

Australians at War Film Archive

Robert Whorlow (Tripod) - Transcript of interview

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Tape 1

- 00:33 Okay, my name is Bob Whorlow and the records indicate that I was born on the 22nd January 1925. It wasn't until I saw the bit of paper that I believed it, but my mother did in fact marry before I was born, but it was a shotgun wedding so to speak [a wedding enforced by pregnancy] and my father was nothing but a mongrel. He left me perhaps at the age of two, when I was as at the age of 2. And
- 01:00 following that my mother, who was a country girl, was forced to the city due to the Depression or the forthcoming Depression. And that led her into being unskilled and taking on positions as waitress and housekeeper and the like. This was quite a trial for her, particularly when at an early age she became, stricken with deafness, which immediately threw her out of her waitressing
- 01:30 positions which was the more lucrative of the lot because of the gratuities continuities which flowed from it. She was good at whatever she did that was. So we traipsed around the countryside and I can remember at a very tender year being put on the guard's van of a train which went down South Gippsland somewhere, and I finished up at a place called, yes where did I finish up, Koranella Korumburra. And
- 02:00 there I was boarded with a family and they were happy to take the money, but weren't too happy to have a rat bagratbag kid like me around. So I suffered accordingly, going through a one-1 teacher school, which is now a gravel pit. And so that didn't last too long, many a life's experience was gained during that period, I learnt to swim for example at tender years in a billabong. And
- 02:30 came back into the city and floated around from relative to boarding house to rooming and what have you, as the economy would allow and the income. And finally settled on a couple whom I knew as "Aunt Sal" and "Uncle Charlie." I have photographs of them there, sour couple, but the woman was very generous and I subsequently found out they were not related to me in any manner. They were just
- 03:00 taking us in for boarding and whilst at this boarding house, I had a surrogate father in the form of another boarder, who introduced me to the theatre. In as much as he organised what they call susso, [sustenance allowance] concerts, all these established wanted a- bes and could- be artists would volunteer their time and acts. And if you went
- 03:30 along you'd be charged a shilling or a dinadeaner, or a bob [other wordsslang for a shilling] whatever you want. Then the takings would go for distribution to the, mainly to the widows who had suffered the most during the time.

Bob that's probably a little bit too much detail at the moment?

Oh okay.

We'll come back to the susso concerts.

The susso concerts, yeah well more...

More broad strokes at the moment?

I used to

- 04:00 participate in that for two bob a go, as a wage and I can tell you some stories about that also, but perhaps later. And however going on from that I went to a State School where at the age of eleven I attained a Scholarship scholarship to attend the Collingwood 2 Two-up School, or Technical School as its known. Where such personalities like Lou Richards [Collingwood footballer] were in attendance in the same year etc.
- 04:30 And so starting, or gaining the Scholarship at eleven, starting the school at twelve, my birthday being in January, I got to Form Two then I went to work at thirteen. And that was necessary not because of the school, I suppose because of the school because I wagged it a lot, but Mum needed the money. So I went straight into employment at age thirteen and I worked all my life until,

- 05:00 well, I'm still working I guess. But formerly 1972 when I retired, no I retired from theA air fForce [RAAF - Royal Australian Air Force] in 1972, having reached that age at which they no longer allow people to fly. And built this home in 1977 and found out it wasn't big enough for my self and my wife, because I was in the kitchen and it was her kitchen. So I said "Okay, I'm going back to work." and I joined
- 05:30 the Public Service as a trained monkey [pejorative slang for a clerk], found a computer and learnt to play with it. Did a few courses in programming and I grew with the computer and subsequently, 1992 I think, I resigned. Well on reaching the age of 75, when the hell's that? 65, I'm not 75 yet am I? sixty-five and that's
- 06:00 1990 and came home and unfortunately my wife who had been suffering from cancer for some eighteen years died in that year (1992), and I've lived here ever since. Having a sad life, but not a lonely life - I have many friends and associates that I communicate with and I continue to be here for a while longer, because I have to
- 06:30 get my contribution for the Superannuation superannuation back, and that's about the go of it. Is that okay?
- Okay, we've kind of skipped over a few decades in the middle there., Ccan you take us back a bit?. Tell us first, what was your first job and then take us through your service...?**
- Yes well that was interesting, it ties in with my career in theA air fForce I guess. My first job was with a knitting mill at which my mother was
- 07:00 working as a winder. A winder is where you put scenes skein of wool on a frame work and it rolls down onto a bobbin, which then goes onto a knitting machine. Anyway she basically got me the position out of the goodness of the heart of the boss. But he soon put me through the ropes; he was allegedly and Australian or Australasian Middle Weightmiddleweight Wrestler wrestler Championchampion;,
- 07:30 he'd got a belt. So he used to put me in a few head locks and teach me to heave and ho a bit. Anyway I grew into the job because I had a natural instinct for electro- mechanical work, so I was able to use a spanner and use me head and see what went with which and so on. And along came the War war and he grabbed contracts
- 08:00 for the covering of copper wire, or enamel copper wire as the case may be, with the silk. The silk incidentally was stockpiled from Japan, and the position was the machine which had normally been used to cover elastic as in your socks or underpants with cotton, was converted to cover, to slow down the process and accept the smaller wire. Which was only the size of a hair, a
- 08:30 forty-eight gauge which is fairly small, but you had to get that covered with this silk, which is of a certain denier and get it to lay flat on the wire. So this went on and I was being paid, I suppose a good wage for my age, but a lot less than I would if I was a senior. But I was certainly doing a senior's work at that stage. With the passage of time there was conflict,
- 09:00 because the machine was malfunctioning to the point where the deniers instead of being like so were showing gaps between. "It's your fault." says he to me, "Yyou're neglecting your maintenance." "Not right" said I, "It's because the silk has been incorrectly stored and it has got humidity into it which is causing it to lump instead of spread.", "No, no, blah, blah...." .
- 09:30 So we had this fight, and at that stage I was in charge of the nnumber two factory with all perhaps fifty girls and what have you, and he was round the corner, a mile anyway in the nnumber one factory. So he stormed off and I set to and dried out this silk. And I put a sample wire through and perfect, so I call him up and said "It's working." he said "What did you do?." "Dried out the silk." "No you didn't blah blah....." Anyway
- 10:00 shortly after received a phone call I was required to attend at the Man power office, they controlled all movements of people in protected industry such as myself. So I went up and I was being dressed down by the local Man power officer for being unpatriotic and neglecting my duties etc.... and I asked to speak. I was allowed to speak and I pointed out that I was being used
- 10:30 in as much as I should be paid twice as much as what I was getting, but A he couldn't get anyone with my skills I suppose and certainly he wouldn't be prepared to pay that money. So the Man power office said, (oh at this stage I'd also previously attempted to join the air fForce, but was dragged out because of my protected industry status). So the Man power office said, "Do you have transport?" I said "Yes, a bicycle." and this [the local Manpower office] being located in Richmond, Victoria,
- 11:00 I took his piece of paper and hopped on my bike and rode over to Smith Street, Collingwood, where I handed it into that Man power office which controlled the district in which I lived. He gave me another piece of paper so I rode into the city and arrived at the Recruiting recruiting Officer officer in Russell Street, Melbourne, handed my bit of paper in an having done all the tests and what have you, sat down to be indoctrinated, and admitted to the aAir fForce. And that's where I first encountered the Service service galementality[?]., Tthe
- 11:30 Recruiting recruiting Officer officer said "Well, well done, unfortunately we haven't got any Air air Crew crew Courses courses going at the moment, but if you care to come in we can place you at the Personnel personnel Depot depot and after a while when a vacancy comes up you can transfer over." I

said, "No, thank you I've heard all about that I'll just go back to work." "Oh well, look just a minute, oh yes, well we've got a course starting in four days. L, look, would you like to take special leave

- 12:00 without pay and you can start on that course?". So on the 7th February 1944 I joined the Air Force and on the 11th February I entered the Air Force to commence No 51. Initial Training School at Summers, Victoria. From Summers Victoria I went across to, with the group to a Training training School school at Victor Harbour, South Australia. I forget the index for that No. 3 I think it was, and
- 12:30 there we did a month marking time I suppose you could say until they found a vacancy at one of the other Training training Coursescourses. Eventually the day came when we were transported North north to Evans Head and we started our Navigation navigation Training training Course course at Evans Head. And after about a month they said, "Oh you shouldn't be here; you should be at Port PiriePort Pirie."
- 13:00 So we bundled up our contractors and bits and pieces and hopped on the train and rode all the way back and waved to Victor Harbour as we went on our merry way as we went to Port PiriePort Pirie, which was just up the Coast coast from there. Graduating from Port PiriePort Pirie, we came back to the Personnel personnel Depotdepot, which was the Melbourne Cricket Ground, from there, only stayed a short while. Got pushed out into Croydon, at
- 13:30 Yarra, Yarrabray [Yarrambal ?]....anyway they had a small Arms arms School school there where we threw grenades and fired machine guns and pistols and rifles and the rest. And that was once again a time killer until things moved. And from there they sent us to the Larowis 1 Wireless Air Gunners School at Ballarat, to do a Radar radar Orientation orientation Coursecourse. And from there they arrived at, the 7
- 14:00 Operational Training School at Tokenwell Tocumwall, New South Wales, on the river. And we were bundled up into a crew, (the picture of the crew I have over there) and then we got shunted up to DalbyDalby, Cecil Plains Plains which is near Dalby Dalby on the high plains of Queensland. And we started to train on these Liberators
- 14:30 and just as we were about to be released into, (we were a SquadronSquadron, 102 Squadron), but as we were about to be released into a War war posting, the War war ended. So suddenly we became Transport transport and we flew to Darwin and to Morotai Islande and other places picking up Troops troops that had to be rehabilitated back to the mainland and virtually kicked out of the Service service I guess. Anyway this mass exit
- 15:00 was on and I was just starting to like this Military life and I met a friend of mine and he said "What are you up to, Bob?" and he being in Records records I said, "You should know." and he said, "No, what's going?" and I said, "Blah blah, I'm doing this that and the other thing, but I think they're going to kick me out along with the mad rush." I said, "Do you think you can find me a broom closet to hide in?" So he found me a broom closet and I heard the stampede passing and when it had abated
- 15:30 I opened the door and looked out and said "What about me?" they said, "Oh, we're looking for people." So I stayed in the Air Force. And I stayed there for thirty years and I enjoyed every moment of it. I'd recommend it to anyone; I think that's why I did so well at the Recruitingrecruiting, because I was so buoyant about it all. But then on the other side of it I suppose I really joined the Air Force not out of an act of loyalty, but rather as a very convenient
- 16:00 excuse to leave home. My mother having father sacrificed her life to enter into a 2nd second marriage to provide me with a home to bring my friends to during my adolescent days. It became a millstone for my mother and very unpleasant for myself. So I guess I chose the moment and walked out on that and that's why I married the Air Force. And where do I go from here?

16:30 **Okay, well look, we'll go right back to the beginning, and now we can go into a lot more detail?**

Okay.

So can you tell me a little bit about your childhood and growing up in the country?

Yes my childhood, well I can vaguely remember little incidents, my mother had friends, naturally. She took me to a place in Port Melbourne,

- 17:00 with another single mother, seemed to be only the women there. But there must have been children at some stage, because I was placed in a high chair in front of a cast iron stove, which was common for those days, you bake on one side and the fire was on the other side. Anyway Mum and the girl went off and they were chatting in the kitchen or what ever and I'm in front of this and fairly warm and cosy I suppose. And the next thing I'm screaming, why am I screaming? Because

- 17:30 in my efforts to get out of this chair I rocked it and fell forward with my knees on the hot stove, and I wasn't very happy about that. And of course they felt terribly guilty and all sorts of pellagra hoo-haa [fuss] and what have you. So the next time we visited the house they made certain that this couldn't happen, and they left me in the front lounge room, which had the black cast iron grate with the flap and the mantel piece over it. And the little rascal

- 18:00 crawling around wanted to find out what was behind this flap so he got up and fell in behind and they had to pull the fireplace out to get him out. And I believe there was a lot of soot around, and in my lungs included. And so I don't recall visiting that home again, but I recall another occasion, when living in the shadow at the Yorkshire StiggerStingo Hotel in Collingwood, which still exists, corner of Language Langridge Street and Hoddle Hobble Street.
- 18:30 And but notwithstanding the proximity, they howeverwhoever it was, the male of the house at the time, and it wasn't my father, was making a home -brew in the copper [large vessel for boiling clothes], and I had to sample it, and they found me a bit under the weather, bouncing off the walls. Little things like that, it all adds up. I lived in that Collingwood area for
- 19:00 I guess the bulk of my, yeah, the bulk of my childhood life.
- When did you move to Collingwood?**
- Moved to Collingwood when I'd be about five.
- And whereabouts did you live?**
- In the shadow of the Town Hall, in Stanton Street, Collingwood, next door to a Churchchurch. Which still exists.
- Tell me a**
- 19:30 **bit more about your father?**
- If I could. My father was a likeable rat bagratbag according to reports. I had two2 occasions to contact him, one when I turned twenty-one; my mother had kept me away from him, and I found out where he lived. My mother having divorced him and he having married
- 20:00 the fiancée he had when he got my mother into trouble. So I went up to the house and knocked and he came to the door, and I said, "I don't suppose you know who I am?" he said "Oh yes, you're Elgar" which is my middle name, and his family name. He said, "What are you doing here?" I said, "Well, I just thought it was time I found out what sort of a man I had for a
- 20:30 father." and he said, "Oh well there are two sides to every story." and I said, "Yes, and my mother's told me both of them." He said, "Oh, don't be like that." and "Ccome in." and so on and so on". I said, "Alright, I'll come in." I ssat down. And he was a tailor by trade, good tailor and I'd bought back a length of sharkskin for our summer uniform, well it wasn't strictly mMilitary but it was the same colour and that, and it
- 21:00 hung very well. And I said, "Well, seeing I've located you, perhaps there's something you can do for me. Make up this uniform." So I then saw him again to collect the uniform. I saw his wife actually, I still have that around somewhere just as a memento. And time passes on I retired from the Air fForce, retired from things generally, and I found him up at Noosa, where I had an inkling he was in the general region, Gympie or something, and my wife and
- 21:30 I stayed at a motel there. And I casually said to the proprietors, "Do you know an Albert Elgar Whorlow, or Teddy Whorlow?" she said, "Oh yes, he's a wonderful man." I said, "Oh is he?" I said, "I think he's a relative." She said, "Oh look, that's good, he's good." I said, "What makes you say this?" Sshe said, "Oh, he's done so much for the youth around here". I said, "Well I wonder where he got the experience?". And it turned out
- 22:00 that he started this snooker club, down the pub, because he was a dab hand [skilled] at the snookers. I can remember as a two2 year- old perhaps; we had a fruit shop, this is just before he marched out on me, mother had a fruit shop near the Q Kew Junction [?]. And it was on the hillside of the junction, and just down the hill from the fruit shop was a billiard saloon. And I used to go down there with my pet
- 22:30 Labrador and stand on its back and look through the window at my old man playing snooker. And I have a memory, two2 memories. Bbehind the fruit shop there was open land, this was at Kew Junction and there was a milk bar across the back, and going over there to get milk I was given a bottle to get it in and I ran and the bottle fell and I gashed all my foot. I ran home screaming
- 23:00 with a big gash in the foot and dirt and mud and grass and what have you. They heard my screams and my father came to the back gate, and he grabbed me and when to the wood shed and grabbed a hand full of cob webs and wiped everything off with the cob webs and left the cob webs on, and I haven't got a scar today, and it was quite a severe cut. The next cutting incident was when I was given a penny to go and get my hair cut, down near the milk bar, and I'm
- 23:30 walking over the back and I thought, "Ooh, lollies are better than a hair cut." so I cut my own. Took a while to recover, but saved a lot of money in hair cuts though. Yes and the next interlude in my life, the old man used to drive the truck around, a bigger red crossRed Cross home I think it was on the river banks just near the Victoria Street Bridge in Richmond, it's now an upmarket housing development. And he would drive around there with me sitting on his knee and I'm
- 24:00 driving the truck, at a tender age. I think I was 2 two or thereabouts, and they were busy in the shop and I went out to the truck which was parked out the front, and "Vvroom vroom." like any child would

do, and somehow I released the brake. And after knocking four4 of the cast iron veranda posts the truck stopped, I was in trouble and I don't know why to this day. I only did what I was taught. However he disappeared after that going upwards with my Uncle Elgar,

24:30 who was a gambler and a womaniser, and I think the word that Sam Newman [former footballer - media personality] uses is bon va vontvivant [person who lives luxuriously]. Because Elgar used to be a bit of a larrikin [mischievous person] and after he came home from the wWar, World War I that is, he bought a wife and a child with him, but the child was allegedly the illegitimate

25:00 child of his wife who was a nurse, who had nursed Elgar because he'd lost an arm in the wWar. And anyway she, the wife, was a lonely woman, because she'd been conned [deceived] in a way and she used to walk through her accommodation, according to my mother, gently humming, I dreamt I dwelt in marble halls [from the opera The Bohemian Girl]. I don't know if you know the song, it's an old one, it's a very sad song. Anyway

25:30 Elgar took my father away, I suppose he was an influence on my father, I blame him, but the real history of Elgar, as it turned out much later in life, the so-called illegitimate child etc, was in fact Elgar's child, because I'm subsequently met him and he's a dead ringer [closely resembles] for the family. I'd never met him previously, and so Elgar carried his secret. But Elgar also

26:00 after the Wwar took place in gig racing in St Kilda Road of a Saturday night. A gig is a light vehicle for one person, rather like the trots pull around, only a more elaborate thing, and they'd race in St Kilda Road for five quid [five pounds] or whatever it may be. And on this occasion Elgar had the misfortune to run a woman down who had got off the cable car the wrong side and was killed. And he was

26:30 taken to cCourt etc and charged with murder, and that was reduced to manslaughter, and he was finally found innocent and went on his merry way. And...

And tell me a little bit more about Elgar's child, was it actually his child and was this a ...??

No, what the situation was, when Elgar went to the wWar he lost this arm and was sent to England for hospitalisation

27:00 and he met this nurse there and as time turned out, obviously got her pregnant. He came home, remember the time we were talking about is 1917 and the times were a bit different to today, but he came home with this woman and child. Having greased the rails [prepared the path] by sending a letter to the family saying he'd met this beautiful woman and she'd unfortunately had a child in an orphanage and she wouldn't come unless "I bought the child and it adopted the family name."

27:30 So the child came home and was welcomed into the family and I don't know how they were that stupid that they couldn't recognise that belonged in the family anyway. Turned out he was a very successful business man, and only recently died, yes indeed. His daughter's still alive and she too has been prominent in the community, and still is today. As a matter of fact I did a search for the name, the family name

28:00 on the a web quite recently and I found some seven hundred names. All in which some form would have to be related because of the uniqueness of the name. And she was one of them, or there was another lady here, whom I don't know and she's a doctor down at Monash, in immunology. I must get in touch and see where she fits into the family.

Do you have any connection with Elgar Rhode?

Who?

Elgar Rhode?

28:30 I'd like to be able to answer that, I don't really know. The child that I'm talking about knew more about history of Elgar than I, because his father's name was Elgar. And he used, when I met him he quizzed me, or used to quiz me about what was the origin of Elgar, and I can only think of the times, Edward Elgar was quite famous back in those days, with these, what is it "pomp and something march." you

29:00 know the thing they play?

Pomp and ceremony [Circumstance]?

That's an Edward Elgar piece, but this music runs in the family. I can play a gum leaf, that's about the strength of it too. But my son's very accomplished with an accordion and he plays the oom-pa-pa ompha music, German bBands and what have you. Yes well that's all the detail of the....

Tell me what did you

29:30 **know of Elgar's experience in World War I?**

Nothing, I was too young, I was two2 years old.

Did you ever ask him or talk to him about it?

No, he was would just a blow in the mouth to pick up Dad. They He used to go to the market with Dad,

(Ggeez I called him Dad). Ggod., Hhe and my father used to go to the market to pick up the wholesale fruit and vegies and they'd come and dump it,

30:00 just dump the boxes on the shop and Mum would have to unload them and stack the shelves. You know the way they do in the fruit shops, and they'd be off to the races. Anyway they went off to the races up in the bush and they had a big win, and they never came back. And my mother, that applied to both the wives, Elgar's wives, who subsequently married a hotelier from out Western Districts.

30:30 And anyway...

What was your mother's reaction when your father didn't come back?

Oh anger I guess,, didn't matter to me. Then as now I'm just a hedonistic headmisticsoulle [devoted to pleasure], a fatalist perhaps, "what has to be, will be." and you can moan and groan and push and shove and do what you like,, take the cards as they'reir dealt and get on and make the most of it. I've got no complaints,

31:00 I'm comfortable. I guess I have a complaint that my beautiful [wife] was taken so early in life, but it happens to many so I'm not alone there. So there be it.

When your father did leave did your mother divorce him?

Not immediately, I mean there's finance involved in this and my mother was not in a position to do anything but survive. And that's when she started this traipsing around,

31:30 working as a piece peace worker [manual tasks such as sewing in a mill over in Abbotsford. Coming home with peace piece work, i.e. putting cotton threads through price tickets, you know the little price tickets with a loop on it, sitting up for hours and hours doing that. Crocheting doilies, doily being a fancy bit of cotton that adorns the table underneath your scratchy metallic candle stick or

32:00 whatever. Making milk jug covers, because milk then had to be protected from the flies and the cover was a circular, a piece of lace with ornamentation on it, with beads to hang it down onto the top of the jug. Making aprons, making a multitude of things. Oh, addressing envelopes, many of the activities I helped her with in

32:30 some small way. aAnd being a young woman . S(see my mother was only sixteen and a half when I was conceived, so she wasn't very worldly). And having come from down Warnervale and she had a lot to learn in a short space of time and survival was a skill,, I guess you pick it up by experience. So you learn by your lessons and get on with it once again.

33:00 I suppose I've often wondered about the background of Warnervale, there's not much there. I know the was grandfather there and he married and the 2nd second wife., Ooh my mother's mother, or my grandmother, maternal grandmother, died at the birth of the younger child, who subsequently died at a very early age of, I think she was about twenty-eight, with tuberculosis, [disease which affected the lungs],

33:30 which was rifpe in those days. Anyway I said that the maternal mother died, the father took on this allegedly harridan Harradine from out in the sticks who wasn't too happy about having all these kids around, particularly the younger ones who were going to be around for too long. So Mum was sent up town and simple as that. That's why I'm here I guess,

34:00 if she'd stayed on in the bush I may never have been, so who knows.

So tell me, as a young bloke in Collingwood what did you do for fun?

Yes, fight. It was a common thing Collingwood in those days they had pushes [gangs], and even beyond the push at the Collingwood 2 Up Two Up School, I was bored out of my mind with

34:30 like contemporaries, and so I used to play truant a lot, but not initially. Initially I made the day pass by forming a group called the Dirty Herd and the Dirty Herd used to amuse themselves and myself I guess, by grabbing miscellaneous kids from around the playground and shoving them into the broom locker. And we called it the Bblack Hhole of

35:00 Calcutta [tiny dark airless jail] and come the end of recess or lunch, the classrooms had many vacancies because of the Bblack Hhole of Calcutta. 'Cause there were many paybacks waiting for me if I'd dropped the guard at all. But I learnt very quickly that the quickest way to survive in the jungle is not to push, not to shove, not to wrestle, but go straight for the nose with one God almighty whack,, when the blood dirties the

35:30 shirt and the stars die down the fight is over. And so the paybacks were waiting. And there was one occasion where a lad named Angelo, an Italian lad, whose father owned a fish and chip shop just down from the school, two2- storey place in Johnston Street Collingwood. And young Angelo was sitting on the rail of the playground of the Collingwood Tech,

36:00 the total height above the ash felt below would be eleven to twelve feet, he fell backwards over it. Rushed to hospital., "What happened?" says the playground teacher. "Whorlow did it." said the mob in

unison, "He pushed him, we saw him.", "Rubbish I wasn't even near it.", "They said you did it, blah blah blah." So here I am on the rack with Angelo in

36:30 hospital fighting for survival and me under the hammer with all these witnesses. And anyway Angelo survived and he came to. "Why did Whorlow push you?" "Oh, he didn't push me, I fell." I gave him every comic book I had, took it into the hospital and said, "Here." Oh, that was a tough moment.

Why do you think your mates turned on ya?

Ah

Why did your mates turn on you like that?

37:00 No, it wasn't the mates, it was the minions, the ones that always had. See I used to make, I hope I don't go to jail for this, I used to make gun powder with chloro-di-(UNCLEAR) and sulphur and a bit of carbon. And there were various little antidotes anecdotes at the school, for example there was one lad, I'd better not mention his name, he was from, (he was a misfit at the school),, he came from Ivanhoe,

37:30 and he was "born Born to rule" sort of thing. And he and I was in conflict because I was on the opposite side of the house, anyway he came strutting down the stairs on one occasion and I'd already booby-trapped a concrete slab, because the plumbers had lifted them out of a drain and put them aside the drains while they cleaned them. And I put it underneath it and so bit of dialogue and baited him and they said, "Oh you're bloody weak."

38:00 he said, "I'll get you." I said, "You haven't got the guts, let's see you jump on that." and he jumped on this slab and it detonated and split the slab wide open and he, ahh, ahh..... Oh well, payback time. And I guess another incident about the time with the Dirty Herd was Kyle Kyle's two and sixpence shop opened in Smith Street Collingwood, and lunch timelunchtime the Dirty Herd

38:30 would go out and shoplift, not me I swear it, but when they came back with the goodies that I liked I confiscated them, "You shouldn't have those, you'll get into trouble." , sSo I guess it's by default. However I had this knack of making this gun powdergunpowder and they used to have tobacco tins of about two inch by two inch dimension, by about five eighths of an inch, or whatever you call it these days. And

39:00 I'd put one of those on the tram lines in Victoria Parade, outside the brewery. and then Tthe tram line there runs between shrubs and lawn and road, as it still is today. And I'd wait over on the corner and the tram would come charging down the hill, "Bbang." lots of noise, lots of smoke and the train would grind to a hoalt and the coneys conductors and that would get out and look underneath to see which motor had blown up and the old ladies are "Ooh, oh....". Hhe he,

39:30 glee glee, just a little monster. And so another occasion I got up on a two-2 storey building under construction and put the powder under one brick, put another one on top and dropped another from upstairs and it all blew up, and the Chinaman's fruit cart horse, bolted, distributing goodies along the way. What else? , tThe Chinese had a market

40:00 garden at Walmer Street Bridge area in the bend in the Bendalee Yarra, just near that big home where we used to deliver vegetables, and anyway on the way home from the market in the early hours of the morning, we would turn the horse around while the Chinaman slept on it, and he'd wake up back at the market. And therethey're still looking for me. tThat's why I had to quiz you guys [the interviewers from the archive] when you came to the door.

I've heard that story before.?

It's true.

40:30 **Yeah somebody else told youus they did that?**

Yep, that was the game of the day.

Tape 2

00:31 **I wanted to ask you now did you know anything about John Wren?**

Yes in fact I had dinner with John Wren [working-class entrepreneur and villain] on one occasion. John Wren was a wirily wily old man and he had the various establishments, mainly to do with gambling and one of them was the Don Billiard Billiard SaloonSaloon. Which was, if you know Punt Road, the Don has been

01:00 pulled down, it would be the wWestern footpath of the freeway now or the highway. And the Don was left open because it was a good source of information for the pPolice. Although there were many murders recorded at the Don, because there was lots of payback there. But John Wren was very kind to the women that came to his notice. Blokes would say, "Oh so and so's

- 01:30 having it rough." and so on and John would say, "Here." and toss out a quid [a pound] and, "See she gets that." and so on. How did I get involved personally? Wwhen I came back from the Berlin Airlift [the name for the operation which supplied West Berlin by air for a year during a Russian blockade], in 1949 there was a message at the hotel, through my stepfather, who frequented the hotel, saying, "Wwould you have your son contact so and
- 02:00 so with a view to having dinner with Mr Wren." Why, why is it so? John Wren's daughter, if you read into the story books, had some involvement with the Germans, whether she married a German or she got involved with him at some of the Communist meetings or whatever it was, I'm uncertain, I never followed the history. However, he had this interest in Germany, and he was one of the men who wanted to hear
- 02:30 first-hand, so he wanted me to be there while he asked me questions over dinner as to what life was like in pPost wWar Germany. "How was this going?" , lLike such as we're talking now, only specifically about Germany and my experiences there, and how the people were recovering and the like. Beyond that no further contact, nothing directly and no doubt the information sources would give him feedback on what was happening.

03:00 He was quite well established in the Districtdistrict.

Did you go to the tote [illegal betting shop] at all?

Go to the?

The tote in Johnston Street. You know he had a string of totes along Wellington Street there and Smith Street?

No, no, the only recollections I have of Smith Street were Friday night shopping and that was quite an outing, particularly

- 03:30 in the Sspring and Ssummer. Walking along there and you'd have a push [a gang] come out of the side streets of Fitzroy, going like the clappers [running fast] and they'd run after a cable car and jump onto it, and they were being chased by another push, who jumped onto the cable car and chased them through the enclosed section and threw them off. And then the fight carried on, on the street and footpaths
- 04:00 and it was a real shanghaishhenanigans [fuss]. But this was only, the same things we have now I guess, but then we didn't have the mobility. If you wanted to have a push punch up, you had the Carlton boys, you had the Footscray boys, the Willi [Williamstown] boys, the Collingwood boys, the Fitzroy boys, they were all there. There was personalities in each one. Now my step father, had a shalaylie shillelagh, a great baseball- like contraption with
- 04:30 knobs all over it, and whenever the push were in the District district he would stand inside his fence and if anyone came near his fence, "Bbang!" he'd hit them because the common thing in those days you'd have a picket fight. They'd kick one picket off and use it to lever the rest off and they weren't going to bugger up his fence, no way. And he was a robust little man who was the Regimental regimental Sergent sergeant Major major
- 05:00 for the 5th Scottish Regiment. And he lasted about 18 months into the wWar and got turfed out [removed] because of khaki poisoning, a form of dermatitis [either from the dye or the fabric of the uniform]. I remember he was in a big way with daily bathing of some purple muck all over his body and that.

Was this in the First World War?

No, he was in the First World War and the 2ndSecond World War he was a Regimental regimental Sergent sergeant Major major for the 5th Scottish Regiment [5th Battalion Victorian Scottish Regiment] in Victoria.

How long was he with your mother?

05:30 Until he died.

Did they get married?

Oh yes, well that was the sorrow of it all that Mum had committed herself to this man for the sake of giving me somewhere to bring my friends to. See they couldn't go to the boarding house and the other establishments. And I found that most of the time any relatives that took me were generally just well intentioneds, and

06:00 presenting themselves to the community, rather than interest in my welfare. Cause I was a rat bagratbag, a bit hard to handle I guess. I can remember one relative, oh Mowbray Street, Camberwell Cambwell, they lived there and I was at a party or some family do, and along came two2 children, the goodyie two shoes brigade [someone who tries to behave better than others] with Mum and Pa, Salvation Army escorting

06:30 them to the CCitadel [hall used for worship]. And I happen to be out the front and they made some

derogative comment and I sort of said "Well yeah, cope this, young Harry." and I turned the hose on and drenched them and sent them home, so they missed out on CCitadel that day. And it caused a bit of a ruckus between the god-fearing mob and the neighbours, and once again I was in trouble. It's always my fault I guess. And I suppose it's interesting at that stage and in particular on that day

07:00 there was a brother of my mother's brother in law and his companion. And the brother was the husband and the companion was the wife, and this is back in 1938, 1939. And the husband was in the

07:30 Public Service, well established in the Public Service. And it wasn't hidden but it wasn't open, and I had no idea at that stage what all the "yak yak" was going on behind the scenes. It was only in later life the whole thing sort of flowed out and I thought, "mMy God what courage that man had in those days." I know his drive must have been beyond belief to put up with the issue, but all these things go on.

08:00 Collingwood Town Hall, I was a child so to speak and they had dances there, and they stopped you taking grog [alcohol] anywhere within four hundred yards of a dance precinct or something to that effect. And living in the shadow of the Town Hall I was able to observe where the young blokes planted their grog, so I thought it might get stolen and I took it in custody.

08:30 And then when they came looking for it I was able to sell it to them and it was eleven pence ha'penny [half penny] in the pubs, but I managed to get one [shilling] and threepence out of them. Which helped us survive I guess.

That must have been pretty tough years;, did you have enough food and enough clothing?

Enough food, clothing was always a hand-me-down job. Food. I remember one incident where I was sent

09:00 to the milk shop to get milk, in a billy can, a swaggie's [swagmen -itinerant labourertramp] billy can, and on the way I bumped into a contemporary and he had a billy can and I said, "G'day Harry, you're going to get some milk?" Hhe said, "No, I'm going to St Phillips" (that's the local church). I said, "What for?" "Tthey don't sell milk." Hhe said, "No, I'm going to get some soup.", I said, "What soup?" Anyway, I tagged along with him and Iit was lovely soup I saw and so I got my billy can filled with it and I took it

09:30 home full of glee. I got belted because we hadn't sunk to that yet, "Wwe can still afford to get our own soup." Shocking., Nnow what did we eat?. Sunday, roast lamb;, Monday, cold cuts;, Wednesday, minces, rissoles everything off the bone and what have

10:00 you;, Thursday the soup from the bone broken down to get the marrow out and the like, and Friday; fish and chips. Now what did we do on Saturday and Sunday? I don't remember. But no that was, I didn't really ever suffer from hunger I don't think, because adults tended to look after their children in terms of a little

10:30 bit extra on the plate for the child to help them grow. I can remember one incident at this place in Collingwood, where I went outside the house and sat on the fence, (which had about a nine-inch separation between the wall and the boundary fence), sat on the fence and leant against the window to peer into the room. And I could see my mother so I knocked on the window, while peering in and seeing

11:00 I'd taken all of the resilience out of the glass, it went "Wwhoomp!" and exploded and I fell forward into the room onto the settee [upholstered seat for two or more], which was beneath the window in the room. And my mother roared up, and "Oh my God, what have you done, what have you done, have you hurt yourself?" "No, I'm alright, I'm alright." "What'd you do that for, you little bugger?" Jjustly deserved., I mean I can't go crook [get angry], anything that happened to me, I

11:30 deserved it. The one who should be suffering in hell is the father because he did absolutely nothing for me, so there we have it.

How did you get on with your step father?

Difficult man as I say. Hhe was a Regimental regimental Sergeant sergeant Major major and I was a rat bagratbag. So the aAir fForce was a great strengthening process in my

12:00 life. But you can imagine the difficulty I had in getting them to accept me as a Aair Ccrew Ttrainee on a Form 2 education and a mechanical background. But I think I did sufficiently well on their testing and that for them to sort of say, "Wwell hey let's get this act together." and have a look. So at one point at the linitial tTraining sSchool towards the end of the course, myself and another guy

12:30 were called before the chief ground instructor, and he said, "I'm in a quandary, you Whorlow have the runs on the board with your results, you Charlie have the experience forin your age. I have one vacancy for flight training at Winnipeg." (I think it was somewhere in the United States) "And do you mind if I toss a coin on it?". So we agreed to

13:00 that and accordingly we tossed and I lost. I felt very sad because the thought of going overseas was very attractive. But as it turned out while I was hiding in the broom closets, afore mentioned while the stampede was on, Charlie was in the stampede and he finished up in the wWeather bBureau and heis just sunk into oblivion. I don't know where he may be. So it all worked out well in the end, and I guess that's an argument I've often had with psychology when I've had, was in

- 13:30 Recruiting recruiting there was psychologists in abundance there. And I put the philosophy that “wWhatever happened to me happened for the best.” and there their argument is that “yYou can’t say that because you never tried the alternative.” I said “I never desired the alternative because whatever has happened to me has happened for the best.” so there you have it. I guess a positive outlook.

Can’t argue with that. Tell me about your first job

- 14:00 **as a winder, or working at the winding factory?**

Well I was working as a winder; no I never did winding, no, that was Mum’s job. I went in there to help with the servicing of circular knitting machines, which was a necessity; these things are going to gather a lot of fluff, cause you’re handling a lot of this woollen, cotton and stuff, and I’d have to clean it out. And there was an older chap there at the time and I suppose

- 14:30 I was his understudy. And then I graduated to more and more difficult work there, then the boss put me into night school to get an apprenticeship in fitting and turning which he was paying. And I was absolutely appalled, because it took up four4 nights of the week. However the saving grace was when I went to the school I was confronted with the day teachers, who knew my records back to front, “What are you

- 15:00 wasting our time for, what are you doing here?” etc. “I wish to learn.” “Oh yes, rah rah rah.” and it turned out that two2 of the nights were mathematics and if at the six6 months mark you did your full year’s examination and passed, you only had to do two2 nights for the rest of the year. So I did my exam, I passed it and I topped the course and I only went for two2 nights a year. But even that was enough to meet my social requirements

- 15:30 so at the end of the year I ditched it. And the boss wasn’t happy my mother wasn’t happy, but I’d learnt enough. Couldn’t stand teachers, overpaid and under worked.

Tell me why did they call it the Two2 up Up School?

Just Tech [technical] school. It was in the area.

And did you have a lot of mates?

Not a great number. I had a number of true mates, you know.

- 16:00 I didn’t spread myself out into a club situation. Although I did play cricket and football and various other sporting activities. For example the chap who lived outat the back, only in recent years I contacted Jim because I couldn’t find him, and when I got a phone disc for the computer and did a search and located him in South Australia. And rang up and said “Is that you Ox?” hHe said,

- 16:30 “Yeah, how are you going?”, Wwe recognised each other straight away, simple as that. And had a chat and so I said, “I’ll be in touch; I’ll come and get a free board and lodging.” He told me his domestic situation and that and he was sitting on a bit of expensive real estate so we joked about things. And this happened just pre- Christmas, and I sent him a Christmas card and about the January,

- 17:00 February, received a phone call from his daughter. She said, “Oh, you don’t seem to know Dad died.” And about a fortnight after I rang him he died. It’s sad about that because we had so much to catch up on, and that’s how life passes you by. He incidentally was in theA fForce before me and perhaps he drew me into the aAir Fforce, part of the attraction. He went off to England as an Air air Gunner gunner and

- 17:30 keeled cooled his heels over there for a few years, then we got together for a while and he went his way whenin the rag trade [clothing] industry, I can’t think of the name of the firm. The people that sell all these bits and pieces to the trade, wholesalers’ houses in Flinders Street, Brooks, McClashMcLeish and McHarg [?], that type of establishment. Anyway that’s

- 18:00 the go. Oh that reminds me, I bypassed there, when I first left school I didn’t go straight to my mother’s place, I went to Brooks McClashMcLeish and McHarg and I had I think six months there. And Mum said, “Oh, you’d better come and work for Joe Blow.” So I ditched the Brooks McClashMcLeish and McHarg, where I was helping to make felt hats.

- 18:30 It wasn’t very appealing to me but it was money.

What was your job, what exactly were you doing with the hats?

Steaming them, they had, you get the, you’ve seen the sheilas [girls] wearing this bit of misshapen felt that sort of drapes all over the head, well that’s how it comes to you, it’s formed down in another factory and it comes in and you put it on a press with a suction, well I suppose it was

- 19:00 rubber in those days, and all the air’s drawn out and the suction falls down over the mould and of course the felt being damp before it’s placed on it is moulded and then dried out with the heat of the steam and that they put though it. And so it’s then trimmed around the outside for regularity and a band put on it and lining, things that the ladies do, sewing bits and pieces onto it.

- 19:30 It was a strange shape, it was very similar to the shape that the Australian Women’s Army Service girls wore, the sort of a flattish thing with a rain catching gutter round it. Anyway that went on and the chap

that employed me there he went out into business as a tyre distributor in South Melbourne somewhere. I guess he did all right.

Can you remember where you were

20:00 **when war was declared?**

I was in Collingwood still but that's about all. Didn't influence me, wWar per se did not interest me. All the news and that, well I very rarely saw a newspaper anyway apart from headlines. Apart from that, an interesting thing, my mother finally obtained assistance from the wWelfare people and she was getting

20:30 two shillings a week allowance a week to keep me. 2 Shillings well why not, for sixpence you could get a meal and a bottle of, pint of brew and what have you. However I went out to get more pocket money by doing a paper round, and I found it more advantageous to have a paper stand and seeing I lived at the bottom of the railway station it was possible that I would get a paper stand there, but it was already taken.

21:00 So I had to induce the lad there to move, and after he moved and I got the stand. the, I lasted for about three3 weeks.

How did you induce him?

Oh, a little bit of vocal advice, nothing too strenuous.

You stood over him though?

Hey.

You stood over him?

Oh no, I didn't have a thing for

21:30 that, words are a more powerful weapon than the sword. You can play mind games. Anyway along came Mrs Do- Gooder who reported to the welfare authorities that I was working, but strange twist on the one I told you about the women in the hills isn't it, remember that she was....oh well, pay back time I guess. Anyway I was dragged out of that and

22:00 I never sold papers again. But I used to look at the pics [pictures] with all the girlies, yeh good old days, but wWar didn't come into it.

In your teenage years did you have any girlfriends?

Oh yes, yes.

And what sort of things did you do with them, did you go to dances?

Danced a lot

22:30 yes. Collingwood Town Hall dances. I have an autograph book somewhere in the house, where when I went over and stand stood in the foyer there., Tthe West Australian football team come over to play against Collingwood and they all came to the dance and I've got all their autographs and that. One day someone will find and say, "Ooh, goldmine." But no they had three3 dance halls there,

23:00 the modern and old time, the jazz and the old Town Hall. So no that was good and I still communicate, well remotely communicate, with ladies that are alive from those days and we reminisce about old times. But I was engaged four4 times. And on the

23:30 4th fourth occasion, my wife, the ring served me for the 3other three but on the 4th fourth occasion my wife refused it, my wife to be refused it and I had to buy a new ring. And anyway following the marriage the ring was sold and later in life when an aunt of my wife's died, the wife had her rings made over, and she said, "You know I should have kept that engagement ring, it was a lovely little ring wasn't it?"

24:00 Yes indeed.

When did you get married?

When did I get married? The 8th of October 1949 when I came back from the Airl Lift. Now after I found the broom closet I stepped out into a position with a Unit unit inas Essendon and their role was VIP [very important person] flying.

24:30 And we used to fly between Essendon Airport and Canberra during its developing days, transporting pPoliticians and other notable dignitaries. And we moved from Essendon, as the unit moved on we moved from Essendon to Laverton and became more established and the fleet more elaborate and we started flying more and more dignitaries. For example in my log booklogbook I've got Lord and Lady BledisloeLedislow,

25:00 Lord Louis Mount Batonbatten and his wife [Lady Mountbatten]. One interesting passenger was Ben Chifley [Prime Minister of Australia, 1945-49] and his wife, and there was one occasion we were flying

him from Canberra to Bathurst and we had engine trouble just after start up and there was a delay while they were working on it and quite a hot day, we were standing around

- 25:30 under the wing waiting for a report on the status of the engine and I found out it was going to be some time. And I went over to the PM [Prime Minister] and said, "Excuse me Sir, will I take Mrs. Chifley across to the lounge room, the waiting lounge?" "God know no, let her stand, it will do her good." Just a typical man, that's what he was like. And during the flights
- 26:00 once he'd done his cabinet business, signed the papers and what have you, he'd pull out a penny dreadful [cheap literature]. In those days they used to have these thin paperback books about the "Ddead man's Gulch" and the "Ddead so and so." and that was his relaxation. Off the work completely. But I was involved in
- 26:30 transporting many of these dignitaries and spent a lot of time in Canberra, we'd fly there on slack times, on the Monday and fly home on the Friday. There's a lass I met there who I still communicate with, she's a wido and during her lifew. When I went to Berlin she came to Melbourne and introduced herself to my mother, now because my mother
- 27:00 was so close to my age and this girl was a bit older than I, my mother and she became very good friends. So the mother used to communicate regularly with my ex- girlfriend, and the, yes difficult times. And I'd often say to Mum "Oh look I'm heading up nNorth, what say I drop in and see Julie?" and she'd say
- 27:30 "You leave that girl alone, she's got enough troubles without you, son." and I'd say "Oh, come off it, Mum.." "No, I know all about it." "All about what?. "Oh, you're making it up, aren't you?" "No, we've had a long talk.", Ssuch was life.

Yes a lot of trouble?

It was a case in those days the wife often charted asked me about "Wwhy do you have to get

- 28:00 engaged to these other people?". I said "Well you don't go and buy the first car you see do you, you give it a test run and find out how things work" and I said "I shopped around for the best and I got it, so be satisfied." which I did.

Now tell me a bit more about working at the second 2nd factory or sorry the 3rd third factory you were at with the copper wire?

That was at tTextile; that was the same factory.

Oh is it the same factory, okay well....?

It was just a conversion from the rubber

- 28:30 covering to the wiring covering.

And what was the wire being used for?

Torpedos wire. I think it was Electrolux down in the river bank near Punt Road, not Punt Road, Chapel Street, Richmond, they used to wind these things. And strangely many, many years later, even with my son which makes it after 1956, he being of walking age I guess it was getting close to 1960.

- 29:00 I was in the city, Elizabeth Street and there was a mMilitary disposal store and I forget what I was looking for there, some electrical electronic component and I found these reels of wire with my signature on them, that was the stuff that I'd worked on back in the 1930's., Sso life is shorts isn't it;, you always catch up on it one way or another. Yeah well there's so many stories,
- 29:30 look there's some stuff about the factory that's a bit, oh, a bit over the top, the girls as a group were a bit, oh feral I suppose.

Well please tell us that stuff don't hold back because that's what were here for?

Well I'm afraid of going public on the goings on.

You don't have to mention names, but...?

Well I've mentioned the establishment; I haven't' mentioned that by name

- 30:00 anyway. No well there was all these machinists there, they were operating the winding machines, the circular knitting machines, the flat band knitters, the wire covering machines, just monitoring it. But the big thing was this "multi hole machine bench." we used to call it, and it extended for about twenty feet, ten up one side and ten down the other. Now each of them had a machine and
- 30:30 the, they sat facing each other, but it was common for a belt to break, because they were on peace piece work they worked the machines hard. And you have to put your foot on one side the pedal to start it and on the other to brake, so when you come to the corner you brake and turn the corner and "zroom." "brake." "zroom." getting a many a needle through your finger by the way, out with the pliers, pull it out. Anyway

- 31:00 the girls would, these belts would come off but I couldn't stop the hole bench, because there was too much work involved and the girls would go crock, they couldn't make up their time and so on. So I'd have to put a new belt on, and I knew the length of the belt, I'd measured it static and I'd cut the circular belt about, oh quarter of an inch round and it had a staple through it to join it together, it's as simple as that. So I had the belts ready to make up and clinch them in,
- 31:30 put it on, except it was all running at that time. Now whenever a new girl came the ladies of the house would de-bag her and then toss her undergarment to the rafters where they would dangle like a flag of conquest. Well that was bad enough for a calla callow youth like myself, but then the little darlings would arrange to kick the belt off, knowing that she was in a position where I'd
- 32:00 have to get opposite with the machine running to run the belt on. Some I got from beside the operator, some from opposite the machine. And naturally the girl would be in her stance of operating with legs aspladesplayed and was rather embarrassing for me, and much to the guffaws of these crude females, oh shock horror. It's a wonder I didn't bail out on them there and then for the rest of my life. One girl in fact
- 32:30 had an abortion in the toilet, whether she aborted it herself or what I don't know, the girls found her, the fetus, and they had to get the ambulance and get it all cleaned up. And the two2 of the girls, were taken out of the, this would be after the wWar had started, Guada CamalGuadalcanal days when the Yanks [Americans] came in, two2 of the girls were taken out of employment and stayed home to help mum out with the brothel.
- 33:00 And there we go, they were nice girls those two, I'd imagine they'd do well. Haven't seen them since, a long time ago.

Tell us a bit more about that working with all these women?

Gossip, spite, virtuosities, "Ccan I have overtime?" "Ooh come on I need the money, you know I haven't had overtime for a week."

- 33:30 "Wwell it's a two- way trade love, so whatever." You had to go to school somewhere.

So did you, was this your own system or are you talking about other people's system?

Oh it's the way they worked; it's the way the system operated. Yes many, many incidents.

And did you get on

- 34:00 **well with these girls?**

With?

With these girls that you were working with?

Oh yes, yes, no troubles at all. Oh I suppose there was one big fat bitch there but you know they're the barge arse, type you met them anywhere you can't avoid... any office has got one, yah yah.

The girl, well I should say women really,

- 34:30 **they were mostly, well my question is whether they were working at the factory before the wWar or whether they were there as a result of men going to the wWar?**

No, it was a girls' factory, but we did draw in extra girls because of the increased orders. See the production demand went up; initially we were just limiting ourselves to

- 35:00 ladies' garments, not frocks, under garments and also surgical knee [bandage?], what do you call the things around your knee? Can't think of them, footballer still wear them today, knee, whatever it is rubber thing, but there's where the elastic in the rubber used to come together to make these things.
- 35:30 But then the shift was towards this wire, which did away with the elastic and toward the webbing, used to make these gas mask packs, the ammunition packs, the belts, all those things, because we had the sewing machines. And of course my prime function was basically with the minklatiure activities of
- 36:00 textile mechanic. And I had to look after the maintenance of the sewing machines, the knitting machines, look after the supply, new machines coming in. For example there was a braiding machine came down from Japan, oh a Jules Verne [science fiction writer] [?]duals vern contraption with little bobbins running around like ants and two knitting needles sticking up in the air and the end result it came out with a braided ribbon.
- 36:30 And that could be used in turn for such things as the straps on ladies' suspenders which was sewn onto their corsets and so on. And then that was converted to provide little tabs for the webbing that was used on the sSoldiers. Which With each of these moves there had to be increased staff bought in, more machinery and so on if it was available. So it was a good life.

And it gave you a bit of

- 37:00 **extra money to take home to your mum?**
Oh yes, yes, that's what it was about.
Did you find it, well what was your step fatherstepfather doing for work at the time?
Oh, he was involved in storeman's duty with a big furniture company in Norman.
And he went to fight in World War II?
No he was
- 37:30 there, as a regimental sergeant major, but at tTraining dDepot down at Mount Martha, and that's where he got this dermatitis from the khaki stuff.
Oh okay so that was at Mount Martha?
Yep. No he never got out of the country on World War II, but he got out of the country in World War I.
- 38:00 **Sorry, pause for a minute, there you go now you can tell us?**
Okay and doing this run from Singapore back to Japan and we flew across and into Vietnam which was in the throes of the tail end of the French Warwar. And as I passed across the countryside, I saw evidence of a very large airfield being constructed,
- 38:30 so I quickly took notes., Wwe had no camera and observed as much as I could. And on arriving back in Japan went to the iIntelligence oOfficer and said, "Hey, have I got something for you." and I gave him the details and he said, "Well, let's sit down and talk about this." And after he'd interrogated me, I found out that I knew more than twice, three times what I'd told him, that I hadn't remembered, and just by interrogation
- 39:00 he extracted it from me and I had the greatest admiration for them after that. So that's the way it works, you jog the memory, what was really behind that shadow, and you see such and such and so it goes on. Anyway while we were there, landed for a refuel job, flying Dakotas at the time. And alongside us was a Dakota which was like a colander, nothing but holes, right through; it had been perforated completely.
- 39:30 And yeah all of interest. I recently at the behest of my granddaughter, eldest granddaughter, put down or started listing the places I had visited and stayed and airfields and that and I got up to one hundred and forty six. And I decided that I wasn't going to type anymore. So I obtained a voice recognition package
- 40:00 and once I get the time to train the baby to react to me I'll be able to speak to you as we are now, put it onto my digital recorder and plug it into the computer and have it typed out for me. And go and amend it as necessary by voice again.

Tape 3

- 00:31 **Okay now you last mentioned about the factory working with the girls?**
Yes.
What did you do after that in the factory?
Oh that's the interesting thing, I thought I'd told you about, yes I did, about leaving the factory under the guys I'd been reported to the Manpower office for not being
- 01:00 patriotic enough etc, and then getting my side of the story across. So I was able to go and join the air fForce. No, I'd previously been through all the tests and I was already to go in the air fForce and they found out I was too young. And I came back on the due date and they put the kibosh on me [prevented me] with the protected industry. And then I needed this piece of paper from the Manpower office to get released to finally get
- 01:30 in, in 1944. So I went from 1942 to 1944 working for my country instead of fighting for them.
Okay now you want to mention the susso [sustenance - the dole] concert?
Oh the sSusso cConcert, yeah we'd be up to that. Well this John Barnes, John Turner Barnes, a very stately gentleman who worked for the lLocal cCouncil
- 02:00 as a lLibrarian, and he used to provide lots of goodies for me, as a substitute father. And anyway one of the goodies, he'd organise this concert for the people on sustenance and mainly widowed ladies and all these, oh arty-farty [artistic] friends would
- 02:30 come in. He had lots of contacts at the Tifley [?]Tivoli and the Gaiety and these live theatres. And I'd get

a job as a call boy and that's the old position where you go and knock on the door, "Two minutes Mr. Henry, two minutes, one minute Mr. Henry, you're on Mr. Henry." So it would go on, then I would become a stooge in the audience and

03:00 Doctor Carl Wolfram a magician would, his one name that came to mind, he would step forward and say, "Well for my next trick I need the services of a little boy. Are there any little boys who wish to come up and help me out?" "Me, sir." along with a dozen others, but, "me Me, sir." always got it because I was the stooge. And I'd go up and "What is your name?" and I'd say "Elgar." "Oh Algernon, ho, ho, ho"

03:30 'cause the audience would go into uproar. And then I would have to help in various tricks, holding things and pointing at things and so on and removing things.e....are you cold also?

No I'm fine?

And one of the tricks was he'd get a watch from someone in the audience put it in a black velvet bag and draw it up. He'd hold it and I would have to fire the gun at it, a blunderbust, and go

04:00 "Bbang." and a lot of smoke and fire and gunpowder, and out would come the watch in pieces, because of a secret compartment. Then this went fine for a number of nights and I got a back fire and sort of burnt my face and that, so thereafter I had to hold the watch and of course I had to shake it appropriately. And another thing was the ribbon umbrella,

04:30 where you get an umbrella and you roll it up into a carpet and pull it out and it's all ribbons instead of the black covering. Then you put it away and pull it out and it's all black and that was a case where at the end of the carpet there's a double stitching with a spot for each thing, and a bayonet fitting for the handle, and I had to hold the appropriate one to, so he could pull it out and the other one wouldn't slip out,;

05:00 quite simple stuff.

What was the attendance like at the Susso susso Concertsconcerts?

Full., Full house always.

When you say full, how many people are we talking about approximately?

Oh God, I couldn't estimate. I'd have to go back to the Collingwood Town Hall, Melbourne Town Hall for example. What would that hold? I wouldn't know, a thousand, eight hundred? It was upstairs and downstairs. I really figures didn't interest me then; it was just a full house as far as I was concerned. But we'll say

05:30 there'd have to be eight hundred there at least.

And how often would were the Susso susso cConcerts held?

Quarterly I think, that's a guess, I think it was quarterly. But it was an outing for me; it was a means of meeting people, developing my confidence I guess, providing pocket money once again to help Mum out. And you did all these things that were just part of the course. Now there was one interesting

06:00 phase at that time, there was an elderly lady that lived within proximity and she had a young child my age, a boy, and frequently I would be invited to accompany that boy and this elderly person in a hire car to go for a trip up the hills. And I never ever worked out what all that was about, you know I used to play with him, yes that was no problem, but

06:30 why he was with the lady, and why, I guess I was asked for company for him. But the hire car, oh, he used to live like a lord, I mean this is in the sSusso days. So obviously she wasn't short of a quid and that's the way it goes. And speaking of short of a quid - slight digression here, in later life I had reason to challenge a chap about his father's behaviour and he introduced the

07:00 topic and I said, "Sounds as though he's short of a quid." and the response was, "Oh no, he's got plenty of money." My comment "short of a quid" is a general term meanings "hHe isis not the full shilling." "Hhe's a bit off the planet." [all mean mentally unstable] perhaps you can say the same about me but who cares.

Were you a pPolitically inclined person in any way?

Never at all, never at all. They were, someone to be avoided unless they were handing out something.

07:30 **What do you remember about say the CCommunists in the Communist Party in Melbourne, about the activities during the Depression?**

They never seemed to involve me, didn't come into my ambit. I didn't have the interest, I suppose the closest I got to pPolitics was going and watching the sing-along at the corner of Russell Street and Bourke Street with the Sally Annes [Salvation Army],

08:00 they'd have a "Sshall we gather at the river" routine. and we'd go along and sing suitable ditties to the tutt tutt of the Llieutenant or cCaptain or whoever. But I guess one of the, you talk about pPolitics, they

used to go down Yarra [River] banks for entertainment on a Sunday and that was where the populace assembled and they had little mounds, blue stone rocks with dirt and different people would have their set spots

08:30 and they would get up. And you speak about CCommunists there was one chap there was, I couldn't tell you his name, but he was very anti- CCommunist and he was very quick witted. The crowd, he had the same spiel, he didn't change it much, and the crowd knew him and they'd bait him see, and he'd be talking on about the Communists Communists and "Tell us about the Communists Communists, Harry?" a couple of boys said., "I'll tell you about the CommunistsCommunists, look at so and so,

09:00 she's a member, she hangs around with her Communist Communist friends all week and she can't even roll here eyes." She's "Aarrh arrrh, but as soon as she get home with them she rolls her eyes all over the place." This was pPolitical dialogue on the bank, but they usually get fairly heated down there and that's why we went for the entertainment more than the message. And yeah there was soap boxessoapboxes all over

09:30 town I guess. The meetings at the Town Hall on the backs of the horse and cart, they were quite vocal and yeh. Well, I was speaking earlier I guess of the later stage when I was traipsing around with pPoliticians and on one occasion we were, I was flying with the Minister for Air, out in

10:00 from Melbourne to Canberra, and the Minister for Air was an ex- railway man, always late. And this occasion we were carrying Bob Menzies [Robert Menzies, later Prime Minister] back to Canberra, Bob Menzies being in opposition. And Bob turned up on time like any gentleman would, but had to wait for Arthur Samuel who arrived. While he was waiting he joined

10:30 us under the wing of the aircraft which was the normal thing, and he was a marvellous raconteur telling us all manner of stories, jocular and faulettes etc. And when the Minister turned up he said "Oh, late again, Arthur." "No, sorry Bob, was such and such, after you." and they step up, go up the stairs into the Dakota which is fitted out with three-quarter inch Tasmanian's

11:00 hardwood, deeply polished and what have you. I used to have photographs of it around but I don't know where they are. Anyway he pauses at the top of the stairs and turns around and says, "This is magnificent Arthur, I think I may stay in pPolitics a bit longer, I may get to fly around in this one day." A typical Bob response, but anyway that's one incident and there were many more. But this was a different era,

11:30 in 1948 yes it would be 1947, 1948 we flew around Australia.

Actually I don't want to go too far ahead, if you can hang onto that thought I'll come back a little bit later.

It's a bit hard for me to hang onto thoughts you know.

I've noticed, because you've got so many, which is good. With the Wwar starting with Germany

12:00 **and Japan's entrance into the Wwar, tell us what was going on at that stage, I mean how did you view it all?**

We did car racing every Saturday night, down at Olympic Park. That's about as close as I got to the wWar. I had friends of mates going, family members would go off and you'd hear different tales they'd come back with this that and the other thing, but it just didn't appear.

12:30 I suppose once again it gets back to the fact that I never saw newspapers. So no one told me about the wWar, I didn't discuss it with adolescents. Saw newsreels I guess at the cinema, what did they tell me, "Whwizz bang, bang." "Wwhere's Tom Mix [cowboy movie star], let's get on with it." Perils of Pauline [1947 film], so it goes on. I was never involved, I guess

13:00 I've used the word before, I guess I was totally headamistichedonistic, life had treated me bad but it was never going to put me down. And so I just went for the ho ho ho life all the way, and that's the way it is, so be it.

Do you remember the day when wWar was declared?

No. No not at all, I have no conscious memory of where I was, what I was

13:30 doing or any such thing.

You were saying before about your friends you'd meet who had gone overseas and come back and tell you stories, what sort of stories?

No, I got an occasional insight into the mate who had gone off, who'd drop a line, and he was just having a ball. Telling me about all these exotic places that he'd visited and the training and the like. But he was sent to Ireland for his training,

14:00 to get out of the bombing of course, he never really saw combat, he was in England, but he didn't see combat as such, he didn't fly bomber missions over Germany or anything.

I see.

He was just in the pool.

And of course the Americans, one can't forget them; tell us about your experiences and what you went through?

We used to have some good fights in Flinders Street, Flinders and Swanson Street, where the

14:30 Yanks congregated at the Flinders Street Station steps to pick up the sheilas [women]. But all they did was sort the girls out, the ones they left were the ones that were worth marrying, the other ones you couldn't give two hoots for. There'd be a lot of people offended by that because there was many Wwar brides and in fact ones on my circuit, but no we didn't have much time for them. They were 'over- paid, over- sexed and over here' and that was a problem. And the biggest

15:00 blow they had was when the, that the guy, the killer in the ditches, the air raid ditches, I can't think of his name. But all these twilight murders took place and it turned out to be the American.

Oh, Lewonski?

Lewonski [Eddie Leonski] yep, that's the one, and that slowed them down a bit. Silk stockings and candy didn't matter, life's a bit better than that. So

15:30 there we have it. Didn't have any association whatsoever with them socially, it was always one of disinterest and distain.

Did you dislike them initially from the onset outset of their?

Yes, they swaggered and strutted and literally boasted. You know you had Kentucky hillbillies strutting around as though they owned bloody Melbourne, simply because they got 10 ten times the money we got and they got dressed up

16:00 in Bond Street suits [fashionable London street] so to speak. Where as we got around in dunnars [dungarees] and two bob [two shillings] in our pocket. But there was many fine friendships struck there. Subsequently I've been through American many times and served on a joint base in Japan with the Americans. Had many much involvement with Americans on other ventures, the aAir lift in England and

16:30 so on. Never formed any close bond to an American. Oh no, there's one old dear I met on a cruise, she showed me her driving licence and claimed she was eighty. Wwell she must have had ten face lifts, because she looked good. But the important thing I guess was she had a holiday resort, was one of the goodies she picked up during

17:00 her trials and tribulations through life. Yeah.

You're talking about fights taking place in Flinders Street and Swanson Street, tell us more about them?

Well that was a case of slagging [abusing], we'd go and make odd comments about "Yyou know you're bloody poofters you wouldn't know....." Bbut they were all Veterans veterans they were out at Gouda CanalGuadalcanal, you couldn't take that away from them. But they'd get baited and one would start

17:30 and as soon as a Yank got involved with an Aussie the other sServices would come in and have a whack. And then the American apes, or the Military Police, would come in with their baseball bats and zap a few heads and whip them into the patrol van and cart them off to Russell Street [police station] and dump them in the cells and cool them down. But it was mainly grog involved. And outside the railways station

18:00 was no doubt due to Yyoung and Jacksons [a pub in Melbourne], always plenty of booze and plenty of broads and so it goes on.

Now Military Police that came, they'd take an Aussie as well?

No, oh no.

Just the Americans?

Oh no, that would be dynamite. There was some near incidents over that sort of thing.

Yeah?

Get your hand off me you mother sausage.

18:30 No, there they're nice guys, they're there normal human beings, but it's just the way they handled themselves. They didn't have the background for it and I guess I didn't have the background anyway to make a true assessment. I would be highly cynical and heavily biased; I guess that would be a true assessment. Yeah it was interesting; I can relay the story of relating to relationships with the Americans. Much later when I was flying through America

19:00 we were at the mid centreal of it, which was and perhaps still is the headquarters of the Strategic Air

Command, which is umpteen, eleven floors or something under the ground. Now we arrived to take off, fill in our flight plan and so on but there was no weather available., Wwe were heading for Newfoundland where the weather gets a bit claggy so it will be nice to know before we took off what

- 19:30 was happening. The aAttachment oOfficer of it for the RAF [Royal Air Force], said, "Well look, I'll take you down to the aircraft, you can get your pre- flights done and I'll go back and pick up the weather." The weather was coming in on a facsimile and the facsimile was a great burning device. Iit was dark, rather a loose pattern of things on the, this bit of paper, sensitised paper.
- 20:00 Anyway we never saw this oOfficer again, so we took off without the weather because we were on a flight schedule and when we came back in the next time we said, "What the hell happened?" he had an American vehicle on loan and it was a bigt buck tooth Buick, I don't know if you remember them, these great grilles out the front. And he drove into, went back to operations, drove into the spot nearest the door,
- 20:30 got out, when inwent in and got the weather, came out and hopped into the car and took off. He'd hardly gone a block and he was flagged down by the air pPolice;, "You stole this vehicle.", "No but, but...." "No' buts.", "But I'm squadron leader." Took him off to the cells and it took a lot of explanations to get him out. Someone had parked between his car and the door and he just got in then nearest car thinking it was his.
- 21:00 **Can I ask you, with the Americans and the Australian girls, how did they react to the American soldiers here?**
- They went for all the materialistic goodies that they could get out of the deal. If they got the grain coffee they'd be in it, if they got the silk stockings [items unavailable in Australia] they'd be in it,
- 21:30 all the things that came out of the post exchange [PX - American canteen]. You'd wonder what the hell the Yanks were sending that sort of stuff to a mMilitary post exchange for 'cause there was no American women here at that time that I'm aware of. And that's what they baited the girls with. And many a, it's been recorded, it's not just my opinion, many a girl was entrapped into going over as a wWar bride, you know starlight and moons and all the rest of the
- 22:00 stuff that goes with it. And they'd hop on a boat and get over to America and there they're living in hillbilly land on a patched- up dunny [toilet] out the back of a haystack. They weren't very happy, particularly as they had a kid or two at that stage. So a lot of them fell by the way side. But this is going on everywhere that's just one part of history. I mean when you think, perhaps I'm going ahead now,
- 22:30 but when you think about the orphan children in Vietnam, as a result of the conflict, and then extend it to Japan. Now this is only a personal opinion but have you noticed how many big- boned large- structured Japanese children in the sporting field these days, which is a legacy from the occupation. And I always felt sorry for any
- 23:00 illegitimates that were left there, after the occupation, because they were so different. We would be as strikingly different in that country as what the Asians are in our country; it's just one of those things. But I felt how in God's name when their they're eighteen inches taller then than their playmates, their they're black or brindle or what have you, with round eyes, blue eyes and so on.
- 23:30 There They're so totally different, how are they going to be accepted, they'll be the butt of the schoolyard jokes etc, because of numbers count. These are just personal views on that type of thing. Yeah, Wars wars are a damn nuisance at times. Anyway I'm interrupting so go on.

No, no you're not. With you joining up the air fForce, can you walk us through the sequence of events that lead you to join?

- 24:00 **You said that before some had accused you of being unpatriotic?**

Oh that was at the end, that was the day I joined.

Yes tell us what happened?

I was in, I thought I'd gone through this. I was in the factory and I had this wire covering equipment to maintain and it wasn't doing its job, remember I told you about the silk line. Well now before that, that was in 1944,

- 24:30 before that in 1942 I'd gone in and done all the tests to join the aAir fForce, because I wanted to join my close friend. That was about the only reason, to get in with Jimmy and "Wwe'll do the world over." He was telling me about his experiences. All of a personal delight nature, nothing horrendous. And so I did all that and the I got knocked out because I was under age. Then the boss found
- 25:00 out that I'd gone and done this and he put the red stamp on my Manpower papers. Or had it put on to the effect that I was in a protected industry. So when I went back on my birthday on the 22nd January 1943, I was told "Nno go, you're in a protected industry." So I had to go back to the factory and carry on with this wire covering and the other duties. Now that went
- 25:30 on for the next twelve months, then we run into this servicing problem which lead to me being reported by the boss, to the Man power office for holding up production etc, etc. And when I responded to the

call to visit the Man power office I was told all these things about “yYou’re slowing down production, it’s unpatriotic and blah blah.” All the rah rah stuff, and then when I told

26:00 how I was being financially exploited and the hours I was working in relation to the remuneration and the work; I obtained my release. And then I went and joined the air fForce the same day that I obtained that release. So there we go.

Now how old were you at this stage?

Oh that, I’d be 19, yeah.

And tell us what happened; tell us about your training in the Aair fForce?

My friend? I never caught up with him,

26:30 he was in England and I was stuck in the sSouth wWest.

No not your friend, about your training specifically when you first joined up in the air force, which unit were you stationed with?

Oh, I’ve been through all this, I’ll do it again if you want.

We’d like a bit more detail about your training, that’s all.?

Well I went down to Number 51 Initial Training School at Somers in Victoria

27:00 which I enjoyed very much. I was surrounded by people that were in the main, much higher educated than I. Came from better background than I because as I have explained at some stage it was only by virtue of my results on the entrance test that I was able to convince them that I had the ability to cope with the training and what have you. It’s just

27:30 my lack of academic achievement was based on the fact that I wasn’t prepared to apply myself. I had too many other things to do and by going to school I was only keeping teachers in a job. And subsequently it’s been hard but I’ve gained what information I’ve found necessary to survive and progress without the aid of teachers. But always with the guidance of wise men and

28:00 that’s been a great help. However we survived the Initial initial Training training School school and made some friend there which carried through, but we went from there, I forget what duration it was, it wasn’t too long. As an example of the times, of a weekend when we got leave and chaps were on guard duty I would volunteer to do their guard duty for a price, so I could

28:30 take the money home to Mum. Cause the money you got in the Air air fForce wasn’t great and...

Where was this?

This is at Somers, just down the road on Westernport Bay, not Westernport Bay, in between. While they were in town whooping it up [living it up] I was down there doing guard duty. So we got out of there and we went over to this other Initial initial Training training School school at...

29:00 where’d I say it was? I’ve forgotten. Victor Harbour at South Australia. and have you lost something..... Okay, well nineteen and a few days when I joined the aAir fForce and we went onto this Number 3 Initial Training School at Victor Harbour, where I think it was a month we did a month of

29:30 preparatory training. An interesting thing there, pretty close Victor Harbour it was also a training school for the WAAAF [Women’s Auxiliary Australian Air Force] WHAF, that’s the ladies of the Aair fForce, so that made it easy to fill in the weekends and the nights I guess. But...

Can you tell me any interesting stories?

No, I couldn’t. But there was one I always remember I almost failed the course over there because I couldn’t take visual Morse [Morse code]. That’s where you use the olders Aldis lamp; you know “fFlash flash.....”

30:00 and why couldn’t I take that, because every time it flashed I’d blink my eyes and so the “Ddot, dash, dot, dash” was being me reacting to the light. However they put on a supplementary test and I went out and sort of held my eyes open and then managed to get it all down. But I will say Morse code robbed me of a beautiful

30:30 script hand I had., I was taught to write with script when I went to school. Basically in primary school and by going into the aAir fForce you had to put it down in long hand, well I couldn’t do traditional long hand, so I intended to scribble and in doing that I lost the touch, but its coming back I’m slowly getting a fairly legible hand, when I don’t need it - I’ve got the computer to do it all.

31:00 Anyway we were kicked out of there put on a train, travelled through, arrived at Ballarat one morning about two2 o’clock in the morning. Frost on the station, all the little pools of water were covered in ice and slept on the luggage rack, you know what a luggage rack is?

You’d better describe it for me.

Hung from the wall. We and bunked up there and stopped at Ballarat to get a

- 31:30 sandwich and a cup of tea or cup of coffee whatever it was, it was mainly tea in those days. Then trundled on through Melbourne, waited a few hours here, got to go home and say "Hi, goodbye." then went on up north until we got to Evans Head. And there we started the, it was an Air Observers School and we started schooling there, and after about a month they found out we shouldn't be there
- 32:00 so we got on the train and came all the way back and went up to Port Pirie, which is only four hours from where we are, or were, but we made it. And I guess an interesting issue there, a guy I've often thought of but unfortunately I just cannot pin his name down, but we were combined for a night flying exercise which involved astral navigation. And Tony, I know that
- 32:30 much, Tony was to bring the sextant, the sextant being the optical device which you measure the angle to the stars. And he was supposed to bring it onto the aircraft and I had other duties. We got airborne and "Where's the sextant Tony?" "Oh I thought you had it." "Oh you were supposed to bring it" and so it went on, didn't have it. "What are we going to do?" , "Keep going." we decided to the
- 33:00 Pilot. So we go on this navigation exercise and to get our angle to the stars put a drawing pin through the centre of a protractor, hung a bit of rope on it with a rubber on the end and then rested the pencil on the pin and I would adjust the protractor until the thing was plumb on the thing, and then look at the reading and Tony would say when it was plumb and I'd go,
- 33:30 "Ooh, twenty two and a half degrees." Anyway we came back with results that were good enough for training Navigators. Got into hot water over that, but got off because we had the initiative to do something about it, so that was that. Finally graduated and came back to Melbourne and filled in time until they started us on this Bomber bomber Training training Course.

Now I'm curious

- 34:00 **about your views of women in the armed forces. What do you think of that, you're first encounter with like you said the WAAFWAFs.**

Oh dear, oh dear. Yes well, there was a place for the women in the Armed Forces. They released men to supposedly go on more active duty. In those days we couldn't accept the fact that they would be able to lift as much as we do and

- 34:30 so we kept them away from the heavy stores and the like and mainly on the telephones, radar, searchlights all that type of thing, motor transport. And the thing was that they gradually proved themselves, they were flying aeroplanes and delivering aeroplanes across the Atlantic Ocean, all manner of things, test flying. And there they proved their worth and now there they're in all roles, well their they're in combat roles now, so they've come a long
- 35:00 way. But remember we'd stepped out of the crinoline quennin dresses and the like at the war, to sort of accept them to start with and then they forged ahead on us, we lost control.

I don't think you ever lost control?

And yeh that's.

What about socially, what were they like?

- 35:30 Well I found that they were very good ironers, they used to do my shirts. I found they were very good companions, they were good talkers, but then most women are anyway. No it was nice to have them around; it provided a balance and outlet.

What do you mean outlet?

A different dialogue, blokes tend to be a bit

- 36:00 crude and yet so funny. I mean one of the best experiences you can get in life in terms of humour is to have fifteen, twenty blokes on a bivouac bivawhack and you sit around the campfire at night time with the quota of beer, a bottle each or whatever it may be, and one guy will start telling a joke, "Hey did you hear about such and such?" and that triggers another guy, "Oh that reminds me of such and such." and they try and outdo
- 36:30 each other and these things grow and grow and grow and there they're just so hilarious. And if you look back in history you'll find that some of the great post-war comedians got their start in the concert parties, the Military military Concert concert Parties parties and they honed their skills there and came out and they told their rude jokes, or their slightly off-beat jokes, and became famous.

Can you tell us about any of these

- 37:00 **jokes?**

Any of the jokes?

Oh we'd love to hear them for the sake of the archives?

Well, oh here comes Colin, [interviewer] just in time.

\n[Verse follows]\n “The bull, the bull, the bull, the bull, the bull the curie bull,\n With a four and twenty prostitutes all lined up on the floor,\n Singing, ‘who’ll do me this time and who’ll do me now,\n The lamb that did it last time he cannot do it now,\n Oh the parson’s daughter, she was there the filthy little runt,\n She had poison ivy round her tits and thistle round her cunt,\n

37:30 Singing who’ll do me this time and who’ll do me now?”,\n

I shan’t go on.

No, please?

No.

Please don’t stop.

No that’s about the go; actually I’m embarrassed about these dialogues going into posterity. There’s that piece of paper you were looking for, Colin’s bought it back.

No it’s

38:00 **actually good because it give us an understanding of what the culture was like at the time, and that is important for any social historian.**

Yeah, that’s true.

You know especially if people want to really, even for my generation it’s difficult for us to understand because we don’t often come across people who are being, I suppose, more up front about what actually took place.

Yeah.

So when we do hear it, it’s quite important in that regard. So

38:30 **don’t feel like in any way you need to restrain yourself, because I’m not going to encourage you to restrain yourself anyway.**

No those ditties you can buy records of them in a modified form, they go on forever. But that’s all blokey stuff, it took our mind off women, we made parity parody of it in these ditties and we got on with whatever we had to do. Now see it’s the

39:00 chronology of all this, there’s so much that, thirty years is a long time to cover. Now in terms of Wwar involvement from 1944 to 1946 that’s it, 1945 and a half if you like. That’s all and I never fired a shot in anger, so what’s my Wwar experience. I was always in the B Company, B here when they come and B here when they come back. Not through any fault of my own, I enlisted to serve anywhere in the Wworld,

39:30 which I eventually did, but during my initial stages I was involved in training as were many others who never got out of the country. Never fought, fired a shot in anger.

You were with the Empire Air Training Scheme [EATS]?

Yes.

Were you expecting at any time to be in some sort of combat role overseas?

Oh yeah, yeah.

What were you thinking?

Thought I’d knock somebody off, simple as that.

What did you think about the Japanese and the Germans?

40:00 Targets. Didn’t think about it, they weren’t human beings to me in any way, they were just images. I think a story of the times, a true story is one of a Contemporise contemporary’s, he’s got a DFC, Distinguished Flying Cross, and whenever he got a few drinks we’d say, “Hey, how’d you get your gong [award] mate?” and he’d start telling the story. And he was in NNorth

40:30 Africa and he got up one morning and went on dawn patrol, as they call it, and the next thing out of the sky comes this Hiney bastard, the German. So he hears the “Rratt a tat tatt, ddd ddd.” and he looks in the rear vision mirror and, “Hhere was this bugger, he was actually shooting at me, so I started weaving to and fro as you’re supposed to do and he followed me and

41:00 ddd ddd...and he’s a lousy shot didn’t get one in.” “And eventually it stopped so I levelled out and just cruised along and he came and cruised alongside me and pulled his canapé canopy back and just waved and said hey you know and I waved back and he showed his watch and said... and patted his tummy, time for breakfast, beauty mate, so he

41:30 peeled off to go home for breakfast, I hadn't fired a bloody shot, so I just went ddd ddd and look, I got a DFC, simply as that." Do you think that's (UNCLEAR)

Very interesting story.

Ah.

It's a very interesting story.?

Well there you go see. You can, I didn't make it up I can assure you.

42:00 End of tape

Tape 4

00:31 I'll just tell you this before you start recording.

When you were moving around these camps, from Somers to Ballarat and all that, I did ask you about socialising. I remember before you joined up you spoke about parties where the Air air fForce blokes would go and they'd wear patches. Tell us about that.

01:00 Well see the CrocaderoTrocadero Chrocatero was one of the big dance halls, dance was big time then.

CrocaderoTrocaderoChrocatero?

Just over the Princess Bridge on the side of the Arts Centre there was a red windmill, was there or a green windmill, I'm not certain of the colour, but that was a big pick- up place, dance place. Quite a good spot, good live music, the best bands were there. But we also had the Masonic Hall the top end of

01:30 Collins Street. There was the Collingwood Town Hall, the St Kilda Town Hall, Mooney Ponds Town Hall, Heidelberg Town Hall, Glenferrie Town Hall, Hawthorn Town Hall... there was a Catholic hall out in Hawthorn also, attached to a Churchchurch, I can't think of the name of that, but that was a good place to go. And there was another ballroom up above the

02:00 Yering, Lingberry[?] Station, they were all over town. Now I found it advantageous to dance properly because the girls appreciated that and so a good time was had by all. I met my first fiancée, I'd mentioned I was engaged four4 times, the first fiancée at the Masonic Town Hall, top of Collins Street and

02:30 we met and fell in love to the tune of It Had To Be You. I don't know if you know the tune?

Yes I remember.?

A wonderful tune, saved me a thousand words that song, It Had To Be You so it was.

Well, it helped you didn't it?

Yes.

So about these air chaps you didn't really mention...?

Oh no well

03:00 you'd go to the dance then, there'd be a lot of these aAir cCadets and they used to have a white patch in their forage caps [military cap with a small brim]. And the girls would dance, someone that you took a fancy to would be dancing around with one of them and when they finished you'd go over and "Mmay I have the next dance?" "Oh I'm booked.", I said, "Not with that guy you were dancing with, surely?" "Oh yes, he's very nice." I said "Oh yes, he should be,

03:30 you know what that white patch is hishe is wearing?", "No.", "Oh apparently he's got some social disease or venereal disease itI think it is". "Oh, well." So you managed to get rid of them, they wondered why they were suddenly wall flowerswallflowers.

I'm actually going to get to the

04:00 **aAir lift, that's something I'm really interested in. Now we were talking about your social activities in Australia, before you went to MoratieMoriatiMorotai that is.**

The which?

Before you went to MoratieMoriatiMorotai?

Oh that was forming the sSquadron, yes. Well the social activities....

In Australia?

All along the way, yes. See well we were fairly active there, the only time, we went from Evans Head, sorry Port Puri Pirie back to

- 04:30 Tokamore Tocumwal then we went up to Brisbane and formed a sSquadron. Now all the time that was fairly hard sService, you know, you're working long hours a lot of things to do and so on, but we did get leave which was a week's break, we were allowed a week off. In anticipation of embarkation, that means going overseas to take the Ssquadron and everything. Now you can't do much in a week, I was in Dolby Dalby which is
- 05:00 out on the high plains of Queensland so I went down to Sydney for the week. I had a good time in Sydney, stopped at Manly and had a good time, and went back to the bBase. And the day following my return to Bbase they nominated me to run in the mile at the local athletic meeting. Simply because I used to run around the perimeter of the air field
- 05:30 and I'd come home first, but I liked the lope, I'd sort of lope along and it was just an outlet. Anyway I got creamed this day, I came in 2nd second and not only that I collapsed on the track, cause I'd put my heart into it but it didn't come off. And when they said, "Oh God, we were told you can handle this.", I said "Yes I could, but not straight after coming back from a week's leave in Sydney, it's
- 06:00 not exactly the training preparation." But anyway we got the sSquadron together and sitting in the Mmess tent there, a big long marquee, only the day before the tree outside had been blown apart with lighting, I dare say if I went back to the airfield which still exists I could identify the tree. And then we find ourselves being transported
- 06:30 to MoratieMoriatiMorotai, or flying ourselves to MoratieMoriatiMorotai, to start transport the tTroops back to Australian, then we found that we not only bought them back to Darwin and dropped them, but we bought them all the way back to Laverton and then from Laverton we used to do shuttle runs up to Darwin and back to Laverton. Now there was one interesting trip I did on that shuttle and we'd fly up past Broken Hill and up the back of Alice Springs and right on up to
- 07:00 Darwin and this was in the Liberator Bombersbombers, which could take so many people. And then on the way up we flew through this claggy weather, bad raining all the way, pouring, lightning and all the rest of it. And then we came back home and similar weather, easing a bit, then we went back up, sea of water and we came back up a sea of grass
- 07:30 and we went back up a desert., Tthat quick;, in a matter of a week the whole transition had been through the cycle. And I often wonder about Ion Idriess in the great Boomerang Book written back in the 1930s which has a similar pattern to what's his name, Bradley and the Snowy Mountain Scheme.
- 08:00 But Idriess suggested that Culley Tulley[?], in Queensland is fifty miles from the mountains to the sea and it's got the 3rd third highest rainfall, or 2nd second or 3rd third highest rainfall in the wWorld, and all that water is going to waste. But if it was tunnelled to the inland the existing water wayswaterways that exist, or the water wayswaterways exist that used to once run, and if we put water back in them then we'd change the ecology
- 08:30 and slowly change the sub- climate and the climate and we'd get water back into the inland sea. Now also Bradley I think it was said the maximum population Australia could sustain in view of its water resources is twenty million people. We're in dire straits with our water now; we have a population approximating that., Wwhen are they going to provide these storages?, Aand on top of it you're providing employment, you're providing energy generating
- 09:00 which is going to introduce different industries here, its going to provide greater income for the country, it's going to provide for a larger population. The whole things a "Pplus plus plus." but all we get out of pPoliticians is "Wwho were you with last night?", "I saw you." "Ssome one told me such and such" and they carry on with this whinging and whining and you wonder why I'm not interested in pPolitics for god's sakes.

Can I ask you about MoratieMoriatiMorotai itself, what did you like about it

- 09:30 **or dislike for that matter?**

I was very lonely, because I was separate from my social contacts. I had an envelope with a lot of small photographs in it, the size of postcards, just the face and that, de an aide memoir if you like, and my second 2nd engaged lady I sent a letter to and unfortunately I put it in this envelope.

- 10:00 And she sent me a Ddear John [a rejection letter];, didn't want anymore to do with me. And here I am stuck out in a foreign country, very sad. So I filled in time going to all the American cinemas, they were all around us every night a different movie, then we'd get on the plane and trundle a few more people away and so on.

You were returning tTroops from the island?

Yep.

How would the system work,

10:30 **if you'd get Australian tTroops coming from Borneo?**

Well they'd be, yeah they'd be bought in from outposts, different outlying places, and just assemble by the, what do they call it, the Transport transport Officerofficer, the Air air Transport transport Officerofficer. And see we called into Ballick PappinBalikpapan and picked up some, well that's on the sSouth of Borneo. Yeah it was., Tthere was one incident when we were operating out of Laverton

11:00 going nNorth to Darwin, there was a plane landed at Darwin and crashed and burst into flames. But fortunately the tTroops and the Nnurses on board got out, and the Ccrew. We just lost the plane, so we flew in the next day and they'd sort of cleaned up all the mess and there was a scar mark on the ground where you could see it happened, but so what get on with it. It's like

11:30 a friend took off to do a test flight in a Vampire aircraft and there was a dark cloud round like the day before yesterday, very dark rolled cloud and as Snow took off he was heading into the nNorth at Laverton, once he got airborne he looked at this cloud and thought "Ggee, it's coming in fast!" so he turned to come downwind, inside the airfield away from the cloud,

12:00 which put him downwind too close to the airfield. So he went onto his cross wing leg and because he was too close he had to pull a tighter turn, now unfortunately the stalling speed varies with the square of the angle of bank I think it is, don't quote me on that, but anyway Snow tightened it but he didn't have the speed and the bloody thing flipped on its back and "bBoom boom." and he's gone and we're standing looking out the

12:30 window while Snow's doing all this. And a few hours later I had the keys to the safe in my hand, "yYou're job." Simple as that, great guy just disappeared.

What did you gather from the sSoldiers returning home?

They were just waiting to get home and see their wives and girlfriends and get some life out of the... the same thing I

13:00 described a moment ago, doing the rounds of the cinemas, the open air cinemas, sitting in the pouring rain with a slouch hat on and a mackintosh thing, ground sheet that what it was called, and yes we used to have some great nights there. They'd break down frequently and you know get "Rrah rah." dialogue going from the bus.

No girls there, no females?

Oh too few for us to get near, the tin tanks were there,

13:30 the Yanks, I'm sorry the Americans, allies. Yeah one of the guys wiped out about seven7 Liberators [aircraft]. The Liberators were parked either side of the taxi waytaxiway, I forget their wing spanwingspan. He's taxiing down and he drifted off and put his wing tip through the nose of about seven7 of them. And do you know what the biggest prize from that was? Perspex.

14:00 Why Perspex? Bbecause the Australian Gground cCrew had a trade going where they make these embedded emblems in Perspex, heat it up and put a wings and so on and gild them up and flog them off to the boys to send home to their girlfriends. So all this broken Perspex, oh good stuff, suddenly a goldmine and away we went. Another Yank tank blew up on take off, and it was on the end of the runway and crashed into the tip actually,

14:30 and was loaded with grog. Ddidn't last long, the boys confiscated it, "Gget the grog, we'll look after the bodies later." Had to get in before the Yanks came on the recovery mission. So that's the sort of life it was. Iit was a strictly disciplined but ist was without bounds at times. You made your own judgements, did your own thing according to the social morse mores surrounding you at the time.

15:00 **You visited Ballick PappinBalikpapan?**

Oh Ballick PappinBalikpapan, was interesting we landed there the day after, or just after an aircraft taking off, anyway as it went along the runway it caught the rear wheel on the PSP, which is Pierced Steel Planking [Plating], which was about, oh I don't know fifteen, twenty feet long by about

15:30 fifteen inches wide and had holes in it and went together like a Meccano set [toy building set], you just interlocked it and rolled it out. And this guy picked it up and rolled it out behind him, so he got the power on and that's the way to take off 'cause he had the power on to get airborne and he's pulling the runway up behind him. 'Cause underneath its just coral, oh well that's another little anecdote.

What

16:00 **was the town like in Ballick PappinBalikpapan?**

Sorry.

In Ballick Pappin what was the actual town like at the time?

Oh it was just a dDepot, basically it was a primitive town, it was an oil town. At that stage at the end of the Wday it was enveloped by the facilities for the support for extracting the oil, for getting the petrol

distributed around the place and so on, all mMilitary trappings. So the true nature of the town had gone.

16:30 **So was it functioning at that time as an actual oil refinery?**

Yep, oh yep.

It was?

Oh yes, yes.

And that would have been 1945, 1946?

1946, 1945, 1946.

Well they got it running pretty quickly?

Oh yeah, we didn't have much around at that stage did we? We knocked out the Middle East airfields the Romanian fields were down and... but once again of little interest to me,

17:00 "Wwhere can a man get a feed around here?"

What was your impression of the War war when it ended, where were you the VJ [Victory in Japan] Day, and VE [Victory in Europe] Day?

The day that it went down, when the War war ended I have an entry in my log book, I was at Cecil Plains up in Queensland and I wrote "hooley Hooley dooley, Axis conquered access concurred by Allies, Great Britain, American etc

17:30 etc." That was that, that was the end of it all, and "wWhat happens now?" And when we got rid of the routine duties, to-ing and fro-ing I told you I went and hid in a broom closets until the stampede calmed down and then I came out and said, "Me, what am I going to do?" "We need men; we got rid of too many." So I continued on my life, improving all the way.

18:00 And here I am today wishing I could go over it all again, 'cause you've stirred up memories in me that I'd perhaps put aside.

Now after you were ferrying Troops troops and so forth, tell us what took place and how you actually came to Berlin in that role?

Oh well after the

18:30 Troops troops I came back to that situation where I asked for the broom closets and from the broom closet I was put into this Communication communication Flight flight at Essendon, which became the VIP fFlight. And while I was at Essendon I got my first break, I got a tax concession 'cause I was on an Operational Bbase, and a penny ride into town on the tram.

19:00 Anyway from there I flew for the next three3 or four4 years, what was that 1946 and at the end of theat, after flying all these guys around, oh I didn't tell you about the Politics politics during the VIP days?. But it must have been the 1947 pPolitics I'd have to look up my records. But we had the pPolities [politicians], in particular

19:30 [Arthur S] Drakeford, the Minister for Air and Navy, lovely guy by the way. And we went around, we went right over to Western Australia and we called in at Forrest and we called in at Kalgoorlie and we called in at Ceduna Sedona, we stopped off everywhere and we had the big spiel [talk] and the boys went along for numbers and "mMunch munch munch." And of course we couldn't grog on [drink a lot] because we were usually flying, if it was the last

20:00 cab of the day, we'd have a few sherbs [sherberts - drinks] too. But the one that really stands in my mind was we went through Western western New South Wales and we stopped at Narrandera, I can't remember the exact location without referring to the book, and were having our snack there, a good meal and Arthur Samuel gets up and says words to the effect of "Well, we're looking to the future and it's going to be

20:30 absolutely necessary with the rise of civil transport, air transport, that we'll have to look for alternative airfields for Sydney because of the increase in the traffic and so on and the nature of the weather. And the advice is this area looks like the most likely to establish such a Basebase, and it's going to bring all these work, this work and it will need maintenance of this and we'll have this and families and so on and so on." Yeah, yeah and we helped

21:00 and "have Have another beer." Then we get in the aeroplane and fly twenty minutes and do the same thing. Another opinion of Politicians politicians, yes. So there you have it. Right so we went from, I became, oh I didn't really fit into this VIP Unit unit because I was a non commissioned

21:30 member and the rest of the people seemed to be commissioned, so it caused logistical problems for the CO [Commanding Officer] and others. So there was an endeavour to dispose of me, particularly when the local newspaper, Smith's Weekly complained to Chifley about the Politicians politicians' joy riding

around in the RAAF aircraft

- 22:00 at great expense to the country when they had TAA [Trans Australia Airlines] and they could use their gold passes. TAA having just been formed. So the word came down, "okayOkay, no more Poli's pollies on the aircraft." And we were retained only for visiting dignitaries and the visiting dignitaries were good catches. I remember this, there was the Lord and Lady, I can't remember
- 22:30 the exact name, but he had his man and she had her lady and they had the son and daughter. And every time we went, as we did on this trip, we went to Tasmania, Government Government House House provided the goodies which came on and the valet provided the cooking and all that, which was shared with the Crewcrew. And they were lovely people really, and South Australia, West Australia, all
- 23:00 these places the vittles vitals [food] were provided by the Government Government HouseHouse, best in flight grub [food] I've had for ages. Anyway with the whistle blower on the TAA I got shunted, and I was shunted a few weeks after my 4th fourth engagement and I bleated like a stuffed pig but I still had to go. And I got up to Schofields in New South Wales which was the 36 Transport Squadron
- 23:30 and I thought "Wwell, instead of being this far away from home I may as well go the whole hog." So the Squadron squadron had an attachment in Townsville and the idea was you stayed up there for a month and then they swapped it over with other Crewcrew. And I said "Well, I'll volunteer for permanent duty, I'll stay up there." So they agreed to that and I stayed at Townsville, and enjoyed life. We used to do the milk
- 24:00 run up to Port Moresby with the Air air Officer officer Commanding commanding and so on. I was, siting there enjoyed enjoying this life and the message came up;, "youYou, you and you return to Basebase." So we got the aircraft, on a routine changeover for servicing and went down to Schofields and they said "You're going over to the Berlin Air lLift on detachment.", "Oh yeah okay, where's that?" "Oh you'll be sent
- 24:30 over.", "gGo get needles and passports." and all the rest. And we get assembled, numbers I've forgotten, ninety perhaps, sixty, ninety. Anyway we get trundled down in a bus to Mascot and I ring up my fiancée and say "Well, put everything on hold I don't know when I'll be seeing ya." and "oh Oh oh, no!" and off we went. But
- 25:00 not that night, we had to find alternative accommodation because the aircraft loused up [broke down]. And then we took off on this Constellation aircraft and I think it was five days, five, six days, time just merged into one. We sort of went Singapore, Dumdum[?], Karachi, Cairo,
- 25:30 Gallipoli and London, I think that was the flight. And the aircraft was modern but the seating was very cramped and you spent long hours with your knees up under your chin and no in-flight movies, very limited in-flight rations, and when you arrived anywhere, because you were travelling West west it was always breakfast.
- 26:00 So everywhere we went it was breakfast, breakfast.... eggs and bacon, breakfast, eggs and bacon, breakfast. And we arrived in London and it was day was dawning, it was into the dawn, and the most magnificent sight I've seen was the English countryside was glistening with the dew or rain, whichever, with the sunlight on it and it looked like someone's front garden. All
- 26:30 these prim, privet windrows hedgerows separating the fields, the little tops of trees, oh it was just so magnificent. And yet there were people living there and they'd been bombed out and all the rest of it. Right, well, having landed in London we were shunted out to, oh Dishforth, Bassingbourne Bassinvorn, no Bassingbourne Bassinvorn this time, Dishforth was a later date, Bassingbourne Bassinvorn and
- 27:00 there we were feed out to do various training, BABS [Blind Approach Beacon System] course up on the wash, that's a little bit out of the eEast Coast coast of England. And BABS was Blind Approach Beacon System, where you fed the Pilot pilot in on a blind approach using a radar screen and a signal coming from a beacon. And once we graduated from that went back and
- 27:30 did some work on Dakotas, and then took a Dakota over to Lubeck which was in Northern northern Germany on the Baltic Sea, an old pirate port. And started operating out of there after a quick briefing and it used to be eight hours on and twelve hours off I think it was, something
- 28:00 in that order, then eight hours and twelve, and it was a rotating shift we just, you know day night, day night. And we used to fly an aircraft with a separation of about 3 minutes, depending on the weather and so on. And because of different Basesbases, 3 three corridors were fed but on our particular corridor, the Northern northern corridor, we had 3three Bases bases being fed into this corridor and aircraft had different speeds and different
- 28:30 distance to travel to the corridor. So we had the combination of aircraft flying over us, that were going to get to the beacon three minutes ahead of us. And then they'd be onto the runway and taxied off. Anyway when your turn came you'd come into the beacon, turn down and turned down onto the approach, a, (a number of aircraft crashed into the Gatow [?] Lake which was on the short side of the runway), , run down the
- 29:00 runway, turn off on the taxiway back and nose to tail where the truck were waiting and they'd unload all

the goodies. Which consisted of a lot of coal, a lot of flour, a lot of basic commodities and in return we bought out people and manufactured goods, electric motors and various other items. On one day I think everyone in the shift carried in condoms, aircraft load of condoms,

29:30 I suppose they didn't want another War war I don't know, but there was a reason for them I guess. And we risked our butts for that I guess. Anyway this went on night and day, day and night and we'd do a fortnight on and then 4 four days off, a fortnight and so this whole rotational thing went. And I believe it was organised by an

30:00 Ex ex-New Zealand guy and he did a marvellous job. But while we were doing this the rusties Rusksies [Russians] weren't very happy because we were closing them down, they wanted to keep us out, but we were saying "uUp your shirt." without really knowing why. And they would issue in accordance with International Agreement, they would issue....

30:30 **Right so you were talking about the Berlin Airlift?**

Yep well we'd have these leaves and go over to England and have the 4 four days off. And of course in England there was a large shortage of men due to the Warwar, so if you went to a dance, you had ladies' tap dances, ladies' choice dances, ladies' this, and you were nearly pulled, you were treated as objects. And it was very

31:00 nice actually. And I remember on one occasion I was on leave when a mate went up to the Black Boy Hotel [Inn] in Nottingham and went to a dance and met a young lady and being close to Christmas time she invited me home to her parents' place and I went along and had a nice meal and then, "Oh, what are you doing

31:30 tonight?", I said "Oh' I'd better go home.", "Oh no, it's quite cold outside, it's starting to snow, perhaps you'd best stay and we'll make up a bed on the settee." says they. "Oh, alright." and I thought my mate would understand if I didn't turn up so I stayed behind and mum and dad were, "Oh best we get to bed now." and they disappear and the young lady gets the call "Oh you're coming

32:00 now, don't be long." so she wasn't long and went upstairs and I got into my jamies [pyjamas] and nestled down in front of the remaining fire on the settee and the next thing, "pitter Pitter patter, pitter patter" and young lady arrived to see if I'm suitably comfortable. And of course I wasn't totally comfortable so we nestled down to get warm and things were looking encouraging and the next thing I hear a squeak on the stairs and I thought "Ooh no!"

32:30 and I saw I was being set up for a passport, so I quickly escaped from the clutches and dressed and left the house and went back to the pub. Having to walk 'cause there was no bloody taxi or anything but fortunately it wasn't that far out from the centre. But that was the sort of scenario at that time. Another incident where was it, Nottingham, I forget the township I was in, however

33:00 I went to a dance, had a very good time, kept the young lady out quite late. When I rang the next day the mother was very angry with me for keeping her out so late, "Wwell why doesn't the father speak to me?" "Bbecause he's in South Africa." so I got the message and I decided to go home to the house to

33:30 say my apologies to the mother and let her assess the character I had so she wouldn't be at all worried. And things became quite favourable and then I rang up and said on the Saturday, that was the Friday, Thursday, Friday and on the Saturday I rang up and said "Where's Bessie?" or whatever her name was., "Oh she's working", . " I said "What do you mean working, it's Saturday?", "Oh she works such and such,

34:00 they all do." I'd forgotten they have a market day or something. And I said "Oh well, I'm just seeing if she'd like to go to the afternoon dance." and "Oh well, she won't knock off until six o'clock" and "Oh well I may see her after work then." " "I may see her." no commitment. So I go to the dance and meet a very nice German lass who spoke perfect English and we discussed future holidays in

34:30 Ireland and that type of thing and had a meal after the dance and was walking down Main Street and out of the doorway of this Emporium emporium steps Bessie, oh she was in full flight "Mummy rang up and said you were going to meet me I've been waiting here for an hour and so and so." The German girl took my arm and said "Oh come on Bob we'll miss the train." and dragged me away, gee I loved her

35:00 for that. So life goes on once again. And life was just like that all through the time. So you had your German side and your English side and in the middle you worked hard a bit.

So how were people in London recovering from the war?

With difficulty. Tthere was one occasion I was sitting in Hyde Park and

35:30 I had a radio which I'd procured in Paris, a little portable thing about yah yay big and a chap came along with a paper bag and his lunch and said "Do you mind if I sit down?" 'cause I was listening to the radio. And he took an interest in the radio and we're got talking and what have you and he said "Why don't you come out to my place for the weekend?" and he lived out in an estate just on the perimeter of London,

36:00 what is it choir near there, girls' choir, can't think of the name, The the something girls' choir. Anyway

that's the region and he had a wife and child and I thought "Yyeah, fair call." And when I came over on my next visit, it was arranged that I go to this home and I called into the Headquarter headquarters where they had a canteen and I obtained tins of tinned meat and

- 36:30 fruit and various other tinned goods and that. And I filled a parachute bag with it, to pay for my weekend's accommodation at this place and I got out there and greeted the wife and very warmly received and the little boy delighted to have a stranger around. And I said "Look I've bought a few goodies here for you." and they were like children poring over these goodies and the wife's saying, "Oh look we can put this away for Harry's birthday,
- 37:00 this will do well for such and such." And she was still measuring the goodies she had in front of her for special occasions because they didn't have the plentifulness that we had. And there's one thing about them, I never found out until then, how many ways you could cook a potato, there was mashed potatoes, hash potatoes, chip potatoes, backed potatoes, oh it went on and on. And over in Germany same thing and the first German
- 37:30 phrase I used was nicks cantroplin danka ["nichts kartoffeln danke"] which means "no No potatoes." so you just accepted your horsemeat without potatoes and lots of sauce.

And what about the attitudes of the Germans after the war?

Ingrossiating, Ingratiating; they were trying to re-establish themselves as people. And I think, actually I heard a tune only last night, Noel Coward's Knoll Corits, dDon't Be

- 38:00 Beastly to the Germans, or something to that effect and he was saying that it's not their fault, they just followed the leaders who did all the stuff. But the strange thing is that my son is married to a German and she's a very capable women woman and I don't know, he possibly listened to the propaganda. But at the time I wrote home from Germany and telling my mother about what life was like
- 38:30 and I said "Wwell the best union I can visualise is for a German girl to marry an Australian, they can work their butt off and we can enjoy them." and so my son must of have got the message because he married one, and she works her butt off for sure. They're honest workers. But mind you there were some shonks [criminals] around, the black market trade
- 39:00 bought out the devious ones. And you'd go down to Berlin and the end of the taxiway when you were waiting to be unloaded, the trucks would come along and along would come a gang to go "Cchoomp choomp..." and get all the stuff out. But one of them that had enormous windcheaters, he was the money character and the dealer and you'd,
- 39:30 might have tins of cocoa, things about yah yay big and cigarettes and various other knick knacks and they'd get swallowed up at a bartering price and what have you. But it was too dicey [dangerous] with the Police police around and the lady I knew with the big blue eyes had a brother who had a VW [Volkswagen] taxi so I came to a deal that
- 40:00 he would call in and pick up myself and my parachute bag, when I returned from leave and take me into see my dear one and then she could give me the money and my bag and I'd be happy as long as the commission was there and all the rest of it. So that was the point. Now that same lass lived in a bombed out house,
- 40:30 much bomb damage still evident, and she had a mother who was a typical large frowhrau, very big womenwoman, she would embrace me and I'd thought I'd gone deaf, there was that much around you it envelops you and then "Ooh Robbie." oh God the mind's still numbed. Anyway there was a daughter who had a
- 41:00 sister and also had a illegitimate child from a English Solider solider and a girlfriend, and they all lived in this bloody enormous bed. And that's where I learnt about a doona, and I came home and told them the values of a doona, this is in 1949, "Wwhat are you talking about?" "Ooh you mean an Ida eiderdown.", Wwe had these covers alls and toss ons. But doonas eventually broke through when the migrants
- 41:30 started coming out. Anyway the lass over there when there was a function on at the Basebase, we used to have a, I think it was a monthly dance and you'd invite the girls from the village in and a band, good time, knees up deal, everyone would have a bit of fun, but come supper time the girls they all had big plastic bags inside their purses
- 42:00 and.....

Tape 5

- 00:31 **I want to take you back a bit and just I wanted to ask you about your step fatherstepfather, you said that he had**

01:00 **either a best mate or a brother who was also in World War I?**

Best mate yeah.

Did they talk at all about their experiences?

No.

Well that being the case what did you know about World War I, did you learn about it in school at all, what was your idea of it?

It happened, it came, it went. We went to Anzac Day ceremonies without any information, the dialogues

01:30 didn't subscribe to the education, they were just oh, self-gratifying presentations. I was there and "blah Blah blah blah." I'm not denigrating their acts, I mean it was sheer slaughter in those days, because of the distance to medical attention, the lack of protective clothing, the nature of the weaponry

02:00 in use, all these things, and the congregation of Troopstroops. I mean they were just one bomb and you'd wipe out a dozen, well you can do that very easily today. But no all those aspects of War war never came to my consciousness, I never had a conscious thought about them. I mean when I was asking chaps who wanted to join the Air air Force force alright, if you are successful and you graduate as a Pilot pilot

02:30 and I say to you, "I want you to go out and devastate that village with two nate palm bombs and as you fly away from the village you look over your shoulder and you see absolute carnage, with bodies screaming out of boiling infernos on fire." and perhaps if you were close enough you'd hear them screaming. Now you go home with that image in your mind, how do you rationalise it with your continued life?. "Oh God

03:00 made me do it, that was a typical answer." they rationalised in that way. You don't do it, it's because you're ordered to do it or God made you do it, or whatever the case may be. Now perhaps, is this on, oh perhaps I shouldn't comment but I had a young recruit come in one day, this is well after the War war and he was a very unsuccessful in his tests and his presentation and what have you so I had to let him down.

03:30 I wanted to let him down gently so there was no scars and he didn't feel that he was any less a person, and I said "And tell me Harry, what brings you here, how did you turn to the Air air Forceforce?" "Oh, God told me." I said "Oh, is that right, well just a minute." and I bowed my head and after a while I said, "Look I've just been in touch and God said he made a mistake you're to go to the Armyarmy.", "Oh okay" off he went,

04:00 so. True story, Colin [interviewer].

I believe you, knowing you as I do now, I believe you. But tell me on that subject did you have any religious instruction when you were young?

I have a certificate, 2 two certificates; I'm a qualified Bible bible School schoolTeacher teacher at the Church of Christ, not the Christ Church the Church of Christ,

04:30 which is an established, I don't know what it is actually. But I lived next to it in Abbotsford under the shadow of the Collingwood Town Hall. And I went along there, they had occasional parties, I got lollies [candy], I got Christmas presents and knick knack things, but I never went swimming in their big pond. That was for people who took the faith; I wasn't going to let them wet my head [baptise me]. And one day whilst sitting in a congregation

05:00 and being lectured to, anyway whatever was doing, I had a little bent pin and an elastic band and I went "Zzap" and his goody two shoes son was sitting beside him. And I just accidentally happen to hit him here, "Sscream, screech, yelp.", "Wwhat happened?", "mMust have been a bee." says he. But God knew.

05:30 **Did you believe in God?**

No, but I give great credence to the existence of a higher, not being, a higher system of, pattern of things, otherwise it wouldn't come together. I mean I have lovely flowers and what have you in the garden and a lady friends says "Oh you've got these beautiful flowers Bob, what do you do?" I said "It's

06:00 TLC" [tender loving care]. Sshe said "TLC?" "Yyou don't do anything to your garden." I said "That's right, total lack of care." I said "It does what nature wants it to, if you pull it up and it grows again it's a weed, and if you let it continue to grow it becomes something that becomes popular in the nurseries instead." "Aof a weed is an unloved plant that's all it is." "So let it go and pick out the ones you want and banish the others." Oh

06:30 dear.

Right tell me about, tell me a little bit more about Melbourne during the Warwar. How did the onset of War war change things for the average person?

Mobility, choice of food;, you were limited to basic rations. None of these things affected me because

- 07:00 I was born in 1925 and that means I was fourteen when the War war broke out, yes fourteen, so fourteen what am I doing, I'm working for a living, that's one thing I guess, but I would have done that anyway. I guess it made work easier in as much as labour became short therefore you were able to shop around. In fact at one time with this company I was
- 07:30 the tTextile Mechanic mechanic with, I had another to do with the boss and I said, "Wwell up your shirt." and I'm out the door and I walked over the road to another factory and started straight away. I worked until lunch timelunchtime, went out for my lunch and my prior boss was waiting for me and made me an offer I couldn't refuse so I went back. That's the trade union negotiation I think. But it was the
- 08:00 circumstance and I took advantage of it. Now early I was asked about CommunismCommunism. During that era there was a chap in Richmond where they,with a building about the size of 2 two double garages, beautiful workshop, everything immaculate, all the tools that you could ask for. And how I know? Bbecause he did some modification to the machinery I was operating on, I went round to him and so on.
- 08:30 And he was a Communist Communist, wouldn't employ anyone. , Tterrific tradesman, really a good tradesman, mid- years guy, but he practiced and preached CommunismCommunism. Strangely I knew a chap in Sydney, now deceased, and had a very interesting story to tell, I cannot identify him, although his widow is also deceased. But he started out
- 09:00 very poor, put his life on the line with a loan, waited for the Depression to pass and emerged and grew on the strength of the basis that his loan was paid off and he had the necessary equipment he had to get on with it, and he finished up a multi- millionaire. And that's not just one or two thousand; he was a multi- millionaire. He was a very benevolent guy but only the circumstance that
- 09:30 you would not divulge his name otherwise you'd be struck from the Willwill. Now the thing is that he died out of his own pig-headedness, but he was a true Communist Communist in as much as he to initially would not have anything to do with the workers or anything like that, he was against all the other things.
- 10:00 But he made all this money. Now there was one story he told me one night about, oh, he was finally bought out of his business for a very large sum and the company who took him over offered him a job with high remuneration to go and manage it. He said, "I can't even spend the interest on the money you have given me, so on your bike." He got bored with being idle so he bought a small- run down
- 10:30 manufacturing business, with his approach to industry it became a thriving business, and on one occasion 2 two little boys came to the back door while he was speaking with the foreman and he said, "Go and see what they want." and the foreman came back and said, "Oh they've got this bit of metal they want a hole put in for their billy cart, is it alright if I do that?" and the guy said, "Yes, sure, go on I'll wait." So
- 11:00 the foreman went and got the piece of metal and he went to the drill press and took out the drill then went to the tool store and got the right drill to put in this bit of metal and drilled the hole and came back to the boss and said, "Well what will I charge them?." and the man said, "Charge them a zack [6 pence]." and the foreman said "Oh, you mean bugger." and Stan said "Charge them a zack and see me after work." And the foreman came in and he said
- 11:30 "I'm a mean bugger am I?" he said "How much an hour do I pay you?", "Oh two and sixpence" or whatever it was, and he said, "Okay how long did the job take you?" "Oh about 10 minutes." "And you had to go and take the drill out etc, go to the store and replace it etc, etc and all that cost me 20 minutes which works out to such and such and I only asked for a zack." So the sign went up all over the
- 12:00 factory, 'Work for Harry for a zack an hour.'

What's a zack?

I didn't say his name I used not deplumes nom-de-plumes, I didn't tell you his name.

No, no but what is a zack?

Sixpence, 5 cents.

Right.

Sorry I forget there's a gap in these things.

That's okay I understand you most of the time.?

Like I asked a bloke if he knew what feet were and I almost said "use Use them."

12:30 No trouble, what about food rationing - you must have noticed the difference there?

Oh food rationing, a barter system. I mean a lot of people grew their own vegetables and we bartered on that basis. And in respect of my mother she had skills with her hands and that and she could sew up an apron or something from a piece of material which came from some other source. So we'll say for a

13:00 zack she was able to get so many carrots and so many cabbages and so on by this barter system. But in terms of going to the store, now a mate of mine his father had a farrier business, I think is the term for it, it was a chaff and hay and straw and chick peas and all that sort of stuff, they still exist today I think one in Hawthorn. And included

13:30 among his many goodies were potatoes, and when I ran away from home I stored my knapsack with potatoes and during the night I light a fire and rolled the potatoes in the ashes and cooked them and then sat down and had a nice meal. Then got on my bike and rode on. And between 4.30 on night and 7.30 the next morning, I'd covered a hundred and seventy-nine miles and I arrived at the doorstep of my, some relatives of mine who lived up in the

14:00 bush and, "Oh my God" so I was in trouble. Age then? I must have been twelve.

How long had you run away for?

I lasted a fortnight, they pinched on me, I was heading for Sydney and they rang up. And the money was made available for me to come home on the train and I refused it and rode home. I had to promise I'd go and I was seen down the road and escorted

14:30 for so many miles, I finally hitched a ride on a truck and got home.

Did you smoke at all?

Yes, heavily.

When did you start?

I started, no I first sampled, on the steps of the church by winning a packet of five Temple Bar

15:00 cigarettes and a penny machine, a slot machine in the local fish and chip shop. You put your penny in and it rolled along and you had to manipulate it to go into the right slot, and it came down and low and behold I got these five Temple Bars. So I shared them with my mate and yes, "Ccough, cough." and wasn't a very pleasant experience so I gave cigarettes away until I got to

15:30 Germany and cigarettes were that damn cheap you couldn't afford not to smoke them. Now there's a very interesting funny story, on of the funniest stories you're going to hear against myself. My friend, Wireless wireless Operator operator in fact on the Crew crew, he stayed in Germany after I left, because I was picked out with 4 four other chaps to fly a Bristol Freighter aircraft home,

16:00 this is ahead of the main contingent. So we leave town and arrive home after fifteen days, very pleasant journey home actually wouldn't fly of a night timenight-time because we weren't instrumented for it. And some two months later the main contingent arrived back at the base and out come all the guys including Signalmansignalman, Wireless wireless Operator operator; "How ya going Pete?" "Oh great." blah blah blah,

16:30 and I said "How are things, do you tie everything up for me?" he He said, "As a matter of fact I've got a bone to pick with you." he said "You know that sheila you left up the duff [pregnant]?" I said "What are you talking about?" he He said, "You know the one I mean?" I said, "Nothing to do with me mate, never had any relationships like that, no." "Oh yes, come on." "Well get on get on with your story, what about this sheila?" he He said "Well after you left they bought this circus into town with a big hurdy gurdie herty gerty Ferris wheel thing and I went in there myself and she happened to be there that night", ." I said "I

17:00 suppose you were with her?" "No, no." "Anyway I went on this Ferris wheel and while it was going around it stopped at the top with a jerk and the next thing she started to have this kid." "And by the time they got it to the bottom it had been delivered and it was still alive and I rushed over and looked in and there it was looking up at me and it looked back, and I said, "Have you got a cigarette mate, and if that's not your kid I'll go eat it." So that's

17:30 Peter, but why that was punch line was we used to get this free ration of cigarettes, so many cigarettes from the Brits, well they were still on rationing and you got so many. Now for what we got, round tin of whatever, whatever it was it was nothing to buy, sixpence a can or something, but we could flog it off for up to a pound on the market. So at the end of the month or the ration period which I think

18:00 was fortnightly I'm not certain now, but the catch cry would go out, "Hhey you got a cigarette mate?", "Hhaven't got a fag would you"? And so on, so that's why the joke came into it. And yep, very funny stuff.

And what about drinking alcohol?

Hmm.

Drinking alcohol?

Yes I learnt not to drink gin, got very ill on gin over in Germany.

18:30 I suppose it was schnapps really, I don't know but it was very potent stuff oh. No I was not a great

drinker, I couldn't drink beer, it bloated me too much so I just had the old spirits whenever I could.

Did you get an alcohol ration when you were in the force?

Oh it was available in the Messmess, don't know if it was rationed, didn't enter into my mind because I didn't have the demand. I

19:00 started to mentioned before about the fortnight, monthly fortnightly dance in the Messmess, Sergeantssergeants', NCOs' [Non-Commissioned Officers] Messmess. And we'd bring the big blue eyedblue-eyed girls in to have a dance and a fun night and a band and so on. And we'd turn on supper and these girls would come in, and they were dolled up to the nines [dressed up], and they had the big purses and inside the purse was a plastic lining and when the supper came on

19:30 they filled that up to take home for their kids, and mothers and fathers or not - the fathers weren't generally evident. But...

What sort of suppers did you have?

Which?

What sort of suppers did you have, you talking sandwiches or cold cuts?

Oh, we'd have sandwiches and cakes; see their they're big on cakes over in Germany. They're, pastry and that is big time and that was always available, I don't think there's much in it. My daughter-in-law makes beautiful pastries,

20:00 some of her vanilla slices, wow, and those funny things that are dipped in chocolate on either end, and all wigglye pastry in between, I don't know what you call them, there's a special name.

Éclair?

Hmm.

An Éclair?

Similar but there more of a biscuity type thing, therethey're strictly continental. Anyway there was one incident where this deserted

20:30 wife I was looking after was coming to the dance, and she was the one who looked after, or whose brother looked after my trading for me and kept the gap between the goodies and the baddies and what have you. And so as a reward I took her into a, oh an equivalent to Myer, David Jones, Target [department stores] perhaps and

21:00 I had a promenade in different frocks in front of me and picked out the frock she was to wear that night, and then took her to the hairdressers and told them what style of couture I thought would be desirable and then she turned up looking like I wanted her to. Which was a bit different to the grotty stuff that she was wearing as a result of the poor circumstance of the country in general. So it was there. I still have a pair of ice skates

21:30 and boots, boots made to measure and ice skates which I paid five pound for in Germany at that time, and I've only worn them a few times. Do you take a size nine?

I do actually.

Yeah can you ice skate?

I can't ice skate.?

Oh bad luck. You don't do you?

No I don't, I play cricket though.?

Do you? That's another aspect I can talk about the

22:00 rides in the pine forests. Days off when there's a horse riding place, and entangler equestrian [?] style place that's set up in the pine forest next to the Air air Basebase. The Air air Base base was multi - storey barracks as typical of the German Militarymilitary, basement and 3 three storey and an attic I think it was. The lake, and we had a guy who

22:30 was determined to go skating although it was forbidden because the ice was very thin, anyway he walked off the end of the jetty and got to about 2 the paces and disappeared, he came back but....oh dear. And then we had a big marquee for our flight meals, pre- flight and post post-flight you'd go and have your breakfast there or what have you, then go out into the aircraft and roll off and

23:00 away you go. Not much formality, nothing much at all. And one indelible memory is at GatowGattough there was an American mobile coffee truck run by the American Red Cross, and their coffee was beautiful, beautiful, never tasted it since, tried everywhere, don't know what the mixture was or anything, but it was absolutely beautiful.

- 23:30 Travelled through the city, from the air you could see the devastation, from the ground you could see it but not on the scope because it was more localised. You have a building the size of Melbourne Town Hall perhaps which is nothing but a pile of rubble and you have women, because there's not many men around, you'd have women who were
- 24:00 sorting out the rubble and good bricks or masonry would be put into one stack and the rubbish into another, or into the trolley as the case may be. Now when the pressure came on with this airlift business they, the French came to the party and offered a site in their sector at Fronhow Fronau [Tegel?] to put a new strip in. And a new strip was built in a matter of weeks, based on the rubble being carted in, in a continuous
- 24:30 stream of tucks, dumped, pushed over the area and sheet foot rollers coming along and clamping it down. And I think we landed there, in well about 3 three weeks after it started, didn't seem to be long at all, but it was all rough, it wasn't a smooth tarmac or anything. But that got the monkey off the back at GatowGatough, because the Americans were trying to get larger aircraft in and Gatow was asphalt felt. But they goofed in as
- 25:00 much as they bought in the oh, the very big one, Globemaster Globe Master, yeh I think it was the Globemaster Globe Master, umpteen stories high and it broke up all the runway and in particular the taxiways and they couldn't put it on the taxiway they had to hold it off the taxiway. And of course in doing that they blocked the traffic coming in, because the traffic was coming in on this 3 minutethree minute interval or less, and this guy would land,
- 25:30 this guy waiting at active, as soon as he went past, before he landed, as soon as he went past, you'd move out behind him and he'd roll on and as soon as he turned off this one would roll and take off. And it was a neat as that, until we had an accidental something untoward. Then when we had fog it became a bit more separation.

Were there many accidents?

But they trundled some stuff in there, hmm.

Were there many accidents?

- 26:00 A number, we lost one guy at our base at Lubeck Lupick, there was a couple on the approach to GatoughGatow, there was a couple at Templehoff, which is the Ccivil aAir Basebase, we didn't, you know, these things happen. The guy we lost wasn't with us on the detachment he was over there on
- 26:30 exchange with this 24th Commonwealth Squadron, where I subsequently went to later in life. Anyway they came in over the runway, over at the end of the runway they had to avoid going over the Russian Bboarder, our airfield was here, so they turned rather tight and similar to the other accident I told about, the tight turn and come
- 27:00 down and "bBoom boom." That was the sort of game we were playing where they had the pressure on this area, to sorting out things, particularly when there was bad weather you can't suddenly appear out of the sky and say there it is, "Bboom and down." you've got to make the approach and feel the your way into it. Then I started to tell you earlier about, they were required to send out notices to Air Manairmen or nothems others when there's any
- 27:30 activity, all our vehicles are when there's any activity affecting an airway or air movements. But the Russians they sent them out, but they always arrived twenty-four hours late, it was just a hiccup in the communications. They'd advise you that there was going to be ground- to- air firing in corridor such and such out of position such and such, "oh Oh that's what we saw yesterday." "oh Oh that explains it." Then we had them playing tag, coming straight at you
- 28:00 and either going up or down or braking as the case may be. So I personally and other used to lower the trailing area which was a lead weight of about that dimension on this great piece of cable, which is only like an eighth of an inch thick, and several hundred feet and you'd let it out. And they stoped flying under you because if the lead ball hit the canapé canopy there they're going to have plenty of Perspex,
- 28:30 but if it went into the propeller, worse still and all we lost was a bit of wire, so it was cat and mouse a bit. And we played little games like scanning across the frequency of the local broadcast station. If you were listening to 3LO [radio station] or equivalent, you'd hear "ehh, ohh..."...Jjust put a beat across it and
- 29:00 spoil to the propaganda a bit, all fun and games, nothing serous.

So during this time what exactly was your role in the plane?

Navigator.

What would that involve?

That involves getting from A to B and knowing where you are. A story perhaps, I was at odds with a

- 29:30 Ssenior Officer officer and flying from Japan to Hong Kong and we were just off the Mosa coast and the American fleet came up to have a look at us, and this guy said "Geez, what do we do now?" I said "Sit

bloody still and look straight ahead." 'cause you'd got these buggers with boom booms.

Boom booms?

Cannon and the like, and there they're a bit

30:00 trigger happy and particularly the Australian emblem wouldn't be too well known to them. So we got through that group and we marching on and, "Where are we now Bob?" I said "Oh such and such", ." "Can I see the map?" I said "Sure." he He said "I can't see that?" I said "You're not meant to, you ask me I tell you", ."

30:30 "Oh if you adopt that attitude I'll take over." I said "Be my guest", ." "I'm only joking." I mean when you're surrounded with five hours of water it's, you've got to know it or you don't. So that's what I do, or did. I think I did it rather well, got a few assessments that support that opinionated statement. No whatever I did I tried to do well.

31:00 It's like in life the easy way out is to tell the truth and you don't have to worry about what you've told them, cause the truth will always out. Cause if you tell lies you'll trip yourself somewhere up along the line.

Before you were sent to Germany what did you know of the Russian Blockade?

What did I know of the Russian?

Blockade?

Not a great deal, just that it was a pain in the

31:30 arse, and it gave us a chance to be there and do something. Oh when we got to Berlin we'd wander down through the Tear Tiergarten Gardens which had been stripped of its trees from Wartimewartime, and got to this structure in the middle of it which had a mosque on it which was shattered with shells, shrapnel whatever, and managed to get a few pieces of it. There somewhere round the house

32:00 and then wander on over to the Brandberg Brandenburg Gate where you had the Americans on one side and the Russians on the other side and you would negotiate things such as watches. And these Russian peasants were very well educated, they knew before you bought a watch you had to find out it had crystals in it. So you had to open up the back and show them the crystals. What they didn't

32:30 know was how to tell the difference between a crystal and nail polish, so.

So tell me a bit more about that, you obviously did a fair bit of bargaining and exchange on the black market. What sort of things did you do?

Ohh, I didn't do it generally I had my lady friend's brother do it. I was a wholesaler and he did the distribution and

33:00 I gave him his cut and I took mine. But it was as funny as all hell, we were on the way back from England, the chaps that had been on this break, and were diverted by bad weather to an airfield, Schleswig-HolsteinSledgewood Holstein, which is the Headquarters headquarters of the Bboarder Patrol patrol for the Schleswig-Holstein Sledgewood Holstein area. So here we are sitting on a cabin full of contraband if you like, and

33:30 we all had to pull it out of the aircraft because the aircraft had to go back and do other things and we'd be picked up or taken care of. So here's this great pile of luggage out in the tarmac and were all anxiously peering through the window to see who's going near it and who's going to do what. But my parachute bag had a code on it which I could see from a distance so I knew which one was mine, I didn't have my name or anything on it, and

34:00 when the time came I was able to go back and pick it up. Can I get that....

Before we were interrupted you were just explaining your role in the black market?

My role was only minimal.

No you were telling us the story about the luggage on the tarmac?

Oh yes well we looked at this pile and the word came that we

34:30 had to de-bus, or en-bus I should say, and we'd be taken to the local railway station and then transported the remainder of the journey to Lubeck. So we gingerly eyed the situation and one at a time went and grabbed our bags and made no false moves just in case we were under observation and "oOh sorry." and then picked up the right bag and moved on. All's well that ends well. But not like one of the, and

35:00 elder citizen in our group who became a Rrovo [?]provost [Military Police] Officerofficer, arrived at English customs on the way back from one of our breaks and said, the customs guy said, "Oh anything to declare?" and And "No, no." and "Yeah, okay well off you go." and the said gentleman was walking off

and the cuckoo clock he had

- 35:30 went, "cCuckoo cuckoo." The Customs Officers officers said "Are you certain you haven't forgotten anything sir?" anyway Anyway the guy said, "Oh yes I forgot, look I got you a bottle of whiskey here." simple as that. And strangely coming back from America, this is on another trip, on Customs customs triggers the mind, that's how my mind works, on triggers. Because of bad weather we were diverted into Northern
- 36:00 Ireland and we had to sit in the aircraft for about 2 two hours waiting for customs to come out of town to us. The weather was fairly foul....anyway he got that out of the way. Coming back through Ireland we had to wait these two hours for customs to come out and I was in flying suit when I got off the aircraft and they took us right through the deal,
- 36:30 anything to declare, "yes Yes I've got this." and so happened I just as a gimmick I'd bought back a box of soap powder this big, which the American kids (UNCLEAR) and I thought I'd bring it home just as a joke. And I had some other minor items for my children and so on, "yes Yes well okay that's going to cost you six pounds seven and sixpence." or whatever it was, I said "Oh look, I haven't got that, just put it in bonds I'll take it when I leave the country?" "What do you mean?" I said "I'm Australian I'm not going to
- 37:00 pay excise here, just put it in bonds and I'll pay it when I go", . " "Why didn't you bloody well say that?" Had to tear it up because they, we didn't pay excise. So there.

You mentioned before when you were with a certain young lady and you heard a squeak on the stairs and you suspected a set up for a passport what did you mean by that?

Well passport,

- 37:30 they were looking for extradites from the island. If you got a new settler out in the Colony's colonies they grab him. In other words I was in the market for a shot gunshotgun marriage. So I bailed out.

Right so someone would force you to marry the girl and....?

Oh well if they.....

Get her out of the country?

If they found you in a compromising situation, straight away I'm gone; the supposition is the girl is

- 38:00 pregnant and if not pregnant at least she's spoilt, so what do you do, and the easy way out is run. During these ladies, tap dances, ladies choice dances and that you'd be waltzing around with a very nice lady and a nicer one would come along and put the tap on your partner, and when she moved into the place the line would
- 38:30 be, "oh Oh thank God for that I was waiting for someone to relieve me." and "how How lucky I could get there was someone like you." and away you go.

Did you speak any German?

Not a great deal, I spoke enough to get by. Even now "Was ist mit dir los? Du bist verrückt!" [phonetic] nish swetenzi deitch, and fossi lossmithda freezderuke, which means "Wwhat's the matter with you, you're bloody mad."

- 39:00 That was a negotiating phrase. When they tried to negotiation on any deals you were doing. And it's like in Japan the first thing I learnt was numerology, what their numbers meant, because they had 2 two prices, one for the locals and one for the tourists and the Forcesforces.

Tape 6

- 00:31 **I'm interested to know apart from going to the dances and various dealings that you had in Germany, what sort of things would you do to relax in your time off?**

On these 4 four days breaks to England,

- 01:00 once again the weather was a dominator. But on a good break period we'd hop on the train and go to no wherenowhere in particular. Just buy a ticket to the next major city or whatever it was, which was not very expensive. But on the way if the train stopped at a village, we may say, "Hey this looks alrightall right, let's stop here." So we'd stop over for a night or two depending on the village, and usually we were
- 01:30 welcomed and fated fated because we were new conversation, we were strangers, we had stories to tell that they didn't know and so on. It was quite a good way to spend the 4 four days just traipsing around through the villages like that. On other occasions at the behest to the Royal Society or whatever it may be, invitations were issued to go and stay at some stately home. You know you walk 3 three miles to get

up the front garden,

02:00 they were quite interesting, because of the location I guess, more than what was in the home or anything like that. I've sailed miniature, model yachts on park lakes in suburbs of London, when staying with people, all manner of things, it was only 9 nine months, can't do much in 9nine months.

02:30 **How often did you get leave to England?**

About every fourteen days I think we had 4 four days off. So that's not bad, that's 4 four days, 8 eight days a month, nine by eight is fifty-six days so...

And what was your impression of general conditions in England at that time?

They'd suffered yes indeed, they'd suffered. The devastation once again was

03:00 fairly marked. But I'll say this that they seemed to be cleaning it up faster than the Germans, which was a good thing. The Germans' [destruction] was there almost as a Memorialmemorial, they just, well I guess they didn't have the manpower, they had the woman power. I remember going on a day off from Lubeck we went down to Hamburg on the train and we must have gone twenty-five miles past nothing but rubble, rubble these houses just

03:30 devastated. Because Hamburg was a secondary target, if you went into Europe to drop bombs and the weather was against you and anti- aircraft fire was impenetrable the losses were too great going in, whatever reason you didn't drop your load, you'd come back and let go on Hamburg which was a fairly busy port. But they certainly made a mess of the place and then this Lubeck place they'd obviously

04:00 made a mess, not a great mess but some of the boys got a bit lost I think, they thought they were bombing Hamburg and they were bombing Lubeck. Like one guy really got himself in trouble, he got to the peak at Berlin and instead of turning right he turned left. He got a hard time out of that one.

You

04:30 **must have in your time flying there, you must have had a few bumpy rides yourself and did you ever get lost?**

No, that was my life mate. You're never casual with that, if you're responsible for it you play it by hilt. Man is never lost; he's just temporarily unaware of his present situation.

Did you ever use that one

05:00 **in the air?**

No, it was straight forwardstraightforward. See in later life when I was in exchange with the RAF [Royal Air Force], well a run would be up through Iceland, sweep past Greenland come down into Newfoundland, cut across Hudson's Bay there and right across the North East Northwest Territories and cut in at Tulith [?],

05:30 which is the Western western most part of the lake system there, it's head of the lake it's called. Then you turn down and go through Minneapolouis, St Paul and Land land in Offit [?]. Now that did away with all the hullabaloo [trouble] of going through the American airway system, six minutes there, two minutes there and round here and up and down. And on one occasion it was a glorious autumn day and not a cloud

06:00 in the sky, took off and beneath us was this swirl of colour, autumn tones, and with the sun gleaming down you could see every water way, every riverlet, every lagoon, and the whole thing was just one gigantic mosque mosaic of, I think it's called a Westminster West Minister Carpet carpet or whatever. It's a sight that you could only capture in those circumstances, and I'll always remember that because it was

06:30 such a stunning array, oh yes. Anyway we get to the head of the lake and checked in and the man on the ground said, "Hey guy what sort of bird is that?" we told him, he said, "Oh man, sure a funny bird." he wasn't used to seeing the old clunkers and there we have it. On another occasion we were coming back through the

07:00 States and we got as far as Chicago and normally you would go around the lake with these two, three, ten minute legs and all the air traffic around there, and clear blue day, so called up and requested permission to break flight plan and fly visually across the lake and re-join at oh, Henry Ford's

07:30 place.....oh where was Henry Ford, Willow Bend, which is on the eastern side of this lake. It took us the rest of the trip to get back into the stream, they wouldn't put us back on the flight plan, not that we needed it, we just floated straight through because we could see everything. Again on another day going in clear blue sky and a light aircraft went "Wwhoof."

08:00 and god "God what was that?" and looked back, and through the dome you've got, "Ddon't know." so-called up and put in "Ana air safety incident" on the act. "Air safety, altitude such and such" and a voice came back, or the tower said "Roger." and a voice came back and said, "Tower such and such it wasn't me." and I got on my mike and I said "If you've got blue eyes it was you, you

08:30 bastard." Anyway he got away with it, some doctor or dentist or something floating round the countryside.

That was the bloke in the light aeroplane?

Yep. We were going into San Francisco and there was a traffic control strike on and they had amateur, Army army amateurs

09:00 replacing the pros [professionals], and we were coming in on an approach to a beacon and I was cleared on for safe 420 at an altitude of 10,000 feet and a guy coming the other way, same details, pooh. So called up and requested change of altitude and no that was taken etc etc, "well Well check your bloody books I'm moving." It's much like

09:30 up in Korea, you're in a stack, in bad weather and the Yanks are circling around as are we, and the next thing you hear one of them say, "Oh man I've had, it I'm coming down." and another voice "Well if you're coming down, I'm coming up." and an Australian voice says, "Well if you dare move, we're out of here" and we just split and go. Because the silly buggers just move without thought. Do you know in

10:00 Korea the Australians had a green card, which means they could fly in cloud, they had the flying experience of a thousand hours so they could sign their own authorisations and there was a third clause, "green card." "alt [alternative] experience." oh and "rank." The Americans would come in these great Stratocruisers and they weren't allowed to sign out, they had to wait for the Field field Operations operations Officer officer

10:30 to authorise their departure. And there are the guys who are sitting in this stack saying, "I'm going down, I'm coming up." and they didn't have it, they just trained them, they were expendable.

You mean they didn't have a thousand hours?

They didn't have a thousand hours; they were straight out of school so to speak. They didn't have the flying experience, they didn't have any instrument ratings, so they just had to sit there and wait for it all to open up. But you

11:00 flew around them and took care.

Look I want to talk a bit more about Korea soon, but let's finish off Germany. You were there for eighteen months?

Where?

In Germany?

No, nine months.

Nine months, alright then from there you were called back to Australia?

Yes a chap Reg Shadford,

11:30 I think Reg is in a retirement home, Merv Pegler, he's deceased and myself, almost deceased, and a guy named James who was on loan from the RAF who was a Flight flight Engineerengineer. And we ferried this Bristol Freighter, which was a big box carboxcar freighter, twin enginetwin-engine job and it wasn't designed to have a Navigator navigator so I was set up down the back with my own little table

12:00 and just sat there and away we went. And we slowly went at our way back home and I said hello to the folks, didn't tell them I was coming home just dropped in and said "G-day I'm back, gotta go, see ya" and away we went. Yep that was straight forwardstraightforward, very enjoyable trip home except it was at the time of the independence of India. And we went

12:30 into India at Delhi and they liked to have associations with autocracies, under the Poms [British] they'd been stamp lickers and the rest but now they had their own way. So A we were kept in the aircraft, locked in after they'd thrown a stink bomb in to fumigate us, we were locked in and sat on the tarmac in a temperature of a hundred

13:00 plus for about twenty minutes. That's enough to put you off, and enough to kill ya. Finally we were let out and taken over to the airport terminal whereupon Reg Chatford who was quite a man of big physic physique and short fuse, but being a diplomat, "hello Hello blah blah blah." "You will fill in this form." don't take any offence at anything I say by the way, "You will fill in this form." "Yes Sir

13:30 what would you like?" "You will put down there such and such." "Now what do you want in this box?" "Oh you will write there such and such." And this went on and finally the chap snatched the form from Reg, "I will fill it in." And Reg, we had to hold him down, "It's alright Reg, we'll take care of it." And that was the tempo at that time, and further on at,

14:00 no, it was before at Karachi, we'd been meandering the streets looking at the sights and even at that time in 1949 they had the Indian fakirs [?] there, well they must be just part of the local scene. And stopped with a camera to take a picture, next thing surrounded, we the group, were surrounded, not by uniform people but males in matching white

- 14:30 shirts and trousers and sash, and, "What for you take this picture?". "You go home to Australia and say this is India, this is not India you come with us we will show you India." "Alright mate no pictures, look all gone, put away." so that's how tenuous it was at the time. So I felt I was in more danger in India in those few days passing through than I had been in Germany, strange isn't it? And when we got to
- 15:00 Mingladon which is the old Burma, they were having their rebels and government fights and we got there just on dusk. And as we were doing a circuit someone popped a bullet through the tail assembly of the aircraft. Now it was against their religion to shoot anyone so they waited till night time, but this guy apparently got a bit trigger happy and let go. And then we hopped
- 15:30 into the bus provided and into town via all the barricades, zig zagged through all the things, and they were fair dinkum at the time. Then got up the next morning to leave, and as we left the beautiful city there was that golden temple bathed in the morning sunlight. Oh I forget the name of it, but it's so magnificent, do you know the temple I'm speaking about, do you?

Yes I think so.?

- 16:00 Yeh, I can't, the minds going.

In Rangoon?

Its not Rangoon now is it, Mingladon, Migladon, Rangoon yep, what's that temple in Rangoon?

MeyambahMyanmar?

How.

You're thinking of the old name of Burma, MeyambahMyanmar?

Yes anyway, it was a sight to be hold. And there were many such sights all round the place. Flying down through Switzerland, and go and have a

- 16:30 close up of the Alps there, great sights. You asked about getting lost, you tend to get lost. I mean there was one stage there where I was involved in going into Warsaw once a week at a set time, had to cross the border and had to stick to a five kilometre corridor. And I
- 17:00 stuck with all the rules for the first time in and everything was okay, came out the same, similar way, then the next time went in oh it was shocking weather and the Ruskies [Russians] kept saying, "Oh you will return do not come bad weather blah blah." and we said, "We'll decided when we get there." "Oh no, you must not come etc etc."
- 17:30 Notwithstanding, we went in and we landed safely and in no time flat the aircraft was taken over by the Ruskies who were seeking out the special equipment we had that enabled us to land at this airfield in this weather, but they didn't know it was up here. It was the pattern we had of flying and using the instruments to bring us about. Anyway on that occasion because of the bad weather we were trapped there
- 18:00 for some time and I got chatting to the young lass behind the bar, when I say chatting, she didn't speak English and I didn't speak Polish. However I communicated to her that I would like some beer labels and wine labels and soak them off and you make them and got sign language and we got there. The next time I came in she had a great bundle of these labels for me, I thanked her profusely and the next time I went in I took
- 18:30 a great heap of gilt stuff from Woolworths [supermarket]. Cheap cosmetics that was all, gold and, oh God I was God himself. Just see her laying it on to show her girlfriends. Little things like that, little human stories that happened around the place. However on that last trip I thought well may as well be shot, instead of sticking in the
- 19:00 corridor, I headed off and went and had a look at some of the cities and the railways and the wheat fields and the steppes and what have you. And before we got back to the German border, "zoomZoom" came in through the slot, that's the only place they were monitoring, on the slot, the rest of it was just make believe.

So you can explain that a bit more simply to me?

It's that simple.

Not being a Navigator navigator myself?

Ah.

So there was a certain

- 19:30 **corridor that they were monitoring air traffic?**

Yeah. The entry and exit point were monitored.

So you could slip across the border?

But I found out that if you wanted wandered off no one said anything 'cause they weren't monitoring you, they didn't have the staff or the equipment, it was all bluff. So we went and had a look at the countryside. All they could say is, "You're off course." and we turn to such and such and put in a notice or something, but no.

Why were

20:00 you going to Poland?

Diplomatic, took in the whiskey in the diplomatic pouch once a week or fortnight or whatever it was, once a week I think it was.

To the Australians?

No the Poms, once again they used the Colonials colonials to do the rough stuff, diplomatic purposes. It's easier to explain the Colonials colonials away if anything untoward occurred; oh you know what there they're like. But possibly possibly right when I think about it.

20:30 What was it like dealing with the English?

In Warsaw?

In general during that time in Europe, what was it like working with and working under the Poms...?

This is getting back into 1956, 1956, 1957, 1958. That's the RAF thing there if you look in the 2nd second column it says UK [United Kingdom] or something I think. Anyway what was it like

21:00 at that time?, it had come good, lots of goodies on the table. We travelled around a lot, my son was born in England up at Rippon which is a Cathedral cathedral town in the North north of England, up past York. And it was quite an interesting time

21:30 there, we were put up in the, initially accommodated in the Black Ball Hotel in the town of Rippon, which was outside the Market Square square or on the perimeter of the Market market Squaresquare. And on Market market Day day the farmers would come in and they'd sit down to the table and be offered a platter, they'd have corn, what's this beef with the batter stuff

22:00 I forget what you call it now, Yorkshire pud [pudding], that's right, and they'd have this. But they'd get a platter of vegetables and I'm not exaggerating the platter would be about yah yay dimensions piled with vegetables. They'd put it on, another platter, so they had two platters. I couldn't knock of one platter let alone two, but that was their meal when they came into town. Anyway the fare was typical

22:30 English marketplace type thing, all the spruikers doing the hard sell and the usual bits and pieces of tin ware and clothing and materials and knick knacks, novelties. I don't think we bought anything at the markets. Anyway, went to the pictures [movies] one night there, which was just around the corner also, just walk across the Market market Square square round the corner there's the cinema, and it finished early because of the

23:00 evening twilight. Being in the North north of England and with the summer time and the latitude, eleven o'clock, it's still daylight. Walking home and there's a fish and chip shop and I said to Mum, "Hey, do you fancy some fish and chips?" and And "Oh yes, that would be nice." So I go in and I'm standing there looking at their board looking around seeing what's offering and the man came and said, "Aye, can I help you?"

23:30 I said, "Yeah where's the thing?", "What do you be wanting?" I said, "I want some flake and some chips" he said "Oh no, you want a supper." I said, "What is a supper?", Hhe said, "Oh a piece of hake and some chips and some vinegar and some salt and pepper." So he wrapped it all up in a box, no messing around no ordering like we do here, it was a case of take it or leave it there it is. That was an experience for

24:00 us, all very sterile their fish shop, line up and walk through, not that there were many there at that time of night. And another interesting thing in that area in Yorkshire my daughter had just starting school when we left, we left in the July to go to England, and the daughter arrived over there and didn't start school until September and when she went

24:30 to the school, and that's because of their summer school holidays and what have you, and when she went to the school she would come home and I'd say, "How'd you go today sweetie?." "Oh good daddy." I said, "What did you learn?" and she'd say, "Ah yeh yi yo." I said "No no.. A for apple, A, E, I, O, U, now lets hear it." "Ah, yeh, yi, you." "No, no, A, E." And I'd put the poor kid through he drill until she got A, E, I, O, U,

25:00 she'd go to school and the nuns would say "No, Ah, yeh, yi, yo, yew";, total turmoil. I didn't recognise what was happening and I thought it was just her playground antics but it was she was being taught, yeah those things happen.

Well we're getting a bit ahead of ourselves, so I just want to go back. When you came back to Australia after your time in Europe, what was it like to

25:30 **be back in Australia?**

This is 1949?

Yes, just after the Berlin airlift.?

In 1949.

May?

Where did I go in 1949?

Richmond?

Oh that's the Transport Squadron again, 36 Squadron. But I didn't stay there long did I?

Do you want this back?

No, I can't read it, I haven't got my glasses.

Well you said May to January.?

26:00 Yeah and where'd I go then?

Laverton.?

Oh that's right I went back to ArdiouARDU, that's correct, I went to the Aircraft Research and Development Unit. And from there I went down to the School of Air Navigations and then I came back to ArdiouARDU, no I went to Japan then.

What were you doing at ArdiouARDU?

Well at that time we were setting up an aircraft to go down to the South Pole

26:30 and I was involved in the instillation installation of a pole path Polar Path Compasscompass, into this Beaver aircraft. And a pole path compass Polar Path Compass was a remote control deviseddevice, a bit elaborate, but it was the first of the side- connected circuit boards that was around, it was done on a modular system. And it came without any instruction so we

27:00 had to work out what was happening on the board and how to join up the circuitry and what have you and I kept asking for a booklet but none was forthcoming, its on the way, its on the way, and the deadline's coming for the Tharlo Dan [?] to set sail and the aircraft had to be loaded on. So I had to take the bit between my teeth and I had a lume loom made up to suit the alternator, the compass, the indicator, it was all in different

27:30 locations, put it all together, still no news. So I said "Ookay, let's connect it up, putup." Put it together, switched it on, "Bbang, bang, crash, crash." and we're looking at fifteen thousand pounds pounds worth of equipment. Big dent in my ego, anyway I powered it down and went over it all again and there was no reason why it couldn't work, powdered it up again, "Bbang, bang, crash, crash." "Where are those instructions?",

28:00 "There's none coming, they can't get here in time.", I said, "Well you know do I take it out or do I persist?", "Oh well give us a bit longer they might get it." I went back to the drawing board and I went over it with the eElectrician to see if two minds could change anything, and on the alternator you've got the plug, 1,2,3,4, right and on the socket

28:30 we put them together, we were looking at 1,2,3,4 right, so you put them together and its 4,3,2,1 isn't it, it's the other way round, so just swapped them over and it ran. So I rang up and said, "Oh, the thing's going." "Oh, what did you do?, "Yyou shouldn't have done that, what if it had blown up?", "It's going, we tested it, it's okay." so away it went. The only reason that that was sold to the expedition was the fact that, I can't

29:00 think of the guy's name, the chap in charge of the expedition, and I said, "Look if you go down there and you find the greatest mineral deposit in the world, it's useless to you unless you know where you are. It's not good saying it's half an hour out there, after you fly back to your base." 'Cause they were homing into a beacon at the base, "You've got to be able to navigate to it and say how many miles it's away and what bearing and so on...."

29:30 so it was. And it went, and went and went, quite happy. Then I had to, or didn't have to, got involved in lecturing on Polar Pathpole path nNavigation down at the School of Air Navigation. That's quite challenging when you consider the convergence of the longitudinal lines and then the

30:00 convergence of the magnetic deviation lines, and all this is happening as you travis traverse that distance, it's going "Bboom boom" and changing around, so you have to draw a map with a particular graticule on it which takes into account all these things, hence it's called Polar Pathpole path navigation. It's where you select a spurious thing; it's rather like if you fly into a hurricane or tornado, straight

30:30 at it you'll come out the other side as though you've gone right through it, but you've gone right around

it, do you follow that? The winds blow you around, so all you do is head straight for the centre of it, and then you get taken off there and when you get to the bottom, the wind's coming back and you get out of it and in theory straight through it.

This is probably a very

31:00 **stupid question, but aren't the longitudinal lines converging everywhere?**

Oh no, when you're close to the equator they're virtually parallel.

Virtually, but anywhere further away from the equator they're converging to some extent?

Oh yes, but we can cope with that, we use a Makatas Mercator Charts which is a, Makata Mercator [?] came up with a formula to adjust these charts for maps within temperate, between temperate meridians, ah

31:30 parallels, the meridians, but when they get down to the end of the pole instead of coming here, they're coming there. You know you get below sixty degrees south and they're starting to move in sharply. Well a simple question is what two points on the earth can you walk ten miles south, thirty miles east and ten miles north and finish up where you start from?

32:00 And one is obviously the North Pole, you come down and you walk around the circumference and go back. The other one has to be on the South Pole, has to be, I think it was fourteen point nine miles from the South Pole, there was a variation, then you had to walk down to this point, and then go around. But the two answers,

32:30 one was the North Pole and one was fourteen point something miles from the South Pole, which gets back to, no if you put a piece of string around the equator and measured it and then you lifted it one inch about the equator all around, how much longer would it be? Come on, come on.

It would be shorter wouldn't it?

No, it would be three and one seventh inches longer, pie times diameter.

33:00 I said an inch didn't I, so it's double that, "2 pie R." trick question.

So did you actually go down to the South Pole?

Not as far as the South Pole, no.

But you flew to Antarctica?

Well yes when you, well the Artic is a better place to navigate in because you've got land masses, down the Antarctic, you've got floating

33:30 hunks of ice and bits and pieces, so I didn't want to go down, I've been down sSouth but I haven't been down to the South Pole. I'm like you, I can't stand the cold.

Surely sometimes it must be very difficult when there's a complete white out - it's very difficult to navigate?

That's right but you never go past your instruments. See there were many incidents where

34:00 you're always against the physical barriers, the weather and other things. Now I can remember up in Japan one night flying up to Tokyo and we were in heavy cloud and what have you, and I in fact was at the controls this night, and everything in my head said that I was rolling over, now if I'd have corrected that I would have been in trouble, but I just had to accept that my sensory perception was

34:30 false and follow my instruments. And that's the salvation.

So it actually felt like the plane was rolling?

Yes the plane was rolling on me. That's like you drink too much and get on bed and go "Oohh" and suddenly you're in a spin, it's just a sensory perception thing. You know how it is when you drink too much?

No.

Oh what a pity.

No never touch the stuff.

35:00 **I'm thinking of actually the 1970s, I'm not sure exactly which year; Air New Zealand hit Mount ErebusMount Aerobes?**

Ah navigation error, put in with the computer wrong, incorrectly.

So it was a computer error rather than a visual error?

Yeah.

I thought it had something to do with the white out?

Yep, that's right but keep out of it. I mean there was

- 35:30 another exercise I was involved in, in Korea when we were coming back in bad weather and the pPilot said, "Oh look." I said, "I'll steer such and such" and he said, "No, I want to fly in and out the clouds" cause there was some quite large clouds there, and I said, "Okay, go for it" and I kept on a,
- 36:00 oh it's a little slide rule thing with circular azimuths and I kept track of all the headings that he flew, and when he finished doing the weaving in and out through the clouds I was able to measure from the centre here to the end of all these jiggery pokery and then plot that down as seventeen minutes out of flight time, of such and such equals such and such so on the ground we'll be there. So from that point on we were able to navigate into there. And you do those
- 36:30 sort of things because, as I said before it's your life and you don't want to mess around with it. Oh I started to tell a story about we were down around Okinawa in the 7th Fleet and what have you, oh I did I finished the story about you know, "I'll do it." and I said "Hhere, be my guest." That was a continuation of another incident on the same trip when we left Japan in a
- 37:00 tornado or hurricane or a cyclone, I'm not certain what they call it up there, cyclone I think it is. And an aircraft was tied down on the runway pending the arrival of the cyclone, and when the cyclone was coming down the runway we had to be ready to take off, now it had its risks because you wouldn't be able to get back in because of the limited visibility, it would create
- 37:30 problems. So everything was right, we took off no hassles, and as soon as we were air borne, oh I gave a heading to fly through the cyclone 'cause we knew where we were and the...so flewight straight into the centre as I mentioned before and we'll come out the other side. I wanted to check the radar equipment immediately when I knew where I was, so as soon as we were air borne, I'd take a certain readings and the next
- 38:00 thing the screen went blank and I looked up and the Ppilot had switched the inverter off. As I leapt up and switched it back on and so I was severally reprimanded, "Don't you come up here switching things off and on." in an angry attitude, "I'm the Ppilot and you ask." "Okay I had to get the information I had to useprove the equipment, I didn't have time to ask or argue or anything else, I know it works, I know
- 38:30 where we are, carry on." So with the admonition ringing in my ears for the next few hours, every ten minutes, "NNavigator to pPilot, would you please switch on the inverter?." wait for a while, "NNavigator to pPilot, would you please switch off the inverter?" and I kept putting it on and off, on and off, and I wouldn't let him have his sleep.
- 39:00 So we got round to Eracooni Iwakuni and, no we came from Eracooni Iawkuni we were going to Okinawa, EracooniIwakuni, I'm getting confused. Anyway we got down to the next port, which was Okinawa that's right, and I'd normally filled in a flight plan and everything, did the whole box and dice and this particular guy
- 39:30 he said, "Oh, will you fix up the flight plan, Bob?", "Sure." so I filled in my necessary parts, times and where we were going, which directions and so on and, "Hhow long it will take, estimated?", Hhe said, "What about the rest?", I said, "Oh, that's your department, SSir.", Iit was a CO [Commanding Officer] so I had to be polite, so "Oh" and every so often he'd say, "Oh, what do I put here?", "Oh, I don't know, ask the sSignalman."
- 40:00 and that's how this difference arose further down the track. It was very bad but he had come from a fFighter pPilot sSquadron where it's solo stuff but when you're working with a cCrew you've got to have a different attitude, it's as simple as that. Anything else?

Tape 7

- 00:31 **Alright Jack, I mean Robert sorry?**

That's alright Sam go on.

There are a few more questions I'd like to look at very briefly I suppose, on your overseas deployments. In Germany you said that, I remember once before it's probably a bit of a silly question to ask, but I'd like it for the sake of the camera.

- 01:00 **You said that there weren't many men in Berlin?**

No.

Right, what were the compelling reasons for that apart from obviously casualties and things like that?

The wWar injuries and lives lost. Remember they made a last ditch stand and they were that short of men within the region that they were calling upon the children. Remember they had the schoolboy, I

forget what they called them,

01:30 the fourteen years old....

Hitler Youth?

Hitler Youth, yes, so these men were scattered around the country side in prisoner of war [POW] camps all over the place. They had quite a few in Africa I imagine and right along the wWest cCoast of Europe. Things slowly came back together as they will again and again... it doesn't matter which wWar you look at, it's like the flood, the drought, the

02:00 fire, nature takes over and follows its course and away you go.

What were the differences between your stay in German and Japan, in IwakuniIracooni was it?

IwakuniIracooni in Japan yes.

And Lubeck and Berlin, what were the differences in what you had seen in the pPost wWar period, in terms of the suffering of people things like that, what

02:30 **were the differences?**

I thought the European people suffered more, perhaps most certainly the Koreans suffered more than the Japanese. The Japanese were getting their act together very quickly because they're an industrious race, as was no doubt the Germans, but it was just a matter of direction and where they were wanting to go and what they had to clean up first too. You know you've got to get the old plaster off the wall before you paint it and it doesn't look much until you

03:00 get underway. No, that was okay. The shops in Germany were a bit short on for stock and the like, the food was there because the farms were still in tact, they hadn't been greatly destroyed, but the cities and the industrial districts had certainly been devastated. So they had to regain their production capacity and people working and

03:30 stock moving.

How did the sight of Germany's pPost wWar state affect you, when you had seen all these things?

Didn't have a great impact on me. Perhaps I had an attitude of "Yyou deserved it you bastards, get on with it." I wasn't very tolerant,

04:00 perhaps I'm not tolerant today, as a consequence of all this. I mentioned before that I developed a strong cynicism, at the atrences [?]utterances of people and the actions equated with the atrances [?]utterances,, and so today I tend to be cynical. Now getting back to that period though I thought "Wwell you know, I've beaten you in a fight, let's get on with it." And they weren't too keen to shake hands although they were amenable to

04:30 dialogue, having a conversation. But I still have problems coping with my daughter-in-law's father, who claims he was only a child etc etc, but I find him very hard to take because of attitudes and values. But it takes a generation to get rid of that stuff, maybe two generations.

05:00 See my daughter's married to an Italian, another enemy if you like, my cousin is married to a Chinese girl, another enemy, no, time will heal all.

So do you think that's good?

Pardon?

You think that's good that they've inter married in that sense?

Yes because it gives a balance of views, the values become modified and lets you look at things

05:30 and say well perhaps, okay you drink black coffee, you drink white coffee, white coffee's an experiment you were bought up on black and some one says, "Ooh its much nicer if you have milk in it." and you say, "Ooh I don't know." and then you try it and you find out yeah, it is a bit better. So then you experiment with cappuccino and as you walk through life your tastes and values vary and so your point of view varies. And when it comes

06:00 to point of view no matter what argument I offer, if I was to ask you to describe that glass you would describe it totally differently to what I do, because of your point of view. I can see certain writings on the glass and reflections of the light through the crystal in it, and it's the same with life, it depends on your point of view as to what, how you view the situation in life and the person and the deeds.

06:30 Anything else?

Yes can you describe to us what Berlin looked like when you were there for the period, what was happening in Berlin?

Berlin was struggling to survive at that time because of the restrictions of the import and export of goods. So they were on a subsistence ration. Now we provided, we the Aair lift, provided necessary vittalesvittles, that's the flour and the coal,

07:00 and then we took in potatoes by the sackful because that was a common denominator in their diet, hence that expression before, "Nichts kartoffeln" of mix cartolisin, "no potato." because potato, potato. Anyway they knew how to survive, they knew how to modify their recipes to adjust to it, they made certain they had their pastries, they loved their pastries and they make beautiful pastries.

07:30 As regards to the city, oh in Lubeck where we were based it was interesting to note that the city had a synagogue in it which was still in use, and I challenged this with the locals and I was told, "Ooh yes. Well it was no problem to us and Hitler never came here so why should we worry?", Wwhy indeed?

It wasn't the Gghetto by any chance?

08:00 No, just a straight- out synagogue in the city. An interesting thingin there, what do they call those big jugs they drink from in Germany?

Stein?

Stein, yeah, they're steins, there's one in there which I picked up from the local Rats CallahRathaus, which I was given to understand was something to do with the tTown hHall, and they had this club there and I acquired that stein and it has engraved

08:30 on it certain names and initials. And I often feel I should contact the Rathaus, Rats Callah the hHeadquarters and say "hHey, do you know these guys and are you interested in it?" just to see if it's important to someone. Just sitting up there gathering dust to me, souvenir of the times. And as regards to the question as to what they were doing, my

09:00 interest in those areas was rather shallow. As I've said before, let the good times roll, let's get on with it.

Now what about 1948, were there still any remnants of an underground Nazi network or anything like that in Berlin?

Would not be conscious of it if it were there. It wasn't there visibley to myself, not enough for me to take any notice of it.

Did you hear about any stories of resistance still?

No, no.

09:30 **Nothing?**

No.

Okay, and with Japan I'm not exactly sure where IracareIawakuni is?

IawakuniIracooni?

IwakuniIracooni.

It's on the main iIsland, ConsueHonshu is the main iIsland, big long one, and Tokyo's on the same iIsland further up. Tokyo would be up on the nNorth Eeast of IwakuniIracooni and Iwakuni Iracooni is just wWest of KobeCoby,

10:00 you know where the big earth quake was?

Yes.

Down that neck of the woods. And the next iIsland down we used to use that as a turning point when we went over to Korea, because there was a mountain range intervening between IwakuniIracooni and we would have had to climb too rapidly to get up and over and all the rest of it. Interesting thing when I was

10:30 flying in Korea on clear days you'd be flying along past a mountain and there were many mountains or hills, whatever you want to call them, and you'd find these rock piles where they, because the ground's so hard they bury the people sitting up and they put rocks around the body. And with the passage of time the rocks had tumbled away and what have you, and you've got skeletons scattered around the hillside. Not an esteeming inspiring sight, and interesting

11:00 sight, because they won't use the lower ground, the fertile ground as burial plots, it's in such short supply.

This is in Korea?

In Korea yeah, sorry I'm jumped around on you but there you go.

Can you describe your trip back?. I think where we left off last time was India, Pakistan. You saw like in a disjointed way we sort of like worked around some of your...?

- 11:30 Well I went, we came down through, oh yes HabaniyahHabanera on the Tigriess River I think it is, its in a ruckIraq anyway, that's the big British airfield. And they'd restrained the Tigriess and built a big lake and they had the yacht club and all sorts of goodies out there, that was back in 1950s
- 12:00 once again. Then we flew on down the Tigriess and the Efraties Euphrates and we came to the origin of the wWorld, the "Garden of Eden." which is at the head of the Gulf there. And the Garden of Eden has fallen into disarray because theiry houses were on stilts when we passed through there; the rest of it was just marsh lands. And that was quite an eye opener to see where all the sin began and now it's paid the wages of sin and disappeared

- 12:30 in to the sloth. But we then came on down the Persian Gulf and landed at, oh Jah Gah [?] which is in the Trusel Marn Oman [?] down on the sSouthern....

Oman is it?

Trusel Marn Oman [?]{/} it's called, it was called then.

Okay.

And then you flew along the coastline of 'Moonscape' which was the lower part of Afghanistan and

- 13:00 Pakistan. And you went into Karachi then we went up to Delhi and then we came down to Dumdum, I forget the name of the town, Bengal, Bengal isn't it, in the gap there. Anyway from there we went down to Mingaladon and from there to Butterworth and there to Changi and Changi to
- 13:30 ah Tangion ParackTanjung Priok. W[Jakarta ?], here's Tangion ParackTanjung Priok? Tangion ParackTanjung Priok is now the capital of Indonesia. It was then the capital of the Netherlands, East Indies [Batavia]. And on the day we arrived there it happened to be the birthday of Queen Juliana and in the city square on the edge of the lake port there, they had this enormous tree,
- 14:00 what type of tree I know not because I'm not into that sort of thing, but it was just a ball of lights, magnificent sight. And anyway we stayed there and rummaged around for the celebrations of poor Queen Juliana. Then we went on our merry way to Darwin, Alice Springs, Mallala in South Australia, and left our aeroplane, no we didn't,
- 14:30 brought the aeroplane over to Laverton in Melbourne and got out of it and said our "hhellos" and "farewells" to the rellies [relatives] and then went back up to Schofields to the 36 Squadron, 36 Squadron and got about our next job.

Can you tell us any interesting stories in Iraq, interactions you had?

Yes as a matter of fact that was very interesting because

- 15:00 the Flight flight Engineer engineer who was also the sSteward on the aircraft he lost my medical certificate and we were half way between Havaner [Hyderabad ?] and Karachi and, sorry Jah Gah [?] and he said, "Sorry Sir, etc etc" I said "Well nothing we can do about it, we've got to on." knowing full well that when we got to Karachi we'd run into problems with no medical certificate for vaccinations. So we fronted up to the
- 15:30 counter and did a soft shoe shuffle on the deal and, "Can I sSee your papers please?" and "Oh yes, oh mine yeah.", "Alright.", "Thank you, see you Jack" and off we went and he hadn't seen mine at all. Otherwise I would have spent the time in the concrete block house on the edge of the airfield, or the middle of the airfield actually. And that's when we went in and met up with these nNationalist groups that were a
- 16:00 bit put out because we were taking photographs. Then I told you about the temple in Rangoon and the tree at Tangion ParackTanjung Priok, nothing much exciting happened there.

You didn't stop at Sarlong [?]?Ceylon?

Hmm.

You didn't stop at SarlongCeylon?

No Sarlong's Ceylon's too far sSouth, see we did the sweep around the top.

- 16:30 **What about the Sewers CanalSuez Canal?**

Sewers CanalSuez Canal, well that was too far to our right; we had to come down this way to avoid certain issues.

Because of all those wWars going on?

Yes. Now an interesting, oh an interesting story that doesn't relateinterlation into this but when I was on exchange in the RAF there was an alert for a mock crisis in Jordan,

- 17:00 so we were all sent out to Cyprus to squat. And I had planned a tour around the continent to use up my

recreation leave and take the family, and this was due in a few short days, relatively, and anyway here we are stuck on Ceylon and there's all sorts of problems coming up. We weren't allowed to fly over Syria, yes we were, we

- 17:30 could do this and the other and time is marching on. So we get down to the airfield and were briefed, yes "Wwell old NASA [National Aeronautics and Space Agency] is going to be sending out messages, take no notice of any messages that are not in code." and so on and so on. And so off we go into the wild blue yonder and were half way there and voice comes over the thing, "Aall aircraft return
- 18:00 to base." blah blah...and half the aircraft turned back and half didn't. Because we'd been briefed not to take any notice of these, so we had half of our planes stuck in Jordan the other half back in Nickaseea [?].Nicosia. And it turns out it was a legitimate call, they weren't supposed to overfly it because of Syria's problems. So Syria then got narky because we'd done this act so that put a further delay into it. Things were getting a bit tight
- 18:30 and tense and my time is running out and being cColonials we were shunted off the base and put in hotel in town where the curfew was on, not allowed on the streets after dark and so on. I said to the guys, "Look, I've got to get moving 'cause the family'sies got all these bookings and we've got to get them cancelled and what have you." So I went onto the bBase and the truck I got a lift from
- 19:00 dropped me at the oOfficers' mMess and there was a coach there, and I saw the guys on the coach, whom I knew and they'd come from the love and kisses sSquadrons, which is LXS. So I got on board and started chatting "What's happening?", "Oh were going down to briefing, it looks as though we might be able to move and so on." then in comes Squadron Leader Popinjay, and full andof vim and
- 19:30 vigour, and he says, "Right, now pay attention lads." "Now look it looks as though we're going to do this that and the other and we'll be told about such and such." Aand then suddenly, ping; "You, you I don't know you, who are you?", I said "It's all right SSir carry on, United Nations." "Oh good to have you aboard, jolly good show." and carried on. Chatting away so we went down to the briefing and it was a no-n event so we come
- 20:00 back to the mMess and decided to squat, or I decided to squat, and have an ale because I had problems getting transport back to the hotel, and along comes Squadron Leader Popinjay "You, you, I know you, I won't forget, I know you now." dear oh dear, there it was. However within twenty-four hours, oh I'd spoken to the aAir oOps about getting home and within twenty-four hours the whole thing started
- 20:30 to move. And we had an aircraft called a Beverly there which was a big boxed freight carrier with an open nose and tail and you could drive trucks though and what have you, and fortunately the Beverly could carry thirty pound for three thousand miles, or three thousand pound for thirty miles. It wasn't particularly effective, didn't last long. And the other one was the Hastings aircraft
- 21:00 which we were in, but the Hastings was a tricycle undercarriage with a tail down and to get the jeep and trailer in you had to go up a ramp from the side and swing around and drive up the thing. No ramps, so we've got all these aircraft lined up for ramps. I had seen a ramp in the civilian compound so I commandeered a Aarmy truck and directed the wWarrant oOfficer to
- 21:30 retrieve these ramps and went over with him and got to the gate, and; "Halt, who goes there?", "It's all right, have to collect ramps.", Wwent in and got them took them back, got our thing loaded and I said to the Sskipper "What say we slip the ramps on board and we can get them off quicker down there?" Hhe said, "You can't do that, look at all the others.", I said "Okay." So off we go and we get into Jordan, not a ramp in sight, all the aircraft
- 22:00 lined up waiting to be unloaded. The only ramps back there, the one I pinched or the one I wanted to bring with me and they had to send an old Avro Anson [aeroplane] down, flap, flap. And it got there and we unloaded the thing then charged off back home. I arrived back at Cyprus, went to oOperations tent was put immediately on a plane returning to England, went off back to England, I hadn't slept for thirty-two hours by the way.
- 22:30 Got back to England walked in on Mum [his wife] and said, "Right is everything ready?" Sshe said, "Yes, it's all packed." got in the car drove down to the Coast coast and hoped in a Bristol Freighter and flew across to France, whipped down the Coast coast to spend the night at a place called Saint-MaloMonsama Cell, with Le Mont-Saint-Michel, Mount St Michael which is a Mmonastery on an iIsland off the cCoast of France there, it dates back to the eleventh century or something, magnificent place
- 23:00 it is. And on that first night I was dead tired and it was raining when we arrived at the camping site, we were camping. My wife and daughter stayed in the car while I attempted to raise this tent in the rain, and as I said in my diary at the time, I spent ten minutes trying to put this tent up and after about ten minutes I was just about ready to pitch it
- 23:30 and so I started to pitch it as far as I could and a German came over and helped me erect it and all was well. We got up the next morning and went and climbed up the mountain and well worth the trip. See I don't know where I'm coming from I've got thirty years of experiences all over the place, so you've got to direct me, you're the director, you tell me where you want me to come from.

When you were

24:00 **in the Asian countries like India, Pakistan Iraq etc, and Cyprus, Asia Minor, did you get a chance to socialise with the women there?**

Not directly, no. I had conversations, but I didn't have any social contact as such.

Are there any interesting stories you can tell us about Cyprus?

24:30 Yes there's a lot of bitterness there between the Turks and the Greeks and I think they finished up putting a dividing line across the country and the Turks got to the nNorth and the Greeks to the sSouth or some such thing. But you talk about an interesting story, there was an Australian there with a bBistro or hHotel, no it was a downstairs bar and the whole ceiling was covered with

25:00 silver foil trinkets. You'd open up a packet of cigarettes, strip the tissue paper from the back of the silver foil, put it in your mouth and chew it then fashion the silver foil into a cup, a horse, a star, anything you wanted. But on the bottom you always had a small cap which you put this thing in folded the edges from it and it was all sticky then you went boom, and it stuck there.

25:30 It might dislodge some of the others in so doing but it stuck there. And I was always intrigued by the way this guy survived in that area. You know he was a dinky di [genuine] Aussie, not a Greek Aussie or Turk or anything he was....

Just in no man's land?

He was a nothing but he was there. Now another guy, a fFlight eEngineer finished up marrying the lady I mentioned earlier in the day,

26:00 Sparrow, who was Queen of the Gut [?] in Malta. And he and Sparrow went back too, he got out of the aAir fForce and went back to Cyprus and they started a high class rest and relaxation house for tired gentleman and they did well. Then, at a similar time I think it was Archbishop Makarios aArchb Bishop Maccarus was doing all the stirring in

26:30 Cyprus [causing all the trouble] but he was exported out of the country. So it fell to the RAF to transport him, I'm uncertain where they dumped him but he was taken out of the country and dumped somewhere. And as he stepped away from the aircraft the Flight flight eEngineer kicked him up the backside and sent him sprawling on his face, which was not big, the suitable

27:00 vocabulary was "Gget out of the way, you so and so." and the plane took off and went about its business. I always wondered about some years later when they re-instated Makarios Maccarus and what his attitude would be towards the British. But maybe he'd forgiven who knows. Anyway those are a couple of stories out of the place.

27:30 **Now what about Bombay and India, what were the women like there, what were your impressions of India?**

Oh a bit poor, they kept clean mainly but there were a lot of grubby ones there. There was sort of, I don't know the car class system or what, but clearly you, had the haves and the have- nots and there was a vast division between those. And the haves didn't want to jeopardise theirre position,

28:00 so they remained aloof and isolated and the have- nots just didn't know how to approach the situation except buckswith "Ggive me." and beg, beg, beg. Which you couldn't blame them they had to survive but no. It's rather like in recent years I went on a cruise to an iIsland sSouth of New Guinea, Samari Island and whilst there I purchased

28:30 some sea shells, not because I wanted a sea shells because the family had had enough initiative to start gathering sea shells and present them to the tourists to make a bit of money, and I thought, well, they need encouragement. And so that's the way it was. Oh I met a pPolice cConstable, different thing again, but at Samari I met a young pPolice cConstable who'd worked for the ABC [Australian Broadcasting Corporation] in the Cairns office

29:00 and he resigned and went back to Port Moresby. Whilst there he saw the gangs, the raskols [Papuan criminal gangs] at work beating up people and what have you so he joined the pPolice fForce to help control and repel them. And they transhipped him to this island, Samari where he had a wife and a child and a father-in-law and he was doing quite well and he was very proud of everything, and took me home and showed me his house and the like.

29:30 And there was an obelisk obalits there which I still seek the answer to today, it spoke of a chap who at the turn of the century was the boss cocky around there, I can't recall the exact words but it was praising and then damming, as though he had two distinct facets, he was a devil and an angel. And they'd put up this obelisk obalits with the engraving to suit both parties,

30:00 quite interesting. But no one I know whose been in that region can offer me an answer. What's your neck hurting?

No just checking the....Tell me something now, after experience of the Berlin Airlift were you of the opinion that there was an imminent war between Russian and the allies, the Soviet Union, America?

I personally felt that

30:30 Russia had had enough, they were making gestures but I didn't see enough presence or enough action to make me feel concerned. Not that I was a very perspective perceptive guy in these areas, but I just saw them as a side show alley. I used to love and go and trade with them at the Brandenburg Gate, take them for what they werere worth. And what they werere worth was cruel really, 'cause basically they were peasants. Now when you look at the

31:00 documentaries of the Russian input in the wWar and the, oh the bestiality on their own fForces, the survival rate was minimal, they killed millions. Just with Stalin'sstaliens attitude "Yyou won't give in, they're not going to advance." and so on and so on. So...

What did you hear of the atrocities of Russian sSoldiers, had committed against....?

Of Russian sSoldiers?

Yes against the Germans, civilians that is?

31:30 Well I know when they came into Berlin I know some guys from the aAir fForce who were in prisoner of war camps there and the local Germans came and broke them out ahead of the Russians and pleaded with them to go home and sleep with their daughters to protect them from the Russians. The Russians are fairly ruthless people really, because I guess, it's lack of education.

32:00 I mean a wild animal is a wild animal until it's trained isn't it, and you got them being bought up in the sticks in the back blocks, absence of culture. But isn't it an amazing thing that the Russians could, the United Soviet Socialist Republic [former Russian federation], could mould together 148 different cultures?

Yes.

And provide an education system and that is absolutely, when you think of the vastness of the country and you think of the extremes of temperature, how little time you have to be productive because of the

32:30 climate there. No, they're historic people and they've got on with it, this gets back to what I said earlier that time heals all wounds and nature levels things out and you form opinions and there proved false with the passage of time and so on. I mean you react to the situation you find yourself in. See I might hate you and find out you're a nice guy in ten years time, who knows.

I hope you don't

33:00 **hate me.**

What was your name again, I've forgotten?

About that, I'm curious to pursue that a little bit more about the atrocities, what did the allied sServiceman do when theyre were pleading, when the Germans civilians were pleading with them to come and sleep next to their daughters?

Oh they went in with them.

They did go?

Oh yes, yes. I mean they offered them the bounty of a

33:30 home for what it was, but it was far better than the prison food. They were able to get a social contact that they wouldn't get had they not gone because they would remain isolated till the Germans, the saviour of bureaucracy burocrocy had sorted out who they were and where they should be and who owned what and why. You go with the moment, you have to seize the, look at the situation and seize it. And I can tell

34:00 you one of the guys involved, I won't say he went off, but he eventually finished up as the Governor of New South Wales so there, he's now deceased.

Who's that?

The ex- Governor of New South Wales.

Sorry his name?

Oh I didn't tell you did I, what a pity.

34:30 **Were there any other stories you heard about what the Russians did in Berlin?**

Nothing substantial, I heard you know different bar talk and casual talk.

Such as?

Well when I asked in a social situations about what they experienced in terms of suffering and that,

- 35:00 it was really nothing. In fact there was a humorous situation where I have a medal which was given to me as a token of friendship I suppose and this medal has got the swastika swastika sticker and it's got a female with a baby and what have you and I said "What is this for?". And I was told it was given to each mother for having a child, and I've since found out it was to encourage the German women to have babies to
- 35:30 produce the pure race and so on. And I said to the woman at the time "Do you mean to say you got a medal for having a child?" "Oh yes." I said "Well what the man got?" , sShe said, "He get nothing." I said "What do you mean nothing, he did all the work, after all you try lifting your arse and dropping it twenty times and see who's working?", Tthere you go. I didn't get a medal though, so that's why she gave me one.
- 36:00 **That's a good incentive for Australia to increase it population as well.**
- Yes well were moving quite well you go down to the....I was in a shopping centre down in Chelsea not so long ago and a young women who looked as though she was in her early twenties and she came in with a great, oh cross terrain
- 36:30 vehicle it looked like, it contained four children of different ages, and she didn't go into the general supermarket she stayed at the counter and they filled her order and carried it out to this thing. And I upset her because she was blocking the whole counter, I said "I think there's a space in the car park for that vehicle." and "Oh I can't help it if....." you know she was up frazzled with all these kids and....
- 37:00 Anyway shoot away.
- Regarding your experience in planes?**
- In when?
- With the RAF, in general, I think you mentioned before that you were interested in becoming a pilot initially?**
- Initially yes.
- Initially, were you actually satisfied with your position, in the aAir cCrew?**
- Yes very much so, I mean it takes a man of means to hire a taxi but nothing
- 37:30 to be a taxi driver.
- What was the difference in mentality between say a pPilot and a nNavigator, aAir gGunner.....?**
- Well the pPilots were fairly gung ho, and there's quite a few interesting comparative stories around. For example the aeroplane transport aircraft was landing at the fighter base at Williams Ttown in Newcastle, New South Wales and the pPilot called up
- 38:00 and ordered a bus for forty-three and the control tower came back and said, "Wwill you repeat forty-three, confirm forty-three?" but a Dakota can only carry twenty-five. "Please order bus for forty-three." so when it landed the bus was there and the control tower guy was waiting and he went over as the Pilot pilot got out of the aircraft and said, "I had to come and see these forty-three." and out marched all these little people and they got on the bus, and the
- 38:30 controller said "What they hell are they?" Hhe said, "Oh they're fFighter pPilots cut down to size." And then there was a kid playing in the backyard and mummy was doing the washing and she heard one say to her son, orh her son said to one of the lads "And what did your dad do in the Warwar?" and he said "Oh my dad flew Spitf Fires, and he shot down six
- 39:00 Germans." "Oh yeah." and "What did your dad do?" and little Johnny said "Oh my dad played piano in the local brothel." and the mother rushed out mortified she said "Johnny, Johnny why didn't you tell him that your father flew Dakotas?" "Oh gee, Mum I've got some pride." So that's the way the conflicts go. Its all just badinage [banter].
- 39:30 No ill intent meant with it, as I mentioned in an earlier story, a fFighter guy came to a crude situation and it was a different situation to him, he was used to making his own decisions and everything so when he was confronted with the management of three other guys it becomes hard. But imagine a photograph there, I forget how many are involved, I think there's eleven crew members on the Liberator,
- 40:00 I'd have to count the photograph. Well wait on there was a tTail Ggunner, a Bbull Tturret Ggunner, two wWastewaist Gunners gunners, an uUpper tTurret gGunner, a nNose gGunner, two pPilots and fFlight eEngineer, who's counting? And a nNavigator, a rRadar oOperator and that's about the go, oh a bBomb aAimer sorry, bBomb aAimer yep, and
- 40:30 they all flew together in a co-ordinated group and did what was necessary at the right time.

Tape 8

00:31 **Robert tell us about your Korean involvement, your deployment there?**

My which?

Your deployment in Korea?

Oh Korea it was just a milk run, we'd go over in the morning and deliver Troopstroops, goodies, arms, messages and what have you and then

01:00 come back in the afternoon, or come back at lunch time. Then have a bit of a kip [rest] and then go into town and have a bit of a knees up [fun] at whatever entertainment was there and that was it just a routine. We had our days off, but then we also had special trips up to Tokyo, Kyoto and oh there was one

01:30 occasion I was out behind a RAF rescue boat which was in the area, part of the deal it had to be there. Because on one occasion one of the mates took off and we had a fire warning light in the aircraft which constantly came on without any fires, and on this occasion he had a fire and it burnt the side out of his plane and he dropped it in the drink straight off the

02:00 end of the runway. Of course the boys got out there and all's well. Anyway on another occasion out behind this rescue boat and there was a nurse and we were on boards, ski boards as opposed to skis, and she could not get up, she'd get up and fall off, get up and fall off, anyway eventually we got mobile, she got the message how to do it and how to avoid the wake while she was

02:30 stabilising. So away we go and in turn I hit the wake and went off, because it was a job getting her up they kept going. I never felt so bloody lonely, no jacket on and here I am in the Inland Sea, no Noah's arks [sharks] that god, and I'm treading water and trying to see the boat, I cannot see it for love nor money, you have no idea how limited the horizon is when the water's here and it seemed like forever, but they had me in

03:00 sight the whole time. I just turned on my back and floated till they came back and picked me up. And another occasion one of the guys, I still have his Mess mess kit upstairs because he sold it to me, but he landed in a Meteor which is a jet aircraft and he had a problem with the wheel, so he put in a warning and the Americans who half shared the base with us, they've

03:30 positioned their fire engines all along the runway. And as soon as he passed them a fire engine would pick up and drive in behind him on the runway, by the time he ground to a halt in a shower of sparks he's surrounded by these enormous fire engines each with a foam cannon pointed at him. And he leapt up out of the cockpit and said "Don't shoot, don't shoot I give in!" dear oh dear. So you know perhaps that's typical of the life, we sort

04:00 took it as it comes and make the most of it and get on with it. But saw some interesting cultural sights in Japan, because they were totally different to anything I'd witnessed before. These, oh I forget the name of the theatre up in Tokyo, but its got three concerts going at once on this enormous stage and it has those

04:30 street, oh what do you call them effigies, they make towers out of people and things in the street and they rise you know a considerable height, has those going, and waterfalls going and has umpteen dancing girls going. And all this is happening there, there and there and you don't know where to look. And oh yes interesting. And the hot tubs were another mystery, you go into the hot tubs and there's Mr and Mrs

05:00 and the children "Oh hiyo Ohayo gozaimasu. gasmausOhaiyo gozaimasu." "How are you?" yes and just carry on, you're all in the nude, doesn't matter to them, doesn't matter to you, it is a bit of a shock to the system, you want to run for cover. But no I never had trouble fitting into any culture anywhere. I had misgivings about some of them I guess but you settle down with time,

05:30 and I'll never forget any of the time I spent in Service service in the aAir fForce, provided a career for me, provided a home, provided friendship, provided opportunity and provided my retirement. Although I must confess I paid for this myself, there we have it.

What was the black market like in Korea and Japan?

Never investigated, no need, more affluent then. I suppose it

06:00 went on, cameras and the like. I thought it just as bargain trading; I've got a pair of binoculars which are just typical cheap Japanese things which you have in any shop around town today.

Did you socialise with the Japanese and Korean people?

Not Korean, Japanese yes, they were interesting yes.

Tell us about your socialisation with them?

06:30 Had a lovely room girl whose job was to do my laundry and tidy up and what have you. And we'd take

off early in the morning, by that I mean by five o'clock we were on the way, and then we'd get back about one-thirty. Usually we didn't dress to go over there, just put on a flying suit and go down to the aircraft, and then

- 07:00 when we came back because it was after the normal lunch hour we would literally sneak into the Messmess, inappropriately dressed. And on this occasion we went into the Mess mess and the officer commanding was there with a high ranking Army army Officer officer having lunch, and of course we were kicked out. And away we went and it was quite a
- 07:30 simple thing to order the meal up in our rooms, but why put people to any trouble? However went up to the room and had the meal and took off the flying suite and lie down on the bed to have a bit of a kip and get up and get dressed. The next thing, "Bbang, bang, bang." and the fFlight cCommander said: "The officer commanding wants you immediately.", "What huh....?". So thrashed around and got dressed all in two seconds type of thing, all the clothes are laid out
- 08:00 and I front up with a guy who subsequently became Chief of the Air Staff and anyway he was senior to myself, and we go into be dressed down [reprimanded] and he had to take the responsibility because he's senior and he's getting strips torn off him. And among the dialogue aimed at him was, "I don't know why on earth you don't have any responsibility." do blah blah blah, and it struck me as funny
- 08:30 because I'd been in such a bloody mad rush to get dressed and get there and the dialogue was completely contrary to what the facts of the thing and I started laughing. So the Group group cCaptain turned on me, "Wwhat are you laughing about?" and I couldn't tell him, I couldn't stop laughing, I laughed and laughed and the more he went crook the more I laughed. So finally, "Get out, get out." Sso off we went, no, Russell had all the pressure taken off him but I'd cope it. And that night I went down to the oOfficers' cClub which was
- 09:00 basically an American establishment, sitting there having a drink and the gGroup cCaptain came up and he said, "What are you drinking?" I said, "Oh, I'm just having a quiet whiskey Sir.", "Drink it up and I'll have the next one with you." So sat down and he said, "Now look you, so and so, what the hell were you laughing at?" I said "If I canCan't tell you" and I started to laugh again", I said "It's impossible to tell you because it's a mind game, I know why I'm
- 09:30 laughing but I can't tell you.", Hhe said "Well stuff you, have your drink and nick off." So he went off over that way. And we had Marilyn Monroe drop in on our honeymoon while I was there, she had bought along that baseballer [Joe Di Maggio] . I must say I was disappointed in her, admittedly she had travelled from the States and she turned up clutching half dead flowers and in a black jacket which was covered in
- 10:00 pancake makeup and dandruff and what have you, it looked a bit how's your father [untidy]. Anyway at the American club that night I found myself sitting within, oh, the range of from here to Colin [interviewer] there, perhaps a bit further, half as much again. And the American wives that were around they were falling over themselves to pass by and have a good look at this lady. But more significantly when
- 10:30 Marilyn got up to go to the ladies' room there was a stampede, so they could perhaps say "Ooh yes I sat on the porcelain Marilyn's been on." I don't know why, it just seemed ludicrous to me. They talk about the paparazzi here, the people up there they were just wild. And I came home a disappointed man because she just didn't live up to my expectations, but I guess reality always
- 11:00 lets you down, a dream is the thing.

How do you think the 2nd Second World War impacted on you as a person?

Beg your pardon?.

The 2nd Second World War?

Yes.

Your experience and the wWar itself even thought you didn't see combat?

Well I didn't see any combat, the wWar was a developing experience to me, I just saw opportunities, seizedceased them, made the most of them

- 11:30 and moved on. And it's one foot after the other, so you just grow as you have the experience, and you acquire it you move up to another level and move on. So I have no vivid images of the Warwar, I didn't participate in the hurley burley [action] of the Warwar, I was too late into the Serviceservice, I'd been through various other skirmishes which I'd considered Warwar, they're just pPolice
- 12:00 actions I suppose. See even at Korea I came in late, the hurley burley was over. Oh there was one interesting thing there that was still going on, an English Pilot pilot on exchange to the RAAF; hie's name may come to me. And he was flying a Meat BoxMeteor over in Surle [?],Seoul, a Metier Meteor and he had the Yanks over wrought, because (Tony Powell, yep), he would come up to the airfield and go
- 12:30 down wind and he would invert the aircraft upside down and fly down wind leg and come across wind

and then turn on to finals and he's still inverted and descending to the ground and at the last minute he'd go choon, choon and land. And he did this with all the flare and bravado of the man he was; he was a typical fly- boy. Anyway he came home and he was

13:00 at the fFighter bBase in Newcastle and he got run down by a bus when he was riding a bike I believe. So it just goes to show doesn't it, you can live on the razor's edge, but don't let your guard down or the chopper will get you. That's why I plan to be around for another twenty years. Will you stick around and come and interview me in twenty years?

Sure.?

Good on ya.

If I'm still around myself.?

13:30 You know the secret to good life?

Yeah?

Get with it, go for it.

Yeah I've been with it for some time.

Hmm.

Now so World War II was more like, so would it be central to your memory, or would the Berlin air Airlift or Japan would be more important?

No, I think I lived for the moment. My memories are rather shallow you know I draw on them

14:00 occasionally, but I don't live with them as I don't wear them on my sleeve. If I'm asked about them I'll talk about them but I don't like to go and say, "Ooh remember when I ..." .it's not that way. You're given a job to do get on with it. It's like you go along and say, "Ooh excuse me SSir, about such and such, I think we should

14:30 do such and such.", "Listen you jumped up little nothing, you're not paid to think, you're paid to do a job of work, now I told you what to do, now get on with it." so.

Can I ask you, do you know of any songs from your years in the Navy navy that you could sing for us. ? When you were in Europe and Japan?

I'm not a singer, I know songs but...

15:00 **Or poems or whatever?**

Who?

Poems or anything like that, parodiesities?

Parities Parodies, yes.....I can't remember the words of them off the cuff like that, oh "Paddtty Maginty's Goat." I known, but that goes back before the wWar. I know the "Bball of Steel." but all those things as I say are recorded on vinyl, they're around

15:30 somewhere and they'll never die because they'll be passed down from father to child. But I haven't grabbed those, yes please.

Can you tell us the lyrics to Marble Hall?

"I dreamt I dwelt in marble halls." when something and something penny, had dealt with the grace and the grandeur of a situation and it's a dream and then when you wake up the to reality you're in porpoise land,

16:00 and basically the lady had, it is a old song, it used to be a music hall son and the lady involved was dupded. She came out here for the emu farm and the kangaroo ranch and all the rest of it, which used to be the go in those days and she found herself in a twenty-two foot, twenty-five foot two storey dwelling in Hawthorn on the main road,

16:30 I think it's called Burwood Road. And half the area upstairs was taken up by the hallway passing from one room to the other plus the staircase to get up there. So you can image she didn't take the pram down too often and she was pushing this pram and, yep. I can remember my maternal grandfather,

17:00 I can remember the step mother, whose my mother's step mother that is, and but I don't have much memories of anyone else in the family. The Sydney crowd, I was very close to them, yeah we're not a clannish family actually the Whorlows, we just get about living our life and getting the most out of the life to suit ourselves.

17:30 If there's a cry for help we respond, if there's no cry for help we don't ask, we just trust that they'll be doing the right thing to get the most out of their life.

Did you ever dream about your experiences after, well I mean like in the last twenty, thirty

years whatever, about your experiences in World War II or Japan, Berlin?

No I'm prompted

18:00 to the recent acquisition of the voice recognition to record dialogues similar to what we have today, only a spontaneous dialogue in answer to my memory. And this is bought about by my granddaughter who finds herself intrigued by the life I've lived. But only gets it in snippets but she wants the whole shebang [lot]. That will eventuate once I teach the baby how to talk and once I get some time off

18:30 to train it. But my life is that full, although I'm sitting here for the day, that many things I have to do, I just hope I live long enough to do them all. But travel doesn't phase faze me at all, I love it, I love New Zealand I think New Zealand's a beautiful country, you've got all the wonders of the world parked away there. I've had about four

19:00 trips, five trips to New Zealand, and I intend to go back again. Yes once the dollar exchange gets to 1.33, I'm going back to New Zealand, make it economical then.

Can I ask you whether you were ever upset about not participating earlier in the Warwar?

Yes.

Tell us about that?

Well I saw the newsreels of the

19:30 fantails in the sky and I thought "Wwouldn't that be wonderful." And I thought, I tested my skill by going to parlours around town and firing off weapons at different targets and was very pleased to take my son into one of these parlours, oh when he was a young fellow and picked up a BB raffle and the idea was you had to get three

20:00 in the central bullseye, which there was just room for three and they gave you five bucks or whatever. I got two in the third one was just on the edge of the outer and wouldn't pay it, I've still go the target around somewhere, but the son was very impressed with that. "Oh gee Dad.", "Jjust behave yourself lad";, as good as a horse whip.

20:30 And so I took oh little side issues like that to compensate for the fact that I was locked out. And when the time came my eyes let me down for flying training so I became a Navigatornavigator. Thing that I've never regretted really because its kept me more active and more responsible I guess because I had responsibility for other lives not just my own.

21:00 I guess if your responsibilitiesty are just for yourself you make different judgements about situations, as opposed to knowing that you will not make that decision because Harry has a wife and two kids or whatever it may be. Now the pPost wWar that's an interesting thing, at the end of the wWar we were being disbanded at Tokamore TocumwallTocumwal,

21:30 we were all taken back there and there was communicating with Japan. And I was on a trip to go up to Japan and the Navigation navigation Officer officer also was on the, sorry he was scheduled to be booted out; you know discharged after so many weeks. And he said, "Oh Bob, it's my last chance to get a trip do you mind if I take your place?"

22:00 to which I said, "No, by all means go." and he went and the plane crashed up in the Mindanao region round that area. And being a Liberator it tore open at the bBomb bay which had flimsy doors and bulkhead, you can see if in the photo, anyway as soon as the door ripped off the water hit the back part and just broke it open and spilt them out. Anyway he died and I thought, "Ggeez,

22:30 that could have been me." but then again, it wasn't, that's the transitory thought, it could have been me but it wasn't. I got subsequent trips up there, so I should worry. And there was another occasion when due to the inactivity during this disbandment phase I found myself absent from the base for a number of days,

23:00 unauthorised, and I was home and revelling in the night life and when I arrived home at eleven o'clock that night my mother said, "There's a telegram for you." which said "Rreturn to base immediately." and it was signed by the Captaincaptain. So I wasn't going to get out on the road at midnight and get to arrive back, so I got up early the next morning and positioned myself on the Hume Highway and got a lift to the

23:30 Shepparton turnoff and then got a lift. Anyway I did the whole journey on horse and ginker jinker [cart] and truck and motorbike and all manner of vehicles, and finally got to the base, got dropped by a motorcyclist at the back fence, went through the back fence, took a bicycle, one of me mate's pushbikes, and rode off down toward oOperations and on the way the red light went

24:00 on at the runway, stopping me from crossing. An aircraft took off and then I got down to Operations operations. "Where's such and such?", "He just took off". "Oh my God", ." Sso the oOps oOfficer [operations officer] said, "There's another plane going in a quarter of an hour up to Amberleyly [?].", I said, "Oh I'll cope that one." So I saw the sSkipper and said, "Do you mind if I ride along?", "No, plenty of room." and off we went and get to AmblyAmberley and I ring up the skipper and say "I'm here.", "Oh

for God's sake, get lost, I've got someone to stand in

24:30 for you", . " "Oh all right, well when are you coming back?", "I'll be back in a fortnight.", "Okay see ya." So I spent the night at AmblyAmberley then I went down to Archerfield and hitched a ride in a Navy navy fighter and got back to Sydney and then went into Sydney and stayed around for the best part of a fortnight and decided it was time to go back to town. So got out on the road and hitched a ride

25:00 back and I got as far as Mittagong and stopped at the hasty tasty [takeaway food place] and the lass there asked me where I was heading and what I was doing, and she said, "Well why don't you stop for the dance tonight?" I said, "I've got to get back to base.", Sshe said, "Oh the train pulls in a half past two, it will get you back to Narrandera and that will get you back to base." and I said, "Oh beauty, okay." So I stopped for the dance and what have you and got on this train in the middle of the

25:30 night and the corridors were filled with sleeping bodies and it was a case of just lie down where you could. In the morning got off at Narrandera, fairly dishevelled and got onto a rail car which was going down to TockamoreTocumwallTocumwal. Do you know a conductor had the cheek to come along and say "Ttickets please." I'd travelled all that way and no one had asked for a ticket. So I fumbled around and I

26:00 couldn't find my ticket and I explained to him how I'd gone to Narrandera for the weekend and I'd lost the ticket, and he said "How much did it cost?" and I happen to know, n so he said "Oh, alright." so I finished the journey. So I came from Melbourne round the full circuit, gratis [free], that's life.

Were you relieved to be back?

Oh no, no relief or anything I was just back, and "Hhow are you going, what was the trip like?". It didn't cross my mind what would I

26:30 have done had the aircraft not come back. I thought about that several times. Do I step forward and say "Wwhat about me"? or do I say, "Rrobber's dog." and slink off into the woodwork and come back and Roberto or whatever I happen to be. Be an interesting call if it had of arisen. Okay next question.

Did you feel that whenever you were

27:00 **serving that it was a part, you were serving for the Empire?**

Who?

When you with the RAF in World War II and after, did you feel like you were fighting for the Empire?

No, never.

Not even before the Warwar?

No, I'd only be fighting for the security of my family. That's all that matters in my life, my family. Maybe a friend or two but basically family. I was very, you ask about the

27:30 Communists, I felt very angry about the Communists Communists Post post War war when the social mores of the country started to disintegrate and the family unit disintegrated. And I then unjustly blamed the CCommunists through undermining our society as part of their chore to overcome. And the thing is our family life has disintegrated

28:00 and our community standards have lowered and the general community has become dog eat dog rather than, that's a generalisation, but as opposed to the old days when you were allowed to open a door for a lady, not because she was weaker but because it was a courtesy. You were allowed to say "Ooh excuse me." you were allowed to ssay "Pardon me." these thing were expected, it was all part of the courtesy of living. And living with your neighbour and

28:30 living in peace and harmony. And neighbourly things in those days were wonderful things, the things that have gone today. I look at these modern developments where there's no backyard., "Why haven't you got a back yard?", "Oh I don't want to be mowing lawn all my life; I've got more to do with my life.", "Yeah what have you got to do, take your son down to the park?", "Oh haven't got time for that nonsense.", "Well what are you doing?", "Oh I've got to make some money, how am I going to afford this place, I'm already owe more than I can

29:00 really meet." and when the rates go up atin Christmas time or thereabouts there's going to be a few cheap places around, if you wish to trade on other peoples hardships. But that's what it will come to. Okay.

So what about your country?

What country?

Australia?

Australia yeah.

If you're not going to fight for the Empire were you fighting for Australia as well?

Oh I'll fight for Australia yes.

But did you feel that at the time?

Yes I'd fight for Australia yep,

29:30 good place. Didn't want to many people to find out about it, and they let all these people in, the Yanks come in and the Brits came in, they all thought it was a good place and they stayed. But see I'm talking about a time when we had a population of seven million I think it was and it might have gone up to, nine million I'm thinking sorry not thousand, million. Fairly comfortable life, you go out on the

30:00 street and play cricket with a kerosene tin in the middle of the road, and the baker's cart wants to come down, hard luck, "Harry's batting, when we get him out you can go through." It was, the way it was.

Did you feel that you were part of the Anzac tradition?

No.

Tell us why?

30:30 I didn't participate therefore I could not justify intruding on them, even joining the RSL [Returned and Services League] I didn't intrude. I joined for a short while and then I backed away because I was frequently asked questions about, "Ddo you remember such and such and such and such?" It's like being accosted in the street, as I sometimes was in England, "Oh my cousin, he's gone out to Australia, hie's name's Harry Bloggs do you know him?",

31:00 "Yeah I know,n him lady why?", "Oh what's he doing lately?", "Well I think he's changed his job since he last wrote to you.", "Oh well what's he doing?", "What was he doing then?", "Oh such and such.", "Oh yes he's totally changed now." you just had to carry it along, because it was important to them, didn't mean a thing to me. Except be courteous to the individual I guess.

What about the RSL, what did you find to your dislike about the

31:30 **RSL?**

Just the inability to answer their stories, because I couldn't compete in the sense of the blood and glory part of it, I was more just a servant doing a job of work. Mind you I would have dearly loved to have bombed off a few, I mean I got in the Rrear Turret turret and we knocked off derelict ships on the reefs out around the Barrier

32:00 Reef there, it's studded with ships that were founded on the reef and used them for target practice. All good stuff, it's no different to being in side show alley and seeing how close you can get, just a challenge get on with it. Move onto the next step.

Did you dislike the politics of the RSL as well?

Yes it's "petticoat politics" at the moment.

So what do you mean by that?

Because the widows are starting to dominate

32:30 and getting more and more into the Committee committee phase and setting more and more petticoat rules. For example I was at a local RSL when I dared to use a plastic water cup to have a drink of coffee, hot coffee; "You're not allowed to use those." said one strident female leading a group of four., "And why is

33:00 that?', "Because there are mugs over there and you pay a dollar to get a mug and on return of the mug you will get it back.", "Why should I waste my time doing that when I have a cup here and it's now full of coffee you'll notice?", "Well it shouldn't be.", "So what do you want me to do, tip it out in the...?", "No just leave it there some one will take care of it.", "Well I've got a good idea." chug a lug., "It's empty now, now what do I do with the cup?"

33:30 I'm not going to bow down to the tyrannical petticoat mob, so there. But do you see how the survival puts them there at the top of the pile because the blokes are....very few of my friends and associates are living now, it's surprising. I rang up a guy, one of the guys in that photo the other day, I must confess I've been remiss hadn't contacted him for a while

34:00 and his wife said, "I'm sorry Lofty's not here.", I said "Oh, can I leave a message?', Sshe said, "Well I don't think so he's been dead for eighteen years." So Lofty fell off the planet and I didn't know about it, because I don't bother getting a local paper and reading it, I get one a week usually but it's only for the television guide.

Did you, when you said that you

34:30 **weren't supportive of the concept of Empire, or rather you didn't fight for it, did you still support the Empire for what it stood for, what it meant to you?**

I tolerated it I guess because it was built on the poverty of man I guess. The areas they conquered they didn't do much to develop them and educate

35:00 the people within the area. Its much like, this is a harsh call, but religion is based on, religion fosters on ignorance and where you have an ignorant mass you'll have them worshipping idols and gods and mystical things and what have you. So the churches go out and they send their missionaries around to teach them the values of their own particular religion, and doing

35:30 so and in particular the Catholics educate them, but in educating them they destroy their own faith. So they have no hope of getting the converts that will last because they've educated them and once you educate the native the religion influence decays, so you get other factor coming in to replace it, in terms of direction for the community. Well I don't know if that explains anything but

36:00 that's how I saw, perhaps saw the British Empire, that it went into these areas and in its case it didn't educate the people to let them take advantage of the knowledge factor. So they answered on a primitive basis to all things, they responded with an eye for an eye I guess and survived as best they could.

What about the Monarchymonarchy, the British Monarchy monarchy how did you

36:30 **see that at the time?**

Strongest feeling I have of the Monarchymonarchy, is [King] George the 5th V was very ill and as a schoolchild I received a postcard, as did all schoolchildren, showing stormy waters and the King was in stormy waters and might go under, I forget the actual wording. And at the end of the ordeal the postcard came back and the waters were

37:00 stilled and the King was there smiling and beaming and all's well with the world, because George the 5thV survived. That's as close as I came to the Monarchymonarchy. Mind you Lord Louis Mount BatonMountbatten, he came fairly close to it and if you turn the camera off I'll give you my opinion but that's another story I guess. I went to Buckingham Palace like everyone else, I

37:30 saw the Military military, the pPomp and the cCeremony, all good stuff, good for tourism. Provide jobs for the gentry in the oOfficer ranks, provided work for the blokes in the lower ranks. It's all part of the economy, it's all part of the huffing and puffing. Mind you the Americans would dearly love to buy the British royalty with all their pPomp and cCeremony, they

38:00 emulate it in so many areas but they can't quite capture that mystic that surrounds the English Monarchymonarchy.

Having said that how do you...?

Go on.

How do you view the concept of a Republic republic for Australia today?

I don't think I support a Republic republic for Australia because we haven't got the

38:30 controls. The Monarchy monarchy has the controls established which let them, and puts them above graft and corruption and the rest of it, they just have...although it may go on, I wouldn't know. But they have sufficient Pomp pomp and Ceremony ceremony to let us view them as you know a safe port in a storm, we can turn to them and say all is saved they know what to do. And when you get these

39:00 Republicans republicans moving forward and causing local descent dissent and upset in the community then they can send in the appropriate forces. Send in a few tTroops and wave their wands and put it all down and we go back to our peaceful tranquil way. What's at the end of it all, life, what are we really aiming for, why are we really sustaining ourselves through all this and all these little side issues, do they mean...

39:30 the important thing is to be able to enjoy your life, survive, care for your family, live with your fellow man and continue to do so as long as you can do so without drain on the community. Even an old dog when it feels its time is up it won't go to Medibank [Medicare?], it will go and find a dark corner under the house or in the back of the yard and curl up and die. But no we get out there and you spend all you can to keep me

40:00 alive I'm important. So I am I guess to some people. But grief is not for the dying, death comes and goes, but grief is what the surviving suffer, there the ones that suffer the most, because each grief is sepaerate in each mind. Some people grieve deeply for different reasons, all for difference different reasons.

40:30 **Do you have a belief in God?**

No I believe in a higher force that enables the beauties we see around us to manifest themselves over and over again. I don't believe for example in people rushing around pouring water on whales that have beached themselves, I feel that whales have been beaching themselves since times in immemorial and if it's their choice to beach themselves for whatever reason let them carry on

41:00 doing it. They haven't suddenly started because we became aware of them and started increasing their numbers, and the more numbers we have the more will beach, and that will give more publicity to the people who want to pour buckets of water on them.

Can I ask you very briefly, we're almost out of time; is there anything you'd like to say for the historical record?

For the historical record I've lived from 1925 to well, almost 2005.

41:30 I'm quite happy with the life I've lead, it's had its usual upsets and miseries but I wouldn't swap it for anyone, I'm quite happy as are my family I hope and work for. Long live the Queen.

I'd like to thank you very much then.

No troubles I mean, it's been a joy to have you in my home, but if I find one bit of dirt on my carpet you've had it, you're bloody history.

INTERVIEW ENDS