- 26:30 the firer held the launcher on his shoulders and the loader put the rocket bomb in the cradle, and attached the wires. It was electrically fired. Patting him on the back to tell him that everything was clear behind him and he wasn't going to bring a building down on himself, and then just move back and let him fire it. Anyway I fired mine and I hit the bunker and I was quite pleased with myself. And when then it came time for me to load this bomb into Sandy's,
- 27:00 I loaded it in and when I put the bomb in...it's got a safety pin in it you see...and, I don't know why but I pulled the safety pin out and put the bomb in the cradle and we're going to fire it aren't we! So I loaded it in, hooked up the wires and right step back...the next thing the sergeant who was a sergeant from 3rd Battalion and had been at Kapyong, he says, "Unload." And I looked at him and said, "I thought we were going to fire it."
- 27:30 And he looked at me again because I had problems and he knew I had problems because to unload meant you put the safety pin back in before you took it out because otherwise the bomb was alive you see. And if you hit anything it would go off. Just previous to that we had a Canadian lance corporal demonstrating a bazooka bomb and he said, "So long as the pin is in it's quite safe" and proceeded to tap it on the nose with a pair of pliers and it exploded and it killed him and two others and wounded about five or six others in the area.

#### **Did that happen during Korea?**

During training.

#### **But did that...I know that happened during training but was that in Korea?**

- 28:00 No, that was back in Japan.

#### **I understand that, but did that happen in Korea when you were actually fighting?**

I'm just coming to that. What you did was... he said to me then, he said, "Okay", and he pulled the pin out of his pocket and gave it to me and he said, "First of all you're going to have a lovely night aren't you, private, walking around with a live bomb? You're not going to have very many friends."

- 28:30 And I was a bit perplexed because it was just on dark. Anyway he relented and gave me the pin because he always carried a couple in his pocket. He waited for people like me to do stupid things. I learned a lesson from then. He said, "When ever you fire a weapon soldier, you never throw away the safety device until it has gone boom."

**Very true.**

- 29:00 So I learned it very well then.

#### **Sorry Harry, can you tell us how you actually got from Japan to Korea?**

Well, eventually...after that, we finished that course and we came back on draft for Korea. I was supposed to go to 3rd Battalion I found out later, but we landed...we took off and this time they put us on board the ship and we were okay, and they fed us and we got across to Pusan, which

- 29:30 was down in the southern part of Japan...Korea. Where the Pusan perimeter used to be. You've probably heard about it. We went to a camp called Seaforth. Anyway that was a staging camp and...the funny part about it...yeah, we went from there up to Seoul then. But while were there we saw the devastation then
- 30:00 of what the fighting was all about. I remember seeing all these refugees and there were literally thousands of them. And one thing I remember quite distinctly, there was a little girl. She wouldn't have been older than three years old and she had a baby brother on her back. And they lived in a big cardboard carton that cornflakes had come in. It was about that big, not quite a metre by a metre. That was their home and there were a lot of them living like that
- 30:30 and they were always trying to steal rations and that out of the camp. The guards used to chase them away and we used to abuse the guards. We would help where we could because you'd see these poor little kids. They'd sell anything because they had to survive. We went by train up to Seoul. At the time there was supposed to be a lot of guerilla activity. The north Koreans had guerillas running around in the south.
- 31:00 Occasionally there were a few attacks on army posts. We got in the train. We had our rifles but we had no ammunition. They hadn't given us anything. They had it in the back in the carriage. Anyway

something happened; I don't know who it was...anyway the diggers went and got the ammunition and they issued a bandolier to each man. We thought we've come here to fight, not to be shot without anyway of retaliating.

31:30 The officer was going to put us on a charge but it sounded a bit silly. To put you on charge for protecting yourself. So we got to Seoul and the first thing they did was take all the bolts out of our rifles and put them into the Q store, the bolts out of the Bren guns. And in Seoul all the Americans were walking around with loaded grease guns like a submachine gun and Thompsons and Garrens, M1 carbines.

32:00 A couple of grenades hanging off their belts. South Koreans were the same, but we in our glory, they took the bolts off us. The next day they gave them back to us. But I do remember that night. I walked around the camp and I walked past this building and I heard a voice say "Halt!" and click. And I knew what the click was and the voice was English. The click was a round going up into the chamber see. I had only taken one pace forward so I took one back before I answered him. I thought the building between me and you

32:30 and I'm not going to start talking here. So I just took one pace forward and one pace back. Then I realised that things were getting a bit serious. So from there the next day we went up to the front as the reserve. Our...1st Battalion I was joining then and I was joining the sig platoon. I was the sig, and I went by myself. The other two mates got left behind, Sandy and Van, they weren't on that draft. I went to the sig platoon and

33:00 we were in reserve at the time. We were back in a place called the Shamazon Valley, a place called Yongdong, I think was the name of it. My hutchie we used to call them... I've got a photograph there. It's got a row of sandbags around a square with a ground sheet over the top. A stretcher made out of sig wire and a couple of pickets. We had the trenches...they used to look straight out over the Shamazon Valley and you could look straight ahead for about 800 metres I suppose

33:30 and on the right hand side on the front line were the British Fusiliers, I think were there at the time, and the American 1st Division on the left. You could see the Chinese hills. There was a mine field right down the centre. Even though we were just reserve we were put there as a blocking position in case they broke through and came down the valley you see. Shamazon Valley was the main attack route ever since the days of Gengis Khan.

34:00 Anyway I watched an attack by the Americans and they lost an outpost which is a group of soldiers who are put out in the front.

**Do you remember what battle the Americans were in?**

It wasn't a battle. They were in the line. You see the main line went right around and across the hills from east to west.

34:30 It went from east coast Korea to west coast Korea and we were slightly towards the west and anyway the American Marine Division...there were different tactics you see. We had our outposts, but their outposts, the Chinese attacked it and they went to take it back. With us, outposts were mainly

35:00 there to listen. The sole job of an outpost was to listen and let the main force back here know who was coming, what sort...how many there were and that sort of thing. So they would warn the people back there to be ready and then we'd got out as quick as we could, because we were only six people and the Chinese sometimes would patrol in a company of a 100.

35:30 So by staying you didn't serve any purpose at all, except you got wiped out. There were a couple of times when outposts were surprised and got wiped out and some were taken prisoner. But the idea was to warn them and get out. But with the Americans it was a matter of honour and prestige. Anyway this day I watched the Americans go over the top of the hill. Before that at 5 o'clock in the morning all these Panther jets napalmed [jellied petrol used in bombs] the Chinese position and

36:00 the outposts where the Chinese were, and rocketed it and that sort of thing. So the Americans went over the top of the hill and you heard all the small arms fire and we were listening on the radio and you could hear the colonel say, "More air support." And in would come all these planes again and this went on about six or seven times and it wasn't until about half past eleven in the morning before they got it back. I don't know how many people they would have lost. And it was irrelevant. The outpost to us was just an outpost.

36:30 It would have been different if they had attacked the main line.

**Do you mean that when you think back, and at the time that there was a lot of hoohar about this outpost and it should never have been an issue?**

Oh yes, an outpost was essential to have. But I only think that to try and hold an outpost which meant nothing. It was there for the sole purpose

37:00 to warn your own forces back here that they were about to be attacked. And beside the outpost we would have ambush patrols whose job was to go out and try and ambush the enemy patrols, as we were. When we eventually...I've jumped the gun a bit here. I was in the sig platoon when 1 Battalion was in the reserve before we went on the hill.

- 37:30 Anyway my mates hadn't turned up and I was a bit sick and tired of pulling lines out of switchboards and climbing telegraph poles. I didn't think much of the signal work. When I joined I thought I was going to be infantry and fight the enemy and that sort of rubbish. Anyway my mates hadn't turned up so I had another friend of mine, Dutton, and he was in D Company. So I had to go up...if you wanted to be transferred you had to give three good reasons.
- 38:00 So I thought if you're going to do anything, do it as best you can, even though it might be wrong, still do it as best you can. So I got paraded before this captain. His name was Captain Buck Rodgers. He was the commander of the sig battalion. He's still alive. Anyway, he said "What's your reason soldier. Do you
- 38:30 realise you're in the sig platoon, the elite platoon of headquarter company?" I said, "Yes sir." He said, "Why do you want to go to a lowly rifle company?" I said, "I have a friend in the lowly rifle company." I didn't say lowly, I said one of the other rifle companies. I was nearly tempted. And I said, "I would rather be in a rifle company."
- 39:00 And he said, "But what's your reasons? Don't you like it here?" So I said, "Well, I have no interest in signal work. Two, I don't intend to have any." I thought he was going to do a Breaker Morant on me and take me out [Australian soldier executed during the Boer War]. And the third one I said, "I would rather be in a rifle company." Well, he went from red to purple and purple back to red and then pink and got his breath back and said,
- 39:30 "You will find it easy to get from here to there, but you'll find it a lot harder to get from there to here. Get out of my sight." So I got what I wanted. I achieved it. And I thought, "Well, if that doesn't make him get rid of me, nothing will."

## Tape 7

- 00:33 **Okay Harry, you just managed to get yourself into a rifle company.**
- Yes I ended up going up to...by this time... we weren't on the hill at that time. I got to the rifle company and then we took over...when we were the reserves, Ian Hutchinson was the commanding officer, the CO. He was relieved and he went back to brigade headquarters. The
- 01:00 brigadier was on leave or something or other. We had an excellent commander by the name of Bunny Austin. That was his name. I don't know where he got the name Bunny but he was a very, very good officer. He was the colonel. He took us into relieve the Royal Canadian Regiment on a hill called 355, which was three hundred and fifty five metres which was 1100 feet high. I've got a photograph and I can show you
- 01:30 that after. There was only about one tree left on this thing. The shells had blasted everything else. Anyway we took over on 1st November, just after a snow fall. It was freezing. The weather used to drop there from anything between 40 degrees in the summer down to 30 degrees below. But when I was there the winter wasn't as bad
- 02:00 as the previous winter they had had with the 3rd Battalion. But it was down to around about the 20. I never had a thermometer. But that was what people told me. It was cold enough for me. Just previous to us going on the hill the Canadians were attacked by the Chinese and they actually nearly lost the hill and it was one of the main lynch points on the whole line
- 02:30 because it dominated the whole lot and you looked down on everybody. If you lost that that meant the whole line had to fall back. So the Canadians held it and they put another company in and they took it back. When we got there it was completely blasted. All the hutchies had been blown in. I counted something like...I believe about
- 03:00 eleven thousand shells went in, and we watched it. We were supposed to move up one night and it was just a dry run. What they did was...you always do a dummy run to fool the enemy. Sometimes it's by intent and sometimes by mistake. I don't know how the army works on that. But normally, you want to move in and take over a line, you send forward parties in a few nights before.
- 03:30 They go out and they get used to where everything is. But when the night comes for you to take over, your section leaders are there and as soon as you move in the Canadians move out as quickly as they can, and you then move in and your section leader shows you where you go. And the idea is to get them off the hill. You only need enough people on the hill to hold the hill. Any more are just a damn nuisance and you could suffer more casualties.
- 04:00 That's where the Americans had problems. They put more men on a hill in my estimation than they really required. Lots of times we didn't have enough, in most cases. But we worked on the principal of why have a crowded area because a man gets hit and you've got four men to carry a stretcher and then you've got four more men who have to fight. Another thing is, the enemy, if they know you're changing over on a certain night,

- 04:30 they'll put in massive barrages and probably an attack when everything's in disarray because you don't know exactly where the positions are and the others are trying to get out as quickly as they can. So it's a good time to put in an attack. So we did a dummy run this night and as it happened we all had quite a few bottles of beer left. We used to get one bottle of beer a day and we were storing it up for a party. So when we thought we were going up to the line, we all finished up the beer so we were in a good mood to go and fight the Chinese
- 05:00 on the trucks. Anyway we got up as far as the road. It was called the Camouflage Road. It faced the enemy and we had hung camouflage nets right along it and we used to water the road so the dust wouldn't give us away. If you couldn't use the road you were in perfect view of the enemy and their artillery was excellent and their mortar men were spot on. The Chinese invented the mortar if you remember correctly. They'd put in three rounds and one would hit the target.
- 05:30 Sometimes they would put one round right in on top of you. They were terrific. In one case they put one through the hatch of a tank. But anyway that's another story. Anyway this night as we were moving up we could see all these spots on the hill, the bright lights, and they copped a real hiding. They had about 26 killed and I don't know how many wounded. And when we took over the whole place was blasted. The
- 06:00 barbed wire was blown out in the front of the mine fields. The Canadians, the reason why they suffered so badly was because they wouldn't patrol forward. Whereas that's the hill there and it's 355 metres high, we would be basically on that hill and that was the main line of resistance. But we would go down off the hill every night just on dusk and we'd get out as far as we could in the valley. The valley used to be about 600 metres wide and the nearest hill to us was
- 06:30 about 200 metres, it was 227. We used to call it John, and it never had a tree on it. It was just like a big ploughed up brown hill. No grass on anything. There had been that much artillery been on it. This was a kind of static war. We were dug in and the Chinese were dug in and they even had hospitals inside hills. Their guns were dug in tunnels. They would push the gun out and fire it and then push it back in the tunnel.
- 07:00 They were a very very effective enemy.

**How did you find the Canadians as fighters?**

Well, this is a point. These were the Royal Canadian Regiment. We had a lot of problems. This might cause a diplomatic problem too but people have said it before me, but their hygiene was absolutely shocking.

- 07:30 The Australian army, our hygiene is spot on. You wash your hands before every meal, even in the trenches we used to shave every day, and you polished your boots. You didn't polish them to a shine, but you put leather on them to keep them water proof. You carried on as though you were...and you felt better because you were clean shaven, whereas the Americans used to grow this bit of growth to look tough with a cigarette
- 08:00 hanging out of their mouth. I think you always felt more of a man when you had good boots on your feet and shaved. It keeps your morale up. You feel like someone. Like if you're walking around with a dirty beard and dirty shirts, you don't feel much and you don't feel presentable. Although we might have been killed we still wanted to be presentable.

**So how did you physically manage your water rations and I guess things like that every day?**

We had one bottle of water.

- 08:30 On the hill mind you...everything had to be carried up by the South Korean porters. They were conscripted. Just people pulled in and conscripted. They had A frames on their back. And some of the loads they used to carry. One little fella used to carry a 44 gallon drum of diesel on his back. Two of them used to load him up and away He'd go. Everything had to be carted up the hill. So therefore the water was pretty scarce.
- 09:00 You used to have a shave. First of all you pour out enough for a cup of coffee. A pint. Then you'd pour out enough for your shaving water. Then you'd shave and then you'd wash in your shaving water. You never had any other. When it got too cold you didn't use a lot because when you washed...like I had a moustache at the time and I wax the end of it. But it used to freeze and I would have an icicle hanging off the end of it. Like the
- 09:30 Chinese Confucius. Icicles hanging down the corners. Anyway I gave it away and it used to make your lip sore. It was so cold that when you touched anything with your bare hands your skin would come off. Even a grenade, you wouldn't clutch a grenade. What I did, when I came from Japan I brought a couple of little hand warmers. They were run on cigarette lighter fluid with an element in it.
- 10:00 Little velvet bags and I had one in each pocket of my parka. So I would ten rounds of 303 for ready ammunition and a grenade. Our clothing used to consist of then....we were pretty well issued with clothing. We had a British issue. The early period when the Australian 3rd Battalion was there they did very badly. They got a lot from America and all the rest.

- 10:30 But the Australian government did buy a lot I believe or our fellows scrounged or the yanks felt sorry for them, I don't know. We had English shoes or boots and we used to wear a boot that was a size too big. I took a size seven so used to wear a size eight and it had a nylon in it that used to fit in the bottom to keep the cold out. And then you had two pairs of woollen nylon socks, and your trousers used to have...then you had a pair of long johns
- 11:00 with a trap door in the back like the kids used to wear. Then you had a woollen shirt that came down to your knees. Underneath that you had a string vest, then the shirt. You didn't have a normal singlet, you had this vest. The space between the course string and your body caused a insulation area and the heat coming off your body would make you warm. Thermal clothing I think they call it nowadays.
- 11:30 Of course the friction from it would make your skin heat up a bit. That was the theory of it all anyway. Then we had the sweater over the top of that. It was a bit like the old time commando sweaters, heavy wool with a tie up string. Then we had a jacket that used to go over that, a battle jacket with a hood on it. Then we had a green parka, an imitation sort of fur lined
- 12:00 with another hood on it. And it had a tail that used to come down and button up in front here if you had to sit on the snow. And then we had another parka, a big white one like yogi bear and that fitted over with another hood. So you had this great big thing over the top of your head and you looked like a monster. Then on your hands you had a mitten...what did they call it? There were no ...
- 12:30 it didn't cover your fingers, just your palms and the wrist to keep that main artery warm. Then you had a pair of woollen gloves then a pair of leather gloves. Then you had a gauntlet which was like a big canvas thing. It had one for your thumb and all your fingers. That used to be on tie strings. You could fight in that.
- 13:00 You had to just let it fall to the side so then you were down to your cotton mitten and gloves. That's why I used to carry these first few rounds warm in there. Anyway when I got to the unit, as I say it had been pretty well blasted and the section I went to was 1 Section, 10 Platoon. The section corporal at the time was a bloke by the name of Bluey Townsend.
- 13:30 I believe he's still living up the coast somewhere. He was an excellent corporal. I don't know what he thought of me. Our sergeant was a man named Des Cockran and he ended up later on as the Premier of South Australia. We had Lieutenant Hue Boyd. He was the Platoon Commander. He's still alive, but I believe he's suffered a stroke and isn't too well. I haven't seen him.
- 14:00 I've run into a couple of the section that I was with. Allan Coleman, he lives in Western Australia now. At one stage our section...I think there was only about seven when I got there and they had already been in action in a battalion before I got there, on another feature and then came off when I joined them in reserve see. So I don't know what the story was. Anyway the day we moved up onto the right flank on 355,
- 14:30 they were shelling us you see. And we had to cross this road and they were trying to hit the tanks that were dug in on top of this crest. They had some centurion tanks dug in just on the crest of the hill. The idea with the enemy firing was most times the shell would go over the top or hit the hill in the front, and if they were lucky they would hit the tank. But the tank used to take a lot of damage. I don't know what the crew felt like inside when the thing exploded on them. But unless they used armour piercing...but a lot of them were high explosives for some reason or other.
- 15:00 My hutchie was just to right about 20 metres and that was the top of the hill, just down below the crest of the hill on the reverse slopes. Anywhere you could put your living quarters on the reverse slopes. At one stage we lived on the forward slopes because it was too steep on the reverse slopes. But this time we were lucky. We had the kitchen down on the right flank behind us and the RAP was around on the hill, and on
- 15:30 our right flank was the Republic of Korea Capital Division. They were the elite division of the South Korean army. Originally the South Koreans didn't perform very well at first and they had their line broken a number of times. But you can't blame them as soldiers because when they were attacked they never had heavy weaponry. When the Koreans were divided the Russians moved out and left all the heavy gear with the North Koreans, tanks, aircraft
- 16:00 and everything. The Americans, because we had Sigmund Ree and he wanted to go into North Korea and I think the yanks thought if they give him too much...so all they had was ...they never had any tanks the South Koreans. They had very little heavy artillery. Mainly machine guns, mortars and that sort of thing. So they were virtually overwhelmed . A panzer attack went through them like a knife through butter. A lot of them fought very well, but later on a lot of them were just conscripted off the streets and
- 16:30 two weeks later they were fighting in the front line, or a week, and given a rifle and the poor devils didn't know what hit them. But towards the end they were very, very good. Moulded together. In fact we had a scheme where they were attached to us. Each division had what we called...we called them 'Katcoms'...Korea attached to commonwealth division. We consisted of a division which was called the Commonwealth Division
- 17:00 for the first time in history. We used to wear a blue shield like a shield the knights used to wear. It had a crown on it. I've still got one in there. Anyway it consisted of three brigades. The Canadians had a brigade, the British had a brigade and we had two battalions. But our battalions were a lot larger. The

British battalions were a lot of the time understrength. Four five hundred men whereas our full battalion would be over eleven hundred.

- 17:30 At one stage I believe there were fourteen hundred which is very unusual. I won't swear to that but I have heard it mentioned. But we could hold a ground a lot better than one of the others could because they had too little, and we had too little too some time. But I'm just trying to explain the difference. And we had New Zealand artillery backing us. We had
- 18:00 the South African Cheetah Squadron was part of the Commonwealth. They flew Mustangs. The Australians flew Meteors when I was there. We had a Dakota Squadron. They did excellent service there. They flew millions of miles and never had one crash. I could go on then for a long while but people today don't realise how efficient our people were in Korea because they gained a lot of
- 18:30 praise from every other country, the Americans in particular. They say that the Australians were always put in the hardest spots mainly because any commander...if you've got good troops, why put a weak battalion in when you've got good troops. So you put the best...if you've got a crack infantry division, you put the best in against them you see. It may sound like I'm blowing my...but the Australians and the British often led the spearheads in the early
- 19:00 part of the Korean war and they led the withdrawals. Not lead the withdrawals but held the rear guard you see. And you've probably heard all about that with Kapyong and that. Anyway on this hill when I joined it, the first patrol I went on...I went in and I joined...I went to this hootchie you see. There was room for four people in it and then just towards the front of it facing the forward part of the hill, there was a little part cut out...
- 19:30 the width of the hootchie [tent], but only about that high and they used to put their gear and ammo in there. And I was the fifth one and I said, "Where do I go." And they said, "That's your spot". I was reinforcements. I didn't know them very well and as I said before reinforcements were welcome but everybody would be a bit dubious before they found out what you were like. Anyway the first patrol I went on...I went down and they nominated myself and another chap to go and get the armoured vests. The patrols sometimes used to wear armoured vests.
- 20:00 That's another thing. The American troops all had individual armoured vests. We Australians being the poor cousins had 12 to a company or platoon. So when a patrol went out you had 12. So I think it was Curly and myself, we'd go down and pick these up from the Q mess and we'd put them on. We'd carry six each. Invariably I would always miss out. When they handed them out I would miss out and I'd be on patrol without one.
- 20:30 The first patrol I went on, Cochran says, "Pooley, you're a sig, aren't you?" "Yes sergeant." "Here's the radio." I should have known it. They've got all your records you see and your records go to the troops. Anyway I ended up being the sig for the patrol and
- 21:00 we went out on another position. It was an outpost named Halifax. I don't remember...my memory's a bit doubtful here because we used to work long hours and you'd be lucky to get two or three hours sleep a night. You were pretty well worn out. We would have detail parties for repairing the tickers in the mine fields and
- 21:30 replacing the barbed wire, and that was a bit hairy scary. You used to go out and muffle the tickers with blankets and a hammer...because if they heard you and knew what you were doing and they blew it out then they would just send half a dozen shells in and they'd catch you working. So that was a bit hairy scary at the time. It didn't worry us until this night on the outpost and I was the sig. It was freezing cold
- 22:00 and we were supposed to be there for four hours. We went out at six o'clock, just on last light. It was a case of getting out before the others got out. If they got there first they would ambush you. But if you got there first you could ambush them. So it was a mad race down the side of this mountain. It had snowed then and they had this big rope about two and a half inches thick. They must have got it off a ship or something. This was dangling down the side of this mountain. We used to use that to climb back up again otherwise you couldn't
- 22:30 get up because where we went down we had disturbed all the snow and it was like a slippery dip. That was fun. We would sit down and put the rifle across our lap. I was supposed to be issued with an Owen gun or a pistol but they never had any, so I had my .303 which was rather ungainly to carry around with a radio. But I was lucky in one respect. I didn't have to carry the big radio. By that time we had little radios issued to us called 88 sets, and they had the radio unit in
- 23:00 this basic pouch. The basic pouch was what we used for standard equipment, magazines and that sort of thing. In this case I carried the radio in this side and the batteries in this side. The aerial used to keep coming out and it had a little handle that just clipped on the front of you. So we were at this outpost and what happened...the Canadians as usual were very slack in their discipline. All around us were old empty shell cases, there were empty ration cans
- 23:30 all shining in the moonlight and they would give you away. They would give the position away. The Chinese are no dills. They would know someone was there. But we put in a raid that night, one of our companies did a raid and everybody was concentrated on them. We were out here to make sure that no Chinese companies tried to come in around them coming back with the wounded.



- 24:00 So we were sitting there like sitting ducks about 600 metres out. There were about six of us. It was freezing. We ended up being there from 6:00pm to just before first light in the morning. I often heard them say that no man had to do more than four hours because of the freezing conditions. We did 12 hours. I lay there with my head on my arm and next morning...I must have a heavy head because
- 24:30 my jaw was so sore from the weight of my head. And sometime during the night I remember the company headquarters called me up and the old call sign was 'Checkerboard' and they were 'Diplomat One Able'. 'Diplomat' was probably D Company. I remember the two call signs but I couldn't say if they were reversed the other way.
- 25:00 We were laying out there and it was perfectly still except for the racket going on over there. And any noise you made...if anyone got up to pass some water it sounded like Niagara Falls. It would travel across the icy snow, and your eyes were busy looking and something would move and so you had to look away and then come back to see if that stump was still a stump or was coming towards you. Anyway next morning this voice cackles out from the radio.
- 25:30 "Diplomat one able. Checkerboard. Sit rest over." And as soon as I heard it I grabbed it and jammed it down into my coat, and then I pulled it out very quietly. But the trouble was you couldn't talk very quietly. It wasn't that type of radio. You had to speak clearly and distinctly like I'm talking now. I said, "Don't call me, I'll call you" and shoved it back in.
- 26:00 So I don't think they thought I was a very good sig. But as far as I was concerned, we were out there as an outpost and we were supposed to be silent and observing, and you don't want a voice cackling away and give your position away. And if we had heard a lot of enemy I would then call them up and say, "There's a lot of movement to the front, request permission to move back." And they would either acknowledge it or not because that was our job. To report. We couldn't stop them, six of us.
- 26:30 As soon as we'd move out they would bring the artillery fire in between us and them and as they come forward they would get chopped up and we would hope to get out before they dropped their mortars on us. We had to scramble up this rope in the moonlight with everybody looking at you. That was a bit hairy I suppose. Up until then I hadn't been very worried or frightened. Until I was in a forward pit one day and this
- 27:00 gun fired...what we used to do when a gun fired from the Chinese line, we used to count the time it took from the gun firing to when it arrived at you. And by counting the seconds, and if you had a compass and saw the flash from the gun or the smoke from the gun, you'd take a bearing on it and then you'd take the time it came and you'd say...by that time we had learnt what was the 122 shells which made the horrible noise and which were mortars, 76s
- 27:30 and that sort of thing. And we could tell the difference. We'd log them in and we'd call the company headquarters and say, 122 firing from bearing 128 degrees, 13 seconds. They knew how fast a shell travelled from a 122 millimetre, so by clocking the time they could approximately get the distance back from where it landed here
- 28:00 to where it was situated. And if you had a bearing for it then our counter artillery fire would get them which they often did of course. I got down the bottom of the trench because I heard this gun coming like an express train and the next minute, wham, just about 10 or 15 metres to the right of me and I would be nearly deaf in my ears. I would have my fingers in my ears in the trench. And I looked up and I heard thud,
- 28:30 and a rock had landed just about that far in front of my nose, and that's when I realised that these things can hurt you. So from that day on, we did an ambush patrol. We ever struck anything, then we came back. We got mortared all the way back from the mine fields. They used to know the mine field gaps by then because it had been static for a long while and they knew exactly where you went out,
- 29:00 and we used to take different route and come back a different way. A company would come back through yours and you'd come back through theirs. And you'd try and make it as hard as possible and the main thing we were keeping them at bay, and this is what the Canadians and the Americans wouldn't do. They'd check behind their defences and of course the Chinese would come right up and they used to dig shelters just about 20 metres down the side of the hill here.
- 29:30 And when they were ready to put in their attack, the Chinese artillery would start blasting the hill and they only had 20 metres to go, and they would come in in waves. So that's what would happen and the Canadians couldn't hold them. We worked on the principal that Australians would always patrol and because we're short of numbers we want to make sure that we don't really want an all out fight when you're outnumbered, say 100 to 10
- 30:00 or something like that. The end is pretty gruesome . You might inflict a lot of casualties but you were still gone. If you wiped out 50 of them you were still gone. So you couldn't get back to wipe out another 50. So all our patrolling was meant to keep the enemy at bay and no-man's land wasn't no-man's land it was our land. Before that we won it back because they Chinese were pushing right back to the defences. So we would
- 30:30 go and push them back. The reverse procedure. We pushed them back onto their footholds and would

be there when they came out. We could ambush them because we owned the valley, and that was the idea of it. But there were a lot of ambush patrols and 'recce' patrols and mine laying patrols and all that sort of thing. And outposts, and it was very tiring because our section, as I said, was done and then it got worse than that because I had been there for about two weeks

- 31:00 and I was pretty tired on my feet by that time. You used to have one hot meal a day which would come up about 1:00pm. So by the time you got back in the morning, back from the patrol or back from your picket at night you would be pretty tired. You'd make yourself a cup of coffee, some C Rations and get some sleep. So we had to go down and they'd give you a de-briefing on what you did the night before. So it was about 11 o'clock before you cleaned all the rubbish out of the trenches
- 31:30 where any shell had thrown stuff in or damaged stuff, so you had to repair things and that. Sometimes details were sent back to the next line of defence to prepare them in case there was a break through. 'The Cancer Line' I think they called it. Anyway we ended up all pretty tired and strange to say, I used to think it was funny. You'd be going out on patrol and you'd hear the sergeant call out a list of names and someone would call out, "Hey Sarg, he went out last night,
- 32:00 it's my turn." And anyone listening would think they must be crazy. He wants to go out there and wander around in the mine field. But the thing was, when you were on the hill you were subjected to shell fire and mortar fire and you were just subjected to it and you couldn't do anything. When you were out there you had a chance to punch back. It's like me sitting here with my hands tied here and you slapping me around the face; it's pretty hard to take.
- 32:30 That's why most people liked to go on the patrols. It would sound crazy to anybody else. This time we came back and we used to go down for a hot meal...like this day we went down to the kitchen which was down at the base of the hill and we had to come back up. And every day at lunch time they knew this, they knew we went down for a hot meal. They had spies and that to let them know. About lunchtime they would shell us and the idea was to keep you awake
- 33:00 all night, deprive you of sleep...the good old Chinese proverb. Deprive people of sleep and they get very poor. Anyway the idea was to try and hit these tanks. They had shelled them for quite a number of days and they never hit them, and I used to say...somebody would say "It's a bit hairy where you are; you're only 20 metres away". And I would say, "So long as they don't get a mug gunner on; he comes 10 degrees left we're sweet."
- 33:30 This day we had just come back from lunch and just as we got to the doorway, there were two of us and we could hear them coming and we dived in this doorway and we got stuck. Two of us in the doorway. It was only this wide. He's looking at me and I'm looking at him and we've both got our rear ends sticking out and the shell went off behind us. I know what went through my mind, how are you going to tell people you only got wounded in the buttocks. It's the crazy things that go through your head. Nothing happened. We went inside and I went up into my
- 34:00 little shelf position. I had been down to the canteen and bought some grapefruit and stuff from the naffy wagon. I just bent over to put it under my bunk and the air quivered. I never heard a thing, just the air went funny, like someone had punched me in both ear drums and the next thing I know I was down on my hands and knees; the hutchie had collapsed;
- 34:30 I could smell the cordite. Apparently the shell had come from that direction and the hutchie was there like that. It had come over the ridge, cleared the ridge and I was there and it hit forward of me. About that far. And that's what saved me I think because all the blast went like that. The mortar bombs usually blast and explodes in an area of 360 degrees. This one went forward. Some go back of course. But that's my theory anyway.
- 35:00 Sometimes the closer you are to an explosion the safer you are. I don't know who thought that one up. But anyway when I got up off the ground I was pretty well stunned. The sand was all drizzling down out of the sandbags we had over the top of us and there was timber hanging down. I could see a bit of daylight just over here and then I started to dig my way out, and one of the other diggers...there was two of them. One was on the right hand side about where
- 35:30 that port is, and the other one was here. And that was all gone. You could see daylight. The top was all gone. It had blown it all out. This fellow here, I had to crawl out over the top of him. He was pretty smashed up. I was still in shock actually and then I heard Mickey Lynch I think his name was, I could hear him calling
- 36:00 out and he had been blown back in the corner and one leg had been blown off at the ankle and the other one was smashed, and I was trying to pull the timber off him. But I was still pretty dazed and I wasn't quite sure which bit of timber to pull and then somebody came in and took me out. I don't remember a lot of that. Just that they took me down to platoon headquarters.

**The fellow you had to crawl out over was he still alive?**

- 36:30 No, no. Impossible. He was completely smashed up. The shell had done a lot of damage to him. The blast. I won't mention any names here because of the fact ...common sense. I don't want to talk about that part. Anyway they took me into...I don't know what happened then because another friend of mine said he found me wandering on the sky line,

- 37:00 and I was trying to talk and there was nothing coming out of my mouth. He thought I must have concussion or something. He took me down and I don't remember anything. I just remember the thing. I remember the air quivering and the stuff falling in and getting out through the hole and trying to help Mick, and the next thing I remember was being in the command post. They gave me a cup of hot coffee and rum. I found out later that was the worse thing you could
- 37:30 do and I was probably in shock then....that's giving you rum.
- Why?**
- Because alcohol doesn't help you. Anyway it didn't seem to worry me. I don't remember much. The next thing I remember I was getting into a jeep. They had a ...up this hill...I'll show you the photograph later, they used to have a jeep track going up the back of the hill and the tanks used to come up there and go onto this crest.
- 38:00 They used to bring the jeeps up at night to bring back any casualties or they'd take them back on a flying fox. They'd fly in one of those M\*A\*S\*H [reference to American TV show about the Korean War] type helicopters, a Sioux and it would land on a platform on one of the reverse slopes. Anyway I went out on the jeep. I remember they put the other soldier's body on the stretcher on that side and the bits and pieces and I was on the stretcher on this side,
- 38:30 and the jeep driver was my friend, Vanatelli. I don't remember. He only told me years ago that it was him who took me. He said, "Don't you remember it was me?" I said, "No." So I must have been in quite a daze. Anyway I ended up...they took me back to Ashkelon and I don't know if they gave me a needle or what but the I can remember them asking, "Are you hit or hurt?" and all I had was a pullover on and all my gear was smashed.
- 39:00 My hat was gone and my rifle butt was all splintered. Anyway I looked around and I couldn't see any blood coming out anyway. They told me to take my sweater off and I couldn't see any bruising anywhere. But my ears were still ringing like hell and I don't remember anyone talking much. I can't remember any commands. The next morning I got up and I came out. I had breakfast and I was heading back up the hill
- 39:30 to my unit. That's where I was supposed to be. That's where my section was. This major came out. I had no hat, and he said, "Where do you think you're going?" I said, "I'm going back to D Company." He said, "No you're not. You're going down to Inchon for a week, for a rest." And by that time our section had lost two men, one killed, one wounded and me. So it was down again. I went to Inchon for a week.
- 40:00 I enjoyed a week down there. I was allowed to...I didn't have to shave if I didn't want to. I could drink if I wanted to. But I wasn't supposed to hit the MPs and they put me to bed. It was quite relaxing. It was a little place just outside of Inchon on the coast. It was a rest and recreation area for the Commonwealth troops. Anyway I ended up...there was a funny story there but I won't go on with that because it's taking too long.

## Tape 8

- 00:32 **Harry when did it dawn on you that you had lost your mate in that battle?**
- Well, as I say I hadn't actually been too close to this chap because I had only just joined the unit. I had only been there for two weeks. We were always doing different things so I didn't see much of him. We weren't always in the hootchie at the same time.
- 01:00 I remember he was a fine upstanding young fellow. He was about six foot. The first thought that comes to my head actually when I saw him and I thought to myself...I had mixed feelings like I'm glad it's not me, but then I thought, "Why was it him and not me". He was such a wonderful young man. Everything in life awaiting him, and now he's ...
- 01:30 just something without a soul. A life is only a life...I mean when the life goes out of the body...the body is basically nothing. It's a shell for a human being. It was just blown away like that. It's a terrible sensation and I felt very sad. Sad is hardly the word for it. As I say, I felt glad one minute that it wasn't me, and
- 02:00 I felt sad that a fine young man like himself was gone. And you wonder what all the point of it is. Why does this have to happen. But you don't have time to dwell on it because survival comes into it, I suppose. We who are left have got to go on. There's nothing we can do
- 02:30 to alter the fact that that person is no longer here, except carry on with the job that you've got in hand. But that was the first time I felt fear. Up until then it had been more or less an adventure and I thought I was doing the right thing, but suddenly it comes home to you that you could be like that.
- 03:00 It could have been you. And what's the purpose. They're gone. You may be remembered and you may

not be. It doesn't matter really because you don't exist any longer. It makes you feel very, very small about your place in the universe...like what we are and what we do. It made me think a lot about life, to try and get the most out of life

- 03:30 as I possibly can. I don't mean living today as though it was the last day. A meteorite's going to fall on your house tomorrow morning or anything like that and we maybe not here tomorrow. I don't mean that. Just the fact that you try and look at life from a different perspective. I used to even allocate money home. Most
- 04:00 bloke's didn't. Some did but most of them spent their money. After three months in Korea you used to get R&R [rest and recreation] in Tokyo and most of them used to blow their money in Tokyo for a glorious time for a week, and come back racked and ruined. The army called it rest and recreation; we called it rack and ruin. Anyway I used to allocate out of the money I had, I would allocate to Mum ten shillings a day, and I
- 04:30 used to put the deferred pay, two and six, away. So I used to put twelve and six a day away. Ten bob to Mum and I used to keep ten bob for myself. I used to use that if I went on leave or if I wanted to buy something from the canteen. So I wasn't working on the assumption that I wasn't going to come home. If I got the idea that I wasn't going to come home, you sorted felt defeated. As soon as you start saying, "Let's have a good time
- 05:00 because tomorrow we'll be dead" attitude, you're going a long way then to defeating yourself. My idea was I was coming back. When I come back I want some money in the bank. If I haven't got any money in the bank I can't do anything. I didn't have a lot but it was something. Anyway, as I said I felt very sorry and I was quite shook up. You become...
- 05:30 ...well, I think the word 'fear' is a very hard thing to explain. I think most of us suffered fear. Anyone who said they didn't, I think are stretching the truth a bit, because they don't have much up here. Seeing people killed alongside you and all that sort of thing, you must be fearful it may happen to you. That's only ...to my way of thinking, it's only basic thinking.
- 06:00 And I think I always had a fair amount of common sense. And I was never brilliant at anything. At school I was average or above average and in the army I was above average or 'steady and reliable' the reports always said. Or 'leads by example' later on when I became an NCO. So I was never put down as anything extraordinary. Basically,
- 06:30 I met my old army commander from D Company and ....I said, "I was in your company, sir." And he said, "You must have been one of the good ones, I don't remember you." But you did your job. That's the way life goes. You do your job properly, nobody remembers you. If you go through life and you become notorious for things....I wasn't aiming to be a hero. I was aiming to stay alive. But I wasn't backing out of it either.
- 07:00 Of course when I came back from the rest camp, I came back via Inchon which is back behind the line a few miles, but it was nearly like being here because unless they broke through the lines you weren't affected. The men there used to sleep eight hours a night, a full night. Heater, fires to heat them up and all that stuff, and we had to improvise with everything. We made
- 07:30 fires out of shell cases and dripped diesel into it. Some of them were quite dangerous. In fact a couple exploded and a couple got burnt to death when the hutchie collapsed and some of them were in sleeping bags and they couldn't get out of the bags when the fuel exploded over the top of them. There were all those sorts of things that happened.

#### **After Inchon, did you go back...go back into Korea**

- 08:00 **and into action?**
- Back into line, yeah. Actually I was offered a job in a Q Store. I was working in there for a while. The Quarter Master, the company quarter master, CQMS. I met him the other day for the first time in 50 years and I didn't know him. He had come to our association. I said, "I think I know your face." He told me his name and I said it didn't ring a bell and he said, "I was the CQMS of your company." I worked in his
- 08:30 Q Store for a week or ten days I suppose. I was waiting for my winter gear to come up. You could never have enough winter gear...and you couldn't go back into line if you didn't have your winter gear. All I had was what I stood up in. Anyway I slept every night with my feet up on a 'choofa' [kerosene stove] and had three meals a day and plenty of sleep so I felt good. When my gear came up, they offered me a job as a lance corporal in the Q Store and said I could stay there if I wanted to.
- 09:00 And that was a hard decision. I would have loved to have stayed there. It was lovely and warm. You slept all night, you got fed, but your mates that I had met up with were up on the hill and they were short handed. It sounds a bit dramatic I suppose but that's the way I felt, and it's nothing about being a hero or anything like that. It's just the fact I didn't like
- 09:30 walking away without finishing what I had started. I was dead scared about going up again, I can tell you now. It was terrible that hill with shells bursting over the top. And the fact that when you were out on patrol you didn't know if your next step would be a mine. We lost quite a number of blokes stepping

on mines because the Canadians didn't register them properly. There were a lot of loose ones lying around. The barbed wire of the minefield had been blown away.

- 10:00 You'd follow the wire around before you knew you had walked into the mine field. In fact Digger James who was Major General James later on, he was in one of the other companies and I was in a protection party when they got him out. We could see the Chinese on the hill watching us. They wouldn't fire. They were good like that but as soon as you got the stretcher back over the hill they let you have everything they had. The ones that were living.
- 10:30 But while you were getting the wounded out, they wouldn't shoot at the wounded. Or anybody trying to help. And we wouldn't shoot on theirs. And we had a sort of code between us. And the only time was when it got mucked up...I don't know if it was an American group ...but someone fired on their wounded and they thought it had come from us. And for a couple of days it was on and they used to fire on everyone, but then they must have woke up that it wasn't us that fired on them. And after that we had a company attack go
- 11:00 in. It was still coming back in, back to our position at 11 o'clock in the morning, broad daylight. All the Chinese were looking down and we were looking down on them and we had a lot of stretcher bearers going out to bring up another company. Anyway we were firing mortars onto the Chinese line to try and stop any of the artillery and that, the next minute we heard pop pop, mortars going off, and they landed
- 11:30 on the hill there and they were smoke mortars. We were putting down smoke to try and cover the withdrawal and the Chinese sent in smoke too. So that sort of thing...even at Christmas time, I had been evacuated by Christmas the second time, but they even left a Christmas tree on the wire and they put all these presents on it and in the middle they had this huge big landmine but there was no detonator in it. They used to broadcast all the time over the air, the propaganda.
- 12:00 There was an American plane that used to fly up and down the valley and you'd hear this ghostly voice coming from the sky telling the enemy to give up. And they had a chap with a loudspeaker who used to play songs for us and tell us we were fighting for the capitalists and why did we want to fight the Chinese when we had no argument. Why don't we just go home? Our loved ones were waiting for us and all this. We're working for Uncle Sam and they're getting rich. All that sort of propaganda.
- 12:30 But it didn't worry us. Anyway...

**What do you think about that propaganda now, Harry?**

Well, it's sad to say, since then I've done quite a bit of research and read quite a lot and it's amazing how the world...It's my belief, they finance war. It's a pretty well known fact that Britain, France and America...

- 13:00 they actually financed Germany in the First World War. The same as in Vietnam. There were a lot of American companies trading back through Europe and the money was going up for essential war materials and coming back down to fight against Americans. So when you think about it...and at home we had the black market during the war. People were making money out of the black market.
- 13:30 It seems the soldier's lot is not to reason why but just damn well die when they put you in. It's changed my way of thinking a lot but I just don't like to see in Australia where we become a mercenary factor. I've had American troops...I went up in an exercise in '89. I was still in the army then.
- 14:00 Up at Kununurra, when we put on a big exercise then and the Americans were involved in it. I heard one guy say, the British had the Gurkhas and we got you Aussies. So it makes you think sometimes. Why should...if our forces are very good, naturally they should be used to that advantage but I often think to myself is it right that we should allow our
- 14:30 people...but we're only a small country. As much as we make a lot of noise as politicians here, we're only a little frog in a big pond. Or a big frog in a small pond. Financially this country is dictated to as to what we do and how we do it. I'm pretty certain of that. Like the structure of the country now. We've lost all our manufacturing.
- 15:00 It's created jobs for people in China, Taiwan and Indonesia and Thailand. It hasn't created any jobs here and the unions at the time, they put the pressure on the government and the manufacturers. I don't know whether it was done on purpose or not but for the manufacturer it was an excuse for him to say, "I'll shift my whole business overseas because the labour is cheap". So we end up...all we've got in this country now is a
- 15:30 specialist area and the hospitality trade I call it.

**So do you think to a certain degree what the Chinese were saying about the propaganda of the war was true. The Australians fighting for the American capitalists?**

Well, they were fighting for North Korea too you see. No, no I didn't believe it that way. There is an element of truth in it but it works both ways.

- 16:00 We were there because...I was against communism, and I wasn't looking at that part of it. But it comes in later in your life; you think, I wonder if there was any truth in it. I'm a great believer in looking at

both sides because during the Second World War...if you looked at all the signs around Britain about all the cross eyed Japanese bomb aimers. But they weren't cross eyed when they wiped out the fleet at Pearl Harbour

16:30 were they. So propaganda is used by both sides and you're stuck in the middle and you have to believe which is which.

**Harry, I interrupted your train of thought anyway and I must say sorry for that. You were saying that you were on the hill when the American voice was coming down from the plane...**

Yeah, just the propaganda.

17:00 **What happened after being there for a while?**

Well, after I left the Q Store and made up my mind to go back up the hill and they all reckoned I was mad. I went back up and the first thing they said was, "You stupid so and so, what the hell did you do that for". I was back about only a week and I had to team up with another chap, a young bloke. We got quite close and we did a few more patrols.

17:30 It wasn't long after that that the Chinese put...they didn't put an attack on us, they put a barrage of shells on us, on the feature I was on, and I had a mortar bomb go off just on top of the parapet. Like with the pit, the top is just sand bagged around and we had the ammunition down underneath and we used to pull the ammunition out and get in there out of the cold. Take it in turns. It was bitterly cold because we were facing the north and you couldn't button down the flaps because you lost your hearing. So you took the risk of

18:00 getting frost bitten ears. Anyway the idea was to...if you both stayed down the pit...like a lot of the Americans would be running into a tunnel. That was good because the Chinese would rush up and blow the front of the tunnel and entomb them. We were always taught that someone, one of us would put our head up and have a quick look and down. And the next time it was your mate's turn to put his head up unless you were silly enough to want to put yours up each time. But I just put my head up, it was my turn, and had a look

18:30 and a phosphorus shell landed just in front of us. They're nasty things. They spray white phosphorous which you can't put out. You can cover it with dirt but as soon as you brush the dirt off it ignites again. It burns right to the bone. Anyway, I heard this...just after I put my head down I heard this whirr...the sound of a mortar. They go whirr, whirr. Like a flutter. And the next minute I got another bang in the ear drums again

19:00 and it had gone off right just about there...my head was there. If it had been summer time I wouldn't be here again. The ground was frozen down to a depth of about two or three feet then. It was like concrete. The mortar bomb, the two inch mortar bomb went off on top and left like a bluish spark on the sandbags. The tail piece dropped on my foot and it was red hot when I pulled my boot away from it. Later on when I picked it up when it was cold. It had "Made in the United States of America." It was 60 millimetre ammunition. It had probably been captured earlier. I hope so anyway.

19:30 So then I went...we continued on. I was t here for about another...it was 15th of November. It was two days after my birthday when I got evacuated the first time. The second time...then Don and I changed positions. We went over to another position on the forward slopes and the trenches used to zig zag like that and we were overlooking a Chinese hill, 227. Of course they could look straight at us and we could look at them.

20:00 We had two blankets up. Just like the First World War. When you went through the first blanket you made sure it was right before you opened the second blanket so no light shone out. Anyway we were living in there and it had already been hit by a 122 millimetre mortar and the roof was all sagging and I had the top bunk and the sand used to drizzle down every time they shelled us at lunch time. I didn't like the idea of being...I had already been buried once and got away with it with the previous bang.

20:30 Anyway, we had a couple of reinforcements come up to us and just as they came in...we had an observation post just to the right of us where we usually had one man on during the day time. But what happened this day, people used to go down to the kitchens in the rear and a couple, two or three stopped to talk to this fellow which meant they had a little crowd, and the Chinaman saw it and thought a good opportunity target, so he rolled out this gun out of the tunnel and he let fire with three shots.

21:00 I heard the first one come in. It was about a three inch shell. He was only firing from 600 metres away so you couldn't hear it fire. You only heard the bang when it got here. Anyway I said to Don at the time, "Let's split up and go outside." The reinforcements had just joined us. It was their first time under fire. I said, "Move out." Move along the trench into the parts of the trench so if anything comes in it will only get one of us.

21:30 So Don led the way and I started to walk behind him. And just as he turned the corner like that, he took a post round and I was just coming forward when this shell came in and it hit the bank just there above him and just blew him down to the ground and killed him outright. It spun me round and I went down flat on my side in the trench. I never got a mark again.

22:00 My ears were pounding again. Anyway up until then...I had a crook back from the first time. It used to

ache like mad and I hardly used to get any sleep. I had to sleep on the ground. I couldn't sleep on anything curved. And I had had it. I was thoroughly exhausted. I've got a photograph and my eyes are like this. Someone used to call it the "thousand yard stare". You'd be looking in the distance but see nothing. It was because we were so short handed,

- 22:30 we didn't get a lot of sleep. Just before then we had had an inspection. We were on duty and Bunny Austin the colonel was inspecting our forward position, our company. I was in with Corporal...I think it was Bluey. We were in a pit facing the Chinese. Usually we used to get out of there during the daylight and just leave one man up there as observation. Anyway this day, the mist was rising
- 23:00 and it's light rain. It's half past six and we were told to wait until inspection. So we're standing there in the drizzling rain getting soaking wet and along comes Bunny Austin the Colonel, followed by Major Carter Thompson, followed by Lieutenant Boyd the platoon commander, followed by Sergeant Des Crock and they arrive at our pit. And I'm thinking, "This is great."
- 23:30 And to make things worse this bloke saluted him and the colonel said, "Don't salute me, I'm leaving and you're staying here." So then he turned around to me and he looked at me, and he said, "How are you, soldier?" And I thought now if I tell him what I really think, that I'm really browned off because I have to wait for you in the rain he'll probably put me on a charge and run me in for insubordination. Something came to my mind. I had never ever used it before, I just said...and if I told him I was happy he would have thought I was a real dill.
- 24:00 So I said to him, "Fair to middling, sir." He looked at me and said, "Fair to middling." And he walked away and he got about three paces and he turned around and said, "Fair to middling, hey." He didn't know if I was good, bad or indifferent. But then after that when Don got killed, I was pretty certain when I saw him after the shell had gone off. There was no...he was just covered in dust and dirt
- 24:30 and I felt his pulse and he was gone. Mainly the blast. There didn't seem to be any superficial damage. There was a lot of dust and dirt around him. But I ran down to get a medic and when I got down there, I got the medic and I was pretty shook up because my ears were thumping again, and lack of sleep. And anyway if I remember correctly I did cry...I'm not ashamed to admit it. I cried.
- 25:00 I was quite close to Don. I thought again, "Why is it him and not me". That's the first thought, strange as it may seem, even though I survived, why did he have to go and not me. What am I here for? Anyway I remember getting quite upset and I was really annoyed, or frustrated that even though I had been there on patrols and everything, I hadn't fired one shot.
- 25:30 I had bought artillery down on a Chinese outpost, which looked like it had been wiped out but you couldn't tell. But the only angry shot I had fired was down the toilet seat to make sure my rifle fired in the morning. I sound like a real big hero. That was the only shot I had fired. And I thought what do you tell people. It doesn't worry me any more. Anyway
- 26:00 I got quite upset and I remember wanting to have a go at one of these guns, the artillery and they're nine mile away. Apparently I was trying to get out of the trench. I don't know. It's hard to tell, I've never met anyone to talk about it again. But they gave me a morphine needle anyway and put me to sleep. I woke up next morning and I went back to my job again.
- 26:30 I lasted about...that was the 17th of December, and I lasted up to about the 20th I think, or the 21st. And I hadn't had any sleep because my back was really giving me curry, and my legs...I would stop in one spot and I couldn't get going again. So I decided to go to the RAP and the RAP was a mile and a half down the hill and around the other side. When you left...when you went out to fight in the valley, you carried one bandolier across your chest of 50 rounds.
- 27:00 And a .303 and three grenades. But when you went down to the RAP you had to carry six bandoliers, which is 300 rounds and three grenades plus your kit and your rifle. I don't know if the idea was to stop you from reporting sick...they said it was the fact that if there was an attack you'd have your own ammunition and everything.
- 27:30 So off I went and I got to the RAP about 11 o'clock that morning and I walked in. The doctor had one eye. I don't mean he was one eyed and that he didn't look at you, but he had one eye. I don't know his name. He said, "What's wrong?" And I told him about the pains in my legs and how they would collapse. And he said it was just the damp bunk. I was only 21. A lot of the older men were feeling it; the Second World War vets were feeling it very bad because a lot of them were in
- 28:00 their 30s, and they felt the cold terribly. Arthritis and that sort of thing coming at that age. I thought, "He's crazy." Anyway he said, "Come back tomorrow." I thought, "Come back tomorrow? All the way up the hill again and down again tomorrow with a full pack." I had never sworn at anyone in my life before...in fact it was the first time I had ever swore at anyone and I said, "I don't think I'll so and so bother, the four letter word". And the sergeant heard me and said, "What did you say?" And I said, "You heard what I said."
- 28:30 I couldn't have cared less. And he said, "You're back here tomorrow. You're on a charge." I had never been on a charge before even though it had been warranted sometimes. But I had managed always to be there on duty at the right time and other things. Anyway I went to go back up the hill. I was that tired. You're supposed to follow the trench line in broad day light, and I started trudging across and I

thought I can't climb up there so I just took a short cut across the valley in the snow. You were

29:00 in broad daylight and the Chinese could see straight out at you. I thought if they want to shoot at me they can shoot. I was that tired. The next thing I know I fell asleep under a little tiny stunted bush and I woke up at dusk. That's how exhausted I was. So I went up the hill, got up the top of the hill and we were on picket that night. Anyway the next morning I reported back to the RAP with all the gear again. Oh, and reason you took

29:30 all your gear was in case you did get sent out, you see. You didn't have much. Change of socks and shirt and that sort of thing. Anyway when I walked in he said, "What's your name?" And I told him and he said, "You're going to hospital. Get on a stretcher." I said, "What for, I can walk." He said, "Get on the stretcher. You've got pierced eardrums and a fractured spine." And I thought, "Now he tells me!"

30:00 This is about nearly a month after I got hit. The first time...the second time didn't seem to do any damage, but the first time when the shell came through the top it smashed me down on the ground, it must have done something to the back. There was no wound but it must have done something at the base of the spine.

**Is that where you think your ill hearing comes from?**

Yes I did my hearing in. For a long while I wouldn't recognise it.

30:30 I gradually... I ended up getting a hearing aide in 1964 actually. Up until then I got by but now I realise that I was disadvantaged in jobs because people...with hearing...when you keep asking people to repeat things, they think you're stupid or dumb or you're not intelligent. And a lot of people...if you meet people with patience it's all right. But a lot of people don't have a lot of patience and they just say don't bother with him.

31:00 And if you go to a party then you find yourself by yourself because you can't converse with the noise. Now I find it terribly hard when I go out. I hear all the background noise and I don't hear the voices. And when I do hear the voices, even in front of the television, I can see them talking, I partly lip read. But if I put the captions on then if I read quick enough I can understand what they're saying. But I can't...you might say ten

31:30 words and I'll only pick out about two or three of them. Anyway I got evacuated and got carried out in the ambulance then and I got taken to Seoul. I spent about a day in Seoul Hospital. When I got there it was funny. They had me on a stretcher and they laid me in the passageway and I wanted to go down to the toilet you see. Anyway I was looking for the orderly and there was an English boy there.

32:00 I couldn't find him so I got up and walked off, and the next moment there was panic because their fractured spine patient had walked off. He was supposed to have a fractured spine. So I went in...it was rather ridiculous. I don't know what it had done but I wouldn't say it was fractured.

**It was kind of silly for them to make you carry your kit if they already knew you'd be going to hospital.**

It just amazes me and I have no answer for it. But anyway I went to go in and they had the ward there with lovely white beds.

32:30 You could put a switch on and an electric light would come on. Up there the only light in the bunker was a tin full of kerosene with a bit of rope in it and you would light it. And all the fumes would ...you'd wake up in the morning with all this black soot on you. It didn't do my lungs much good then because we were living underground and the fumes from the choofa, the heater. Later on I suffered from pleurisy and pneumonia quite a number of times. And probably laying out in the ice and snow didn't help either. Anyway

33:00 I got to Seoul and I was there for about two days I think, then they evacuated me by Dakota. The RAAF [Royal Australian Air Force] took me back to Japan. Luck have it...I missed out...our company, my platoon did an attack on 227 in broad day light. I missed out on that and quite a number...one bloke got killed and quite a few wounded. It was rather

33:30 silly in my estimation to do an attack on a hill when everybody was looking down on you. The American command kept pushing for prisoners. Our command was against us. We knew who was opposite us. We'd been there for a while and there was no point in it. In the end one of our commanders or the chap in charge spoke to the American general because we were under them and he said, "Look, you fight your war a different way to how we fight our war. So let us do our thing and you do your thing."

34:00 So he acknowledged that. It was just pointless. We can't afford to waste lives. We're only a small nation. It's very dominant in the thoughts of the Australian Military with the First World War, just how many lives we just wasted and squandered. They were blown away for very little return. And here we decided we were going to make it different. Every since then we've more

34:30 than won our match in...but we don't sacrifice men for the sake of sacrificing them. That's why a lot of the Australian soldiers....being he knows that the people in charge...will follow him...if he said let's go into North Korea then they'd follow him because he would have a damn good reason for going. But others would want to say why? What are you doing? And it's only fair that you know why your life is being threatened.



- 35:00 It was a bit different. Some of the foreign troops weren't told that. We always worked on the principal that any one of us in the section could take command. Basically it happened many a time. Where someone gets knocked over and someone automatically just comes in. You're not wandering around like WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK s with their heads cut off because there isn't anyone to tell you want to do. We use our own initiative. We do what we have to do. If it means we have to go forward we do it. If we have to go back, we go back.
- 35:30 **Sorry to interrupt but how long were you in Japan before you came back to Australia?**
- I was in Japan...I arrived in Japan the day before Christmas and they had...the general hospital in Kure was well equipped there. There was a Harley Street specialist from London serving there. He was doing his stint. The British boys used to do two years in the National Service. The Americans. Every other nation does two years except us.
- 36:00 We did three months and we thought we were hard done by until we did the two years at the time of Vietnam. Anyway I was in Kure from Christmas Eve...January, February, I was in hospital. They x-rayed me from every angle. From the bottom up and down, and all they could find was a bit of a
- 36:30 blur at the base of the spine. But they said it was very hard to see deep down in there. The funny apart about it was that some days I could walk along quite normally. I could climb the hill. They sent me into a convalescent camp for a while and it was what they called a 'Con [convalescent] Depot' where you were to get fit to go back to Korea, back to your unit. And you used to climb these hills around Japan, and sometimes would have no trouble. I would walk down and climb up. But another day I would just go to step to walk away
- 37:00 from getting up and the legs would give way and I would go down in a heap. My legs would just collapse and there was pain right down in the base here. It was terrible at the time because I thought they must think I'm just bunging on an act. But I assure you. It was quite true. It was terrible. Anyway come about May I was still in hospital and they discharged me from hospital.
- 37:30 What they did then was, my time was up in August and I got sick and tired of being in hospital, back to Con Depot, back to hospital and everybody probing and pushing and x-raying and everybody coming up and saying there was nothing definitely wrong, and then something was wrong. Later on someone said it was a constitutional factor, which means anything. It could be in your head or it could be something you suffered from years ago. That was the army's way of putting it.
- 38:00 Anyway I ended up one morning I decided to get myself paraded to the officer in the charge. He said "What do you want?" And I said, "I either want to go back to my unit or go home. I'm not just going to be in limbo climbing up and down hills in Japan. I was to be discharged or go back." I said, "Make up your mind." Anyway the next morning the sister came up and she said, "You're going home. You're being evacuated to Australia."
- 38:30 Before that they came up one night. They called out my name. They said, "Pooley, you're going to Sasebo to join HMS Glory"... which was a British aircraft carrier. And I looked at her and said, "Matron, I'm in the army, not the navy." The next minute she said, "You're Pooley, aren't you?" I said, "Yes." The next minute a voice down the ward yelled out. "Sister, that's me."
- 39:00 He was a Stoker Mechanic Pooley. He turned out to be my cousin on Dad's side. And that's how I met him. At one stage of the game when I was in and out of hospital and in the convalescent camp, we would get an occasional day's leave and you had to wear blues. You had to wear a white shirt, a red jacket and blue trousers so the MPs knew exactly who you were. You couldn't escape.
- 39:30 But this day for some reason they allowed us to go into battle dress and I saw the HMS Glory at the dock. We went down and I remembered that Stoker Mechanic Pooley was on the Glory you see. This officer came up and he said, "What do you want?" I said, "I've got a brother on board." I had said to my mate, "Do you want to have a look over an aircraft carrier?" And he said that would be all right.
- 40:00 So I changed things around a bit and I said I had a brother on board. So I said, "Stoker Mechanic Charlie Pooley." We waited about 20 minutes and up he came all dressed in his blues. He had been given the order to take us around the aircraft carrier. It was quite interesting to see how they lived on the aircraft carrier. The hammocks slung between the steam pipes and everything. We met the Captain on the flight deck and he was
- 40:30 coming towards us with the four stipes on his sleeve. My mate looked at me and I looked at him and he said, "Do we salute admirals and captains?" And I said, "No, we're in the army not the navy." So we just walked past him and the next minute he said, "Good afternoon. Enjoying the tour?" And I said, "Yes, thank you sir." We always acknowledge it. But we never saluted him and he must have thought "Oh well", and saw the slouch hat.

### **What did you think of the news that you were coming home?**

Well, it was a relief actually. In one way, as I said to you before...I wasn't real keen on...nobody in the right sense and who has any brains at all would

- 01:00 want to go back in and take the risk of being blown apart. And to my way of thinking, I thought it was just a waste after I saw...the last time I saw my mate just go and he was such a fine young man. That sort of thing and I thought what actually is the point of it all. The point was, when I joined the army, was to stop them. And to reach a stale mate...That's what they called it...we had an air force; they never had an air force.
- 01:30 The Americans dropped them out of the sky. But they had the men and the defences there; at that time they had been working on for a couple of years...this was now '52 and the static war was started way back in 1951. So they had defences to depths back to about 50 mile and the hills were just like rabbit warrens. They used to use 1000 pound penetration bombs to go into the hill and then explode when it got down there. They were very clever at camouflage, the Chinese. They were very courageous soldiers. I will admit that. But they were forced...pushed into...we thought at the time that if they didn't do what they did, then someone would shoot them. That was their doctrine like, the communists.
- 02:00
- 02:30 A soldier's life wasn't worth much. I mean if you spoke up to your commander, you'd get a welt over the...there was nothing to stop the South Koreans in their army. An officer could shoot a man in the South Korean army. A lot of the soldiers were dead scared of some of their officers. They could just pull their pistol and.....Well, that didn't happen in our army. And I used to wonder, "What are we really fighting for?" This people I'm fighting with
- 03:00 and these people I'm fighting against...but that's looking at just a small element. I've since found out that the South Koreans are very wonderful people. They were in a circumstance which is very hard to analyse, not having been in that myself. They were fighting for their lives, their existence basically. Because if the communists had taken over, like North Korea now and you know what that's like. Where people are starving to death while one man gets more
- 03:30 power.

### **So you came back to Australia feeling a bit confused about what it was all about?**

Well, what happened was....when I left Japan I came back and what they had then was Operation Little Switch where they transferred some of the prisoners of war from both sides and one of my friends that I joined up with and was in the same unit, Eric Donnelly, he was taken as a prisoner of war

- 04:00 He was in 3rd Battalion. He came back on the same plane as me. And Brian Davron. There were five prisoners of war and myself and a number of other walking wounded you might say. Anyway we came back by Qantas plane. They were on stretchers. They were carried off on stretchers. Eric was. When we
- 04:30 landed at Guam on the way back, the Americans gave us one hell of a time. There was only five of us and they put us in the sick bay. For the five of us we had a gallon of strawberry ice cream, a gallon of vanilla ice cream and a gallon of chocolate ice cream, two crates of Berkeley's orange juice small, two crates of Berkeley's orange juice large. We had a crate of small cartons of milk and big cartons of milk. We had
- 05:00 flavoured milk, chocolate and vanilla. This was for five blokes. Anyway, we had a great time in Guam over night and we flew into Sydney...straight from there to Sydney. When we got to Sydney we were off loaded off the plane and they had a civic reception for all the POWs [prisoners of war]. They were all taken off the plane over here and they were greeted by the Lord Mayor of Sydney and all that. The rest of us were taken off...we were put in
- 05:30 ambulances, we were put in a three ton truck and taken to Concord [Hospital]. There was no welcome for us. The welcome was for the POWs. They were in the limelight. I don't begrudge them, but I still think...amongst our blokes there was one bloke who had done two tours in Korea and he had just come home and that was it. Put in the back of the truck and off. Anyway that was only a fleeting thought.
- 06:00 So I went into Concord. I was there for a day and I rang Mum and Dad and told them. All they knew was that I had been evacuated and that I was in hospital, and I told them earlier that I was okay but they didn't believe me. They didn't know if I was coming home with one leg or not. Anyway I rang them up. When I got to Brisbane I got off the plane at Brisbane and the Salvation Army come out to meet me and also an army major. He said, "You're going to be interviewed by the press." (There were two of us, Reece and myself.) And he said, "Now don't say anything you shouldn't say."
- 06:30 And I thought to myself, "What does that leave me? What alternative does that leave me?" Anyway the interviewer then comes from the Courier Mail. He took a photograph of me...I had a Japanese doll I managed to get for my younger sister. She was about the last...Patricia, she was 10 years after my younger brother.
- 07:00 He said to me, "What was it like in Korea?" I said, "Cold." I don't think I was giving anything away. And then he said, "Were you wounded?" And I said, "Well, I wouldn't exactly say that because I never drew blood even though I had lost my hearing." So that was it. I didn't say much more. When I got into

hospital this major came around and he said, "Very good speech soldier, very good speech." And I thought, "Who are you

- 07:30 kidding?" Anyway I was in hospital in Brisbane in Greenslopes then from May until August. More x-rays, more boards under the beds. They couldn't find out what was wrong with me. Then they down graded me to three, then they upgraded me as A1 again just before I got discharged. I don't know if that helped the situation
- 08:00 later on or what. Anyway I ended up...because I had lost all my gear in Korea, I was issued with full kit again. Some reason or other when I came back out to Yeronga and they discharged me from the hospital, I went to Yeronga because that was the staging point for being discharged back into civvy life. I was due out on August 15th and this was July. So I was out at Yeronga for a month or two weeks while all
- 08:30 all the mucking around, with more medicals and more checking this and checking that and I managed to wangle leave into town. I even bought an old Morris Cowley truck for £30. And I used to ask for leave and he'd say "Why do you want leave?" And I'd say, "I'm going into the fruit business and I've got to work on my truck." And we used to always duck down to the Red Brick Hotel and we'd load about six things in the back of this old Morris Cowley and we'd be down to the Red Brick and I would also
- 09:00 come out first to make sure it started. One day we arrived back just before one o'clock. We used to have our liquid lunch down at the Red Brick. I saw the major walk out who had given me the leave and he looked at me like, you're not going to make a living using that. But it got me quite a bit of leave anyway. Anyway they ended up they kitted me out with a full kit, overcoat everything. A big kit bag. Two pair of boots, a pair of shoes,
- 09:30 pyjamas and all the things I never had before I went in. KD shirts, which I never had because I had to buy Pelaco. Everything. Anyway I had to get cleared by the Q Store. It came time to go down to the Q Store and I gave them my AD83, which is the book they have with all your records. He looked through it and ... 'cleared of all responsibilities'
- 10:00 and off I walked with a full kit. Back into civvy [civilian] life. And that was it. I was back in the streets again. There was no counselling, no nothing. It was just as though you hadn't been anywhere. Nobody cared. No welcome home. Nothing like that.

#### **Did you have any trouble settling in?**

Well, what happened was I went to have some rehabilitation

- 10:30 to get a job...I wanted to get a job back in the mechanical trade so I could start an apprenticeship or finish it, and get my certificate. Engineering certificate. And when I walked into Creek Street and went into rehabilitation, he said, "What do you want to do?" So I told him what I wanted to do, finish my mechanical course and probably go onto diesel engineering and then refrigeration because I thought refrigeration in New Guinea would be a good opportunity
- 11:00 The hot climates and knowing diesel's and petrol's and refrigeration. I wasn't interested in cars. Anyway he said, "You can be a brick layer or a carpenter." And I said, "Look, I'm the one who's got the hearing problem. Didn't you hear me right? I want to finish my trade." He said, "Look I'm sorry to have to tell you (true as I'm sitting here this is the truth), I'm sorry to have to tell
- 11:30 you, but if you had been in the '39-'45 war [Second World War], there would be no problem. But you fought in Korea against the communists and the Metal Workers Union...the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union is communist dominated and they won't accept you." I was astounded. And then I thought to myself, I really have been fighting the right people, when you come home to that. So my immediate thought was
- 12:00 what they can do with it and I said, "Not you personally mate, but they can stick it." Then I put in a claim on my back. My back was giving me a bit of problem. I got a job down at Hardie's as a guillotine operator and...
- 12:30 that's right, I put in this claim with the Department of Veteran Affairs and they sent me back a letter, and they rejected my claim and they said you have the right to appeal if you wish. So I asked for my medical records and they said they had been lost in transit between Korea, Japan and Australia. So there were no medical records and I didn't know where to start.
- 13:00 It was my word against them. So straight away I thought, "Well, blow it. I got on all right by myself before, I'll get on all right by myself now." So I went back and I ended up taking a job driving trolley buses and diesel buses around Brisbane for about 15 months. Then I ended up...oh before that sorry, I teamed up with...my Dad was on his gold mining craze
- 13:30 again, so we lived at Zillmere and he even sunk a shaft in the backyard and he found a bit of copper. I've got it there actually. He told me he wanted to sink a big shaft and I said, "There's no copper here Dad". Back in the early days those Glass House Mountains were volcanos and they spewed all these lumps up, red hot lava all over the place and all we've got is bits of it. The residue has been blown away years ago. He wouldn't believe me. He called me a defeatist.

- 14:00 I've still got a bit of copper. It was like a piece of copper wire sticking out of it. But that's what it was, just little lumps of it. No commercial use. There wasn't the quantity. Anyway we went down to a place called Freestone outside of Warwick, a very old town. And during the First World War and afterwards, and during the Depression, a lot of people used to take out miners' rights and squat on crown land.
- 14:30 They'd cut a certain amount of timber to build their own hut to live in. They were allowed to do that. And the government used to pay them a subsidy for every ounce of gold they found because gold was very valuable in those days. It was a reserve, not like it is nowadays. It was something solid and the country had to have gold reserves. So the only catch was that they had to put in a report every month to say how far they had gone down
- 15:00 and send some samples in. That was the pension for a lot of them. There were two old chaps there. One bloke was 93 and his son and they were both old age pensioners and they'd been there for years. Anyway they showed us around a lot of places and we were picking up the tailings...do you know what I mean by tailings? The residue left from when they've treated ore before. They pull the rock or ore out of the mountain and it's crushed,
- 15:30 carted to a mill and crushed. In those days they used to have a mill that consisted that consisted of five stamper rods and each one weighed 1000 pounds. They would go up and down like that on a big cam shaft. The ore used to come down a chute at the back and they'd crush it up and then it would go over a copper plate with cyanide to stop the oxidation on it. Then it went
- 16:00 into a trough which was full of mercury and the mercury used to retain the gold. When you finished you had what was called an amalgam which was a ball of mercury and hopefully containing the gold you see. You put it through a retort and it came out like...the vapour...the mercury vapour came out and that went back to mercury and what was left was supposed to be pure gold. Anyway I had a truck at the time which I had bought
- 16:30 and we went right around Freestone bringing these tailings because some of the places in those days, gold was worth three pound fifteen an ounce and it cost them 30 shillings to get it carted, so they would only cart ore that had at least an ounce of gold in it you see. Well, now gold is worth fifteen pound an ounce and you got paid a pound bonus for finding it. That's in 1953.
- 17:00 Of course we worked it that if you got 21 pennyweight to an ounce, then if you got something that went a minimum of three pennyweight, you could make a good profit out of it you see. And some of the stuff went an ounce and some went two ounces, if you got pockets of it. So we dragged in about 100 ton in the crusher and where the mine was, was a bloke squatting there.
- 17:30 A farmer and his wife. And on his back yard, we were on this stamping mill. When it started you could hear it six mile away. It was a racket. The first night we didn't sleep and after that we would only wake up when it stopped. If the rhythm changed then you knew it was getting short of rocks and you'd know there was a jam in the chute and the rocks weren't coming down. So this one night...I used to go down to the creek. We used to have a little petrol engine and we used to pump the water up.
- 18:00 I used to always use a torch, but the batteries would run flat because we didn't have a lot of money. Fred and Dad had no dough. Dad had no money and Fred was broke. Only Kev and I...Kev put the money in and I put the truck in. Dad put his knowledge in. Anyway, I was on the jetty this night and I never had the torch so I took a lantern. I had the lantern and I checked when I went to fill the engine
- 18:30 that was on the jetty to make sure...the breeze used to change around, and if you had a lantern close the fumes would...the petrol could hit the lantern and the flame would ignite it, so I put the lantern over there but I couldn't see very well then so I put my hand over the funnel on the top of tank and I poured the petrol through my hand into the tank, and I'm doing this and next minute there's an almighty bang, a flash not a bang. And it had ignited from the lantern
- 19:00 across the vapours and the tin of petrol caught on fire and it come up. I had a beard at the time. It burnt all my beard off and my left hand caught on fire. I stepped back...I was on a jetty eight feet off the ground and I suppose to get away from the fire, I stepped back forgetting I was on the jetty, and I fell on my back eight feet off the ground. I'm beating my hand out on the ground trying to put the fire out. Freddie rushed down to help me. He trod on a 4 inch nail and was pretty well out of it.
- 19:30 The other bloke got down off the crusher and walked into a beam and knocked himself unconscious. So we were all disabled in about 2 seconds flat. Freddie rushes out onto the jetty and goes to grab the can, and I'm on the ground and I thought, he's going to throw it! And I knew what would happen if you throw it. And I yelled out, "Don't throw the can, Freddie." It was too late. He throws it and it went out across the creek and went whoom...it didn't come down on me just as well.
- 20:00 It didn't hurt him, but the whole creek lit up. And the next day...we were about 45 mile from Warwick. I rode into town on my motorbike to get my arm dressed. They put canofax [?] on it. It was like a skin. And when we came back, we were in sheep country and of course I realised I had seen a lot of burn patients from napalm and that, and they used to put them on a sterile tent on sheets
- 20:30 with netting around them, and the burns healed a lot quicker because they used to sweat when you covered them. So I thought bugger it, I'll take this thing off because my fingers were all sweating. I was still working. Anyway I ended up...when I took it off and washed it and left it to the air, every fly around the place decided to come to it. It was sheep country. So I didn't know how to get rid of them and then I

remembered that we used to use diesel around the brims of our hats and the flies didn't like the smell of the diesel.

- 21:00 So I used to plunge my hand into a tin of diesel every day and it healed up. There's not a mark anywhere. A lot of doctors say, "You took a risk," and I say, "Well there was nothing else". It's like when I put kerosene on when I got hit here. They used to use all those sorts of things in the early days when you didn't have the modern medicine you see. So it all healed up and that was all right. Then we decided to go down and sink this ...
- 21:30 and look for alluvial gold in amongst the hills there where it was coming down. Years ago they had lots of Chinese came in, back in the 18th century. In fact they used to call it the Yellow Peril. They thought they were going to take over Australia. But most of them were inoffensive miners and most of the gold they managed to get back out to China to their families. But they used to...it looked like a lunar landscape,
- 22:00 Cararra and around parts of Freestone. Huge mounds. It looked like a whole lot of giant rabbits had been there. And they used to dig down and they used to hit what they called the wash. That was the width of the little creek. And the wash was over gravel which was about a foot thick or so, 18 inches sometimes. Some times it was only a couple of inches thick. And in that would be alluvial gold which being heavy would drop down to the bottom you see. And they were looking
- 22:30 for the alluvial gold. We had already found some by washing the creek and Dad got the idea...we didn't want to go in the old shafts, so we sunk a new shaft and low and behold we got down about 19 feet. We used to take it in turns, Fred, Kev and myself. It was Freddie's turn...he used to go like a bull at a gate and he swings the pick back and drives it into the ground and the next thing the pick goes through the ground and disappeared. He was standing on...there was about that much soil left. It was hard, like rock, and he dropped in on top of an old
- 23:00 Chinese shaft. They were only about that wide and that high, just enough to get your shoulders in and wriggle around in. So we cleaned it out and we decided to go in and follow the wash and see how far it was along. Whether it had petered out or not. Seeing it was my turn next down the shaft and I was the oldest, I had my doubts then because when I got buried back in Korea. I didn't like the idea.
- 23:30 I wasn't claustrophobic but I just didn't like the idea of being under ground. But anyway I went in with a little lamp and you had to edge your way along with your elbows, and when we got in about 20 feet ... about the distance of this room. So when you got up here you may as well have been in the bowels of the earth. It was a terrible feeling. We used to have a little pick and a bag with a rope tied to it and you'd put the stuff in the bag behind you and
- 24:00 they'd pull it out. Anyway I was picking away at the wash like this and putting the stuff in the bag and the light went out. I didn't panic at the time. I was lucky. I just got the matches and went to light it again. And previous to that we had thrown some paper in there to make sure there was no bad air in there. If it burns it means there's oxygen you see. And it did burn so I took those precautions when I went in. But after being in there for a while, what
- 24:30 I didn't allow for was the carbine light was burning out the oxygen and I'm breathing in and the air must have been getting foul and the light went out you see. And when I tried to light it, it wouldn't light and then the gas was coming from the water in the lamp, and I realised then I had better get out of here quick or otherwise...you couldn't turn and run and it took a lot of effort to just wriggle backwards. But
- 25:00 boy, I was relieved when I got back to the shaft end and the fresh air and I said I'm not going down there again. So we gave that idea way.

**Harry can I just interrupt. At the risk of rushing forward I'm just curious, with everything you've told us about your training and what happened in Korea and being happy to be discharged, what was it that convinced you to go back into the army?**

- 25:30 Later on in 1975 I got ...in between that I did other various jobs and I went back...eventually I was working in Goondiwindi. I was carting gravel for the Main Roads and I had carted gravel in Brisbane, from Albany Creek into Bowen Bridge. I had a truck at the time so...
- 26:00 I decided I would make some money out of wheat carting. I went out to Goondiwindi in the wheat season. I had never seen a bag of wheat in my life. We ended up...the first day we loaded 500 bags of wheat on this truck, 100 bags at a time and we travelled 90 mile. Five trips nine mile each way by lunchtime...from day break. So we really worked hard. I couldn't breathe for days. And part of the thing was,
- 26:30 after being rejected on my back and I would be sick and tired...sometimes I'd be all right and sometimes I wouldn't be, and people used to...my brother used to throw off at me and my Father. When I was good I could chase a kangaroo but when I was crook I had a job to crawl around on my hands and knees. I don't know what was wrong. But all I knew was I'd go to turn and I'd get this sharp pain and down in a heap I'd go.

**And you'd never know when it was going to come on?**

No. That was the funny part about it. You might be crook for three months

- 27:00 and then you'd be all right for six months. Then all of a sudden it would come on again. As I say I had a lot of x-rays. I did exercises. Then I decided I was going to fix it or ruin it one way or the other. That's when I took up football and that sort of thing. I took up wheat carting and the bags were 180 pounds and I was only 140. I used to run up the stack with the bags of wheat.
- 27:30 If I tackled anyone playing football sometimes I'd go down and I couldn't get up. As luck would have it, I began to get fitter than what I ever was. Sometimes you'd go to walk and it felt like your legs were paralysed and it took an effort just to move one pace, and the muscles in your chest and body used to stiffen up. I don't know what was wrong, muscular or what it was.
- 28:00 So I ended up...when I was in Goondiwindi...I met Beverley then. She was a nurse at Goondiwindi and she was going overseas and anyway...she went over in 1963 it must have been. And I said I'd probably see her over there. I went over...I quit the garage and I went up to work with my brother up at Tin Can Bay as a butcher. So I took on butchering.
- 28:30 Dad was a butcher when he was in the navy. The brother had a butcher shop up there so I used to make sausages and deliver it all round Gympie. I would keep the car and the machinery and everything going. I worked for six months then I went across in 1964 in January to England. We went over on the Oriana.
- 29:00 I was by myself. After about three weeks, we got to Southampton and England was just dismal to my way of thinking. So I got from Southampton to London and I got myself a room near Earls Court and I had a job prearranged to drive a bus...double decker buses because I had driven buses before. But when I went for my test, there were a lot of bus drivers coming back to go back into the job again,
- 29:30 I was there and they had this instructor and he had been in the Indian Army I think. He was a major or something like that. And he sounded quite jovial until I spoke in my accent, and I don't know if some Australian digger during the war had taken his wife or sister or what, but his attitude changed. He said, "Come on." So I got in the bus and
- 30:00 we're driving around through London in the double decker bus and he said...what he said was, "Right, turn left." And I only heard...see I often miss words, and all I heard was, "Right." I never heard him say turn left. So I turned right and he said, "Where the devil do you think you're going?" And he failed me. The other bus driver said, when I came out, they said, "How did you go?" And I said, "I got failed." They said, "There's nothing wrong with
- 30:30 you." They always sit in the back of the bus and they went around. Nothing wrong with your driving. I used to drive all around here in trolley buses. But I think it was just the fact that he...but to say a thing like, "Right, turn left." And that was the way some people spoke. The English would often say, "I went down to the pub, didn't I?" Well, you just told me you went down to the pub. But they used to sort of confirm a question.
- 31:00 You've probably heard it yourself. And people used to say, "Go ahead and back up." How do you go ahead and back up and the same time. I would say, "Well, just tell me what you want, either one or the other." Anyway I failed that and I went and applied for a job in a taxi company as a mechanic. It was actually boring. You never saw the sun.
- 31:30 I think one day I went across to the little shop. I had started to smoke. I was smoking then...there's a fair bit I've missed out which I can come back to later on if you want to. We went mining at Gyra and we had an old Bren gun carrier and we had quite a time down in a gorge about 2000 foot deep. I was driving the Bren gun carrier and that's when I took up smoking. The roads were only very narrow and all that.
- 32:00 **Was that during your service?**
- No, I'd come back and I had been to Goondiwindi and I was working in Goondiwindi when I met my wife but before I went overseas, Dad had got into mining again.
- My mistake, Harry.**
- That's all right. I had jumped it. It's all right to go back to it or not?
- 32:30 **I'm very curious as to how you found your way back into the reserves, back into the army?**
- After I got married I was in Brisbane here and Bev and I met up again and we got engaged and we got married. Anyway in 1975...we got married in 1970, and in 1975 Gough Whitlam was in charge [Prime Minister] at the time and he was running down all the
- 33:00 cadets and the defence and everything. Of course, my way of thinking was sooner or later, you can't expect everybody else to do your job for you. You can't expect for years and years Britain to defend us. And then we expect America to defend us. But you have to realise that somewhere along the line we would have to do it ourselves. And I could see for years we had a wonderful cadet service which didn't
- 33:30 do the kids any harm. All this gun rule nowadays. I remember kids climbing on the tram with a .310 slung over their shoulders...the school cadets. Nobody took fright or run a mile. You didn't expect them to go berserk and shoot up the street like some western cowboy. It was a pretty placid sort of life. But

we tended to have more responsibilities in those days. We accepted things as they came.

- 34:00 We didn't expect...when I got knocked back with things I just said, "Well, I'll get on with it myself. I'm not going to worry about it now". You just have to move on and do what you have to do. I didn't rely on anybody else. If I got out of work I would go and look for another job somewhere else. I've worked on the roads with a pick and shovel. I've worked down mines. I've worked on buses.
- 34:30 I ended up as foreman in this garage in England but before that I was pretty browned off with the weather and everything and Bev had gone off to Austria for a holiday, so I decided...I spied an ad in a paper one day. They wanted a mess man on a Danish cargo ship. It was going out to the West Indies and I thought, "That will suit me fine". The Virgin Islands it was, plenty of sunshine. I hadn't seen the sun for three months. Anyway I went down
- 35:00 to the docks and went on board the ship and the old master said, "You know this is a cabin boy's job?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Are you happy to do it?" I said, "Yes." It was £5 a week. Well, at the time I was getting £13 a week in London as a mechanic, and you cleared 11 pound after the taxes and health service and all that. You paid £5 for a bed sitter, and it didn't leave you a lot to live on. We were mainly
- 35:30 broke by Wednesday. So I thought, "Well, at least I can save £5 a week here because it's all found. Your food is found. Cigarettes at that time when I smoked were 10 shillings a carton. If you wanted beer it was only nine pence a bottle. A bottle of rum was only 10 shillings, or whisky, Johnny Walker. So it was quite cheap. So I went on board as an officer's steward.
- 36:00 The first morning I was rudely awakened at five in the morning by this big Dane standing over me with a beard and he was saying "Mess" and "Mess Man"...they used to call you Mess Man. So they didn't call me cabin boy, they called me Mess Man. I was in charge of the officers' mess. He said, "The officers want their coffee." And I was half asleep and I looked at my watch and I'm thinking it's
- 36:30 quarter to five...five pound a week; you must be joking. I wasn't going to start the day at quarter to five! Anyway, he went away and I thought, "Oh well". I had accepted it, so up I got and made the coffee. Then I went down and set the breakfast table. I had eleven officers to look after. We sailed from London, from Tilbury and we went out across the Atlantic Ocean down past the Canary Islands. It took us
- 37:00 eleven days to get to Barbados. Then we swung from Barbados and went up around the Virgin Islands, St Lucas and Kitts, Montserrat, up towards Haiti and up that way. All the time I had to look after these eleven officers you see. I didn't speak Danish and I never served anybody in my life. I thought, "I'm not walking in there with a towel over my arm". The only chap
- 37:30 on board who spoke English...the skipper spoke English and the first mate spoke English. That was part of...and the second mate. They had to, to be an officer see. But the rest of them didn't speak English. And the other chap who applied for the job as captain's steward was an Englishman, but I found out he was a homosexual, you see. And I didn't realise that until I went ashore to have a drink and he said, "Let's go ashore to have a drink at a little pub called 'The Gun at Tilbury'
- 38:00 where Lady Hamilton used to come down to see Lord Nelson [famous British sailor]. They had a room there. Anyway we were having a beer each and the next thing I had a rum placed in front of me. And I said, "Are you drinking rum?" And he said, "No, that's for you." I said, "Well, aren't you having one?" And he said, "No." All of a sudden it clicked and I thought, "Well blow you", so I drank the rum and each time we had a beer he'd buy me a rum so when it was time to come back to the ship I said, "See you in the morning, Roy" and off I went.
- 38:30 The next morning, I met him in the hallway and he put his nose up like this. He wouldn't talk to me. It was strange. I'm just telling you the way I found things.

### **So how did that actually lead you to signing up into the army?**

Oh yes, I drifted away, didn't I. I was trying to fill in the spaces. There was a long space in between. I got a lot done. When I joined up into the army again I just thought I would rather be in the army again

- 39:00 because I didn't like the way everything was going. It wasn't a matter of me starting a revolution or anything like that. I just felt like I would join up. I was too old, I was 44, and I was too old to join up in the Regular army and another year I would have been too old for the Reserves. So I joined the Reserves and I went into RAEME, The Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. Because of my background...by that time I had been a foreman three or 4 times in England
- 39:30 and Australia, at Wreckair and Kaido [?] and other places, and anyway I ended up...they said to me, seeing you're an ex-servicemen, you don't have to do the recruit training and then they found out I had been out for 25 years. Things had changed somewhat so I had to go and do the two weeks camp. At the end of the two weeks camp they said, "Would you accept a lance corporal's stripe?" I thought,
- 40:00 "Oh well, I'm in it so I might as well accept the responsibility". By that time, being foreman in certain places, I had already accepted a certain amount of responsibility. So I said, "Okay." That was '75. The next year I went to corporal and the next year I was made substantial corporal. Then I was made a sergeant in 1980 and then a staff sergeant about six months later. That was one below

- 40:30 warrant officer. So they said, "Why don't you go for your warrant officer's cap?" By that time... '75, I was 45. I would have been 50 in 1980. So I thought to myself, what about the young ones. I'm only holding someone back. To be quite honest, staff sergeant was quite a good job because you were in the middle and you could say, "Sergeant."
- 41:00 The only time you got caught sometimes was when the warrant officer couldn't take a parade and then I was it, and then I had to go and take the parade. It wasn't a lot of times but mainly I concentrated on the mechanical. I was interested in the mechanical side of it. First of all I went out to...we used to have light aid detachments. I went to 5/11th Field Artillery and I spent a week with the guns. But I didn't like the idea
- 41:30 of swinging the back of the gun around. I nearly rolled down the hill with it on top of me. I thought, "This is not my kettle of fish". So then I joined the water transport, a LAD I should say, a light aid detachment. That was with the Larks, the amphibious vehicles. We went across to Stradbroke Island doing water tests. You had to get down and grease all the nipples with grease and you'd come out looking like a person from another planet. (TAPE ENDS)