

Australians at War Film Archive

Bernard Kuschert (Dusty) - Transcript of interview

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Tape 1

00:42 **Good Morning Dusty.**

Good morning Kathy.

Thank you for talking with us today. I'd like to start off the interview by just asking you where you were born. I believe you grew up in Goulburn.

Yes but I wasn't born there, five under me were.

01:00 I was born on the 24th August 1917 at Yurana. It's on the Murrumbidgee, downstream from Wagga Wagga. I've no recollection of that myself. And I tell a lot of people I remember the day I was born, my mother was there. That's pulling a long bow. And it, as I say we moved to Goulburn, we were living in Lagoon Street.

01:30 That's in the old days. Lagoon Street was the entrance to Goulburn from Sydney and run up to the main street, Auburn Street. And I wasn't very well my first four or five years of life. And in fact the house we lived in Lagoon Street had no front yard.

02:00 But just front wall fronted the pavement. There was the step from the front door and there was, oh five to six foot double gate at the side leading into the yard. And I can remember one time when dad wasn't allowed, he was

02:30 quarantined from work because of the big flu epidemic. It was running round, must have been 1920, '21 or somewhere around that. He was off work for a week. He was employed at Turner's Garage as a carpenter mechanic and he... but when I turned five I went to

03:00 North Goulburn School for a while. There was the eldest brother Bill, eldest sister, then Edna, then Oscar, then Sadie, she's still alive Sadie, the other three are dead at the moment, now. And then under me there was

03:30 Victor, he's at Wollongong now, Mavis she's in a nursing home in Revesby at the moment. Married Bruce Robertson. He came from Kenmore really, Kenmore Village. And who next then, there was young Ken, he's dead. Then Norma she lives in Punchbowl at the moment, married Alan Cox. And then

04:00 the baby's Patricia, she's dead. So, but there's five of us alive.

And did you go to school in Goulburn?

In Goulburn when I was five. I started at North Goulburn for about two years. Then we moved from Lagoon Street, we went up, towards West Goulburn. Walked up, I remember mum pushing a pram and we were walking, some of us

04:30 were walking the younger ones. And the older ones were still at school that day. And went into, John Street. It only runs for one block between Faithful and oh what was the name of that, the top street, anyhow it was only a small street. And we lived in number sixteen for a few years. Then moved next door into fourteen, they bought the

05:00 house and moved next door to there. And three of us were sleeping out on the veranda cause we had a family of ten. And dad was always in work. And went to Bourke Street Public School then. down towards the centre of town and one street back from Auburn Street was Bourke Street. And that's where

05:30 I done the rest of my. Oh no finished up the last year of my schooling, they built a high school up in the end of Goldsmith Street which run away from Auburn Street and across Faithful Street. And they built the high school there and I done my last year of schooling there till

06:00 in me sixteenth, fifteen, I left school at the end of 1932. I think it was.

And when did you enlist?

Enlist. Well I worked on the railway, went on the railway when I was eighteen. And I went, when I turned twenty-one I went to

- 06:30 West Wyalong 1938 and on recruiting day '39 was Friday the 13th October. And I was loading wool off a four horse drawn wagon. And the head porter, Jack Rogers, came over and said, "Do you want to join up?" I said, "Yeah." so got on the old push bike and about a mile and a half into town and joined
- 07:00 up. Well, put my name down. And they swore us in on the 3rd November. We went on the train and landed in Ingleburn on the 4th November, Saturday. And all from West Wyalong. Our numbers ranged from six-o-six-five to six-treble-one. That was Charlie Yates.
- 07:30 I was six-o-seven-nine. And we were all supposed to be 2/4th Battalion. And we had our books they issued on the Friday the 3rd November. And we were all dressed in mufti [civilian clothes], I had my football blazer on, I remember that. And I was a very sick boy, on the train
- 08:00 that day, from the night before. And we landed at Ingleburn and on the Saturday as I say. And the 2/3rd Battalion was short of a complement. And they took a block out and there happened to be twenty-three of us from West Wyalong in that block. And there was one young chap from Oberon, six foot four and a half, Dave Oram.
- 08:30 And they said "What are we going to do with this chap?" And this Syd Clift from West Wyalong, he was about six-o-six-seven I think, or six-o-six-six. And he said "We'll pot him". And that was his nickname. And he got killed in Greece. And a very naive person Dave was.
- 09:00 Eighteen years of age only.

So you joined up with the 2/3rd?

No, well we were, one day while we were on the train we were 2/4th Battalion. Because there were a lot of West Wyalong still in the 2/4th. And as I say, I just checked through the battalion book has a complete list of all the, there

- 09:30 are a few missing in it. Where, over three thousand names there, in the book. That's our battalion book, The War Dance they call it. And it was edited by, or compiled by Kenny Clift from the 6 Div. He wrote a very good book too of his own, Saga of the Sea. And he got a
- 10:00 DCM [Distinguished Conduct Medal] in Bardia the first day.

Can I just ask when you first left Australia; you went by ship over...?

Yes, yes we boarded the Orcades on the 9th January 1940 at somewhere round Walsh Bay or somewhere

- 10:30 it was. Could have been Darling Harbour. And they moved us down under the bridge and we were out in stream for that afternoon and night. And we sailed on the 10th January. Was quite a big convoy. And I think finally when we left there was about fourteen or fifteen troop ships in that one. Few of the P&O [Pacific & Orient] line and Strath,
- 11:00 Strathmaiden, Stratheden, Strathaird. Couple of the Empress boats, Empress of Japan and Empress of Canada. There was a Polish ship in it too. Zeebruschkee [?] or something. And of course we picked up the first echelon from New Zealand down on the Bass Strait. The Langatiki and two or three of their ships. And
- 11:30 when we left had a day's leave in Fremantle, went into Perth. And when we sailed from there we had the escort of a battle ship, the [HMS] Ramillies, aircraft carrier the [HMS] Eagle, HMAS Sydney the original cruiser. Few other, we
- 12:00 didn't see much of. And we sailed and we had a day off at Colombo, Ceylon then. And when we entered the Red Sea, Ramillies and most of the escort left us. And we sailed up the Suez Canal to El Kantara about mid way up. Disembarked there
- 12:30 and the Kiwis went into Egypt, we went into Palestine by train. A camp called Julis, J-U-L-I-S. And the four battalions, we were all 2/1st, I'll just say, call them our second. But first, second, third and fourth battalion were the Sixteenth Brigade at that time. We were still formed in fours.
- 13:00 We, still had First World War webbing. And the dixie, had a canteen too. Of course the dixie was just an oval tin one. In this Julis camp we were fostered in by a Scottish Battalion. And all the camp, all the tents were in line, tents
- 13:30 all in company lines. With the mess tents at the far end. And the kitchens were weatherboard built. And they were just finishing off a great big cinema in light stone, at the camp. And about the end of oh sometime in March, late
- 14:00 March everything started to change. We received the Bren gun. We only had, prior to this, we only had

Lewis guns. And of course I had a Vickers Gun baton all the way through. But they got rid of the Lewis guns, these Bren guns which was in my opinion the best infantry weapon

14:30 ever devised. And then we got the new webbing and everything, threw away the First World War stuff. And we had aluminium dixies, fitted into one another. They're oblong and I decorated mine with Walt Disney things, a bucking bronco, a map of Australia on the main one and name on the end.

15:00 And Pinocchio, Donald Duck and stuff like that. And there's a story later on, on that, on the dixies, in Greece. But we were at this Julis camp. From there we had training all the time, route marches and the usual rifle drills and stuff like that. And company

15:30 and battalion Guards. And the officers, all the officers' tents were just across the road from us.

And do you recall getting your orders for your first move out of Camp Julis?

We didn't move out till after

16:00 Italy come in the war. When Italy came in the war everything turned into threes. 2/4th, 8th and 11th Battalions became the 19th Brigade. And we formed three ranks of threes then rather than the even numbers. One pace back or left or right whatever it was, form fours. And the we spread the tents and dug them; this is before we left Julis.

16:30 In this time too we're erecting camps further down at El Majdal , El Barbera, Beatjirgia. And then they had Kilo Sixty-nine further down towards Gaza. Never went to Gaza really. But we done leave into Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Seen the sights and red lights.

17:00 But I wasn't taken with it, my first visit to the red light district. But I got used to it after a while. And we had one of the chaps from, oh there's a story too, the chaps from West Wyalong. One chap when we joined up on recruiting day in

17:30 October. They bought him down from the cells, he was a vagrant really, John Lennon. "Honest John" they called him, he was anything else but. He was in our platoon too, worse luck. And every time he went on leave he wouldn't come back. He done three lots of twenty-four days in the Jerusalem jail. And they SNLR'd him, Services No Longer Required. But any time he was doing this twenty-four days we weren't

18:00 allowed any leave. And he'd get out and we'd all take up a bit of tarpaulin just to give him some money to go on leave and he wouldn't come back. We got sick of him really. And the other chap though, Les Daniels, he had a family of about three when he joined up. And then his wife died and there was no-one to look after him so he got compassionate discharge. He was a really nice bloke Les, too. But I don't know whatever happened to him after that. But there was

18:30 another story on, if I can digress, go back to, when we joined up in and went into on the 3rd November, this Harry Goring, from, he was working for the tin mine just out of Ungarie near West Wyalong. And he'd missed out on the recruiting day on the thirteenth. Anyhow he went there

19:00 he was one of this, he was all bone and muscle, about twelve, twelve and half stone, six foot two. And "Tiger" we called him or "Herman". Harry Goring was his name. Or "Corporal Bullshit" at times. And he gave him a story that one day he'd gone over to Bathurst so he took his place and got his number, NX6080. And lo' and behold we get down on the fourth,

19:30 this Mick Elliott came down from the Western Mine, we had two blokes in the Battalion with the same number for quite a while. And Mick, they finally gave Mick a number, one-two-seven-double nine I think it was. And he stuttered, "Hesitation", we called him. He stuttered. "M-make m-me a b-b-bloody ch-choco". But we was all proud of our four figure numbers.

20:00 And our first Colonel was NX6 Colonel England, the "Black Panther" we called him. Can I tell a story on the ship about him? Well incidentally on my final leave, I went to Goulburn of course first, to see mum and dad. Then I went up to West Wyalong and all the

20:30 things. And coming back through on the train I got to Goulburn I said, "Well I'll drop off and see mum and dad first". So we got to the camp a day late. And that cost me loss of two days pay which was five bob a day then too. And a pound. And I didn't front the Colonel til we's aboard the Orcades, down around, we'd just turned into the Bass Strait I think.

21:00 And went along and the mess parade on the Orcades was done in about three sittings. We were in the second sitting mainly where we were. And we had a cheese pie on, macaroni done in cheese. And that was alright but the third set there was some

21:30 engineers. Second Engineers, 2/1st Engineers down below and they were in the third set with some of our blokes. They refused to eat it and turned it all over. And the following day Colonel England had everyone on deck. And he's through the loud speaker, "Any nurses on deck, go below". And then he said "If you want a hair in a soldier's arsehole,

22:00 I'll see the day he'll eat cheese pie and like it". And when we were in action in Bardia, you'd go past his,

and go, "Would you like some cheese pie now?" He was a great fella, he made the platoon. NX6 was his number. We had quite a few officers, some of em'd come in, in kilts. In the two figure numbers, and our last Colonel was

22:30 NX100 Ian Hutchison, he was there. And our first Padre was NX317 Bill Hart. He won the Military Cross. He christened Bruce, my son. He was a great fellow. And we, but anyhow, I digressed, we were in the Middle East now weren't we.

Yeah if I could just take you back.

They got rid of Doug Lennon and

23:00 Les Daniels had gone home. And Italy came in the war and we dispersed the tents, dug em in. And then about oh sometime in July we went in and trained and across into Egypt and just outside Cairo, a place called. Halwan, H-A-L-W-A-N [actually was Helwan]. Quite near the pyramids. There was an

23:30 airfield there. Met a West Wyalong bloke who was in the RAAF [Royal Australian Air Force] there. And we lay there for six weeks. Went and seen the red lights of course in Cairo as well. And we climbed the pyramids twice, or one of the pyramids twice put it that way. Went

24:00 into where the Pharaoh's tomb was. Went over, second time we climbed it was one with the top had been knocked off and a pole. And I'd climbed the pole anyhow so you could go up to where it had been outside. We took a nail or something with us and scratched our names in the stones on the top there. But anyhow oh early in September it'd be, we moved out and went

24:30 across outside Alexandria to Amiriya just out of Ikingi Mariut. And the big tents, camp there. We were fostered in there by a Pommy Battalion really. And we were there; all the tents were dispersed there too, dug in. Of course it was more sandy there. Palestine was really a stony type of desert.

25:00 Wasn't the accepted thing like sand dunes and that. You'd see plenty of that outside Cairo. But when you got on near the coast of Alexandria you're back in the stony type of desert again. And we while we were there, one time, the train line run as far as Mersa Matruh. And they, B Company I

25:30 was in. Eleventh Platoon, B Company, Six Section. And they left a platoon in Ikingi Mariut well Amiriya Battalion, Company Head Quarters, another platoon at El Barbera. And we went up to Sidi Haneish just short of Mersa Matruh.

26:00 And our job was ack-ck [anti aircraft] guard on the trains. They had this little box built on a flat top, just over six foot long. And it sloped up and opened at the top about a foot wide. And you had the Bren gun on the tripod sticking up through the roof and we each laid, or Snowy Elbourne and I was ack-ack guard on one trip. And

26:30 used to take about four or five days to do the round trip. And we had a Corporal, Bill Christoff from West Wyalong. He was on the footplate to make sure the driver in front us stayed there. And we had this, we never got attacked, we'd get on at Sidi Haneish, go up to Mersa Matruh, which is as far as the

27:00 train line went. Then back, wait for a train back, go back as far as Amiriya. Wait for another train to come and get back to Sidi Haneish and someone else'd take over. Really lazy time. But...

Did you go to Bardia?

Yes, I, we after the train guard we, back in Amiriya. And

27:30 just before, the week before Christmas 1940 I'm talking about still, the battalion moved out and left about thirty of us on camp guard. Til another mob came in and we were there til moved out on Boxing Day. On trucks,

28:00 three ton trucks with some of us were on tops of bales of blankets, some canopy over the top. And we Lieutenant Fulton, Lenny Fulton was our Officer in Charge of us. And we get up as far as oh beyond Sidi Barrani. And slept that night and he had us out looking to make sure there was no

28:30 land mines or that. The Italians'd be, that's as far as the Italians had come down to Sidi Barrani. But they'd we'd pushed back before we went up there. Then we went up and Sollum, we went up from Sollum, and went up Hell Fire Pass. And an air raid, Itie's [Italians] put on a bit of an air raid. We were in the first truck up but the rest of em turned back and, we didn't know of course. Went back and we kept on up through Fort Capuzzo. And

29:00 we landed amongst the troops who outside Bardia. And it was getting on dark so we slept in the truck that night. And the following morning, "Get that bloody truck out of the way, enemy fire here". So we got our gear and found out where the battalion was and joined them. And this'd be oh roughly about New Year's Day, roughly. Getting close

29:30 to that anyhow. Found our platoon and section and dug a little bit of a hole in there. And then on the night of the 2nd January the,

- 30:00 Snowy and I had been, this Snowy Elbourne, four different, our numbers. There was two from each company made special runners to Battalion Head Quarters in case the telephone was, the sigs [signals] used to lay the telephone lines. If they got cut and that we'd have to run. And they took us down to the start line they had for the following
- 30:30 morning. Which was a big roll of tape that was four by two we used to clean the rifles with. Went out across the stony desert. And so we had to take our company down that night after midnight. And we got back and this, our RSM [Regimental Sergeant Major] had a
- 31:00 big china mug, you know seen the white china mug. And handed me an half full of OP [over proof] Rum. I've never drank rum since. And Snowy never drank or smoked in his life. And he died of cancer, he was only six foot four, ah five foot four. But anyhow we took the Company to the start
- 31:30 line that morn, about four o'clock in the morning. And of course we were at Battalion Head Quarters still. Snow and I and two from each company. Although Nev Blundell got out of it somehow. He was in A Company, he was supposed to be one of the runners. And he won a Military Medal either in Bardia or Tobruk. And then it started.
- 32:00 The Italians they reckoned they had about four hundred and twenty artillery weapons. I think they were all trying to hit us. And we had about a hundred and twenty guns behind us. There was some Itie tanks there of ours. Had about eight or ten Itie tanks. And the 2/1st Battalion went in first and cut to the right. 2/2nd to the left and we went through the centre. And we were in behind
- 32:30 well it happened to be B Company, our own company see. And Ken McKenzie was our RSM and our higher officer was Jackson Taylor. And we run up against the company gone to ground on the lip of this, well you'd nearly call it a wadi, although it just a big
- 33:00 long shallow dish. And so we went, grabbed behind them and there was a re-entrance on our left. And Jackson Taylor was below McKenzie and I was above McKenzie. And Snow was there and all scattered around. And the Ities down below started firing up and they hit Jackson Taylor. And, just as we were trying to get down to him, and they hit him again and killed him so. And then we got the order to move on.
- 33:30 That was our first casualty I seen. And as we moved on the, B Company in front of us got up and I see one bloke, go, hit through the stomach and it was one of our blokes from West Wyalong, Tim Dempsey. And he died of the wounds of course. And we went down into this; the company went on ahead of us. And we went down and the prisoners they'd taken we, we
- 34:00 started to search them. And there was a big sanger wall. Sanger wall, made of bricks, rocks really. And some of the rocks are that big and the sanger wall'd be, where's that photo I had of those, it showed the sanger wall there. And then, all of a sudden our Colonel raced back in, through the gap in the sanger wall. And "Get those anti tank guns",
- 34:30 there's six Itie tanks behind him see. I went up to the left, hid behind a big rock. And about ten yards behind, back from the sanger wall and these two pounder guns arrived. One of the tanks was on the sanger wall, killed Lieutenant Calman. He was in charge of the mortar platoon. He were there with us. And
- 35:00 these two pounders hit it and stopped it right on the wall. Good photo of it there. Another gun stayed about fifty yards back, firing down; it fired three shots and jammed. And then this other one was right in behind me. He must have fired about fourteen or fifteen shots and I'm getting all the muzzle flash from it. Muzzle blast. And Tony Asgill was on that and Victor Head. And they'd formed,
- 35:30 this anti tank platoon had been formed out of the brigades, some of our chaps see. And one was killed, gunned down in the centre. Pickering, he was killed when he got hit the second time and burst into flames. And it's in the photo there where it burned right down. And in the report
- 36:00 they gave it that Pickering's gun had knocked out all the tanks. But after they'd got hit Tony was still firing up behind us. So, that didn't matter. We stopped the six tanks and then that night we, Snowy and I were given the boys' anti tank rifle which was useless. And we had an Italian; I think it was a Breda or something
- 36:30 it was like a machine gun and our rifles. And we were on guard up on the right flank. At the sanger wall but nothing happened. Next day we moved on and that night we were guarding oh three or four thousand prisoners somewhere. You could hear em crying and talking and that. And one of em starts playing a guitar or something. And the Colonel or whatever got it and
- 37:00 broke it on him. And the next day they started going out, the prisoners. Yeah the second day. No that'd be the third day. It was just all over then and one of our sergeants, he was ex First World War man, Frank Lucas, he was sitting on the back of a fifteen hundred weight with a barrel of
- 37:30 wine alongside him and a tube going in that, with a Bren gun over his lap, leading em out. And you'd see em going along and they had suitcases and bags and everything. You'd see 'em stop and throw something out of line. He reckoned by the time they got to the prison cages where they were built further down, they hardly had anything left to carry. So that was the

- 38:00 idea. They reckoned we got all told, not our battalion, but like the brigades, another battalion apart from our brigades, the Nineteenth Brigade was in it. And we got about forty-four thousand prisoners there in Bardia. It was all over on the third morning. So we came out pulled us back
- 38:30 and there was another sanger wall they had. And that was their lines of defence and all of a sudden we started to get this smell. And had a look in there and there's two Aussies been, that'd suffered a direct hit from a shell. And one of them was from our battalion and one from the 2/2nd Battalion. Coates was the chap, so we pulled em out and covered em up with stone. Cause you couldn't
- 39:00 as I say, very stony and that. And anyhow our platoon section came up, Pioneer Platoon came around. And they pulled the stones off and just took the, had the double disk on. And they take one and leave one on and just covered them up again for the Grave
- 39:30 Battalions to look after on that. And I think it was the 2/2nd Battalion bloke was a bloke named Earles if my memory served me correct. But anyhow we weren't there long and we moved up outside Tobruk.
- I'm gonna stop you here Dusty.**
- Pardon?
- I'm gonna stop you here because I know we're coming up to the end of the tape.**
- Right love.

Tape 2

- 00:31 **Dusty, after the action in Bardia was over, where did you go next?**
- We moved on to outside Tobruk. And we took up a position, oh, we weren't with Battalion Head Quarters any more.
- 01:00 And we were back with our section, company. We dug little holes as far as we could, only about six inches deep, and we received one reinforcement, Louie Whiteman I think he was. And Jack Neuss, Jack Neuss he came from
- 01:30 Cooma. He and I were helping dig his little burrow. And all of a sudden the Italian guns, we see the flashes. Started firing so Jack and I finished up in this little bit of a scraper there. And Louie Whiteman says "Get out of there you bastards, I'll dig me own hole". And that was by the way. And we were there a few nights. And
- 02:00 one night, around oh I think it might have been only two nights before we had to go into action, our platoon under Len Harvey our lieutenant. He took us out on trying to locate any booby trap lines. They were linked by a series of
- 02:30 cord and that and filled up with bench cuttings and stuff like that. And Billy Smith and I placed out in front of 'em a line of the rest of the two lines which was about twenty yards apart we were. And we had to look out very carefully so we didn't hit the booby trap lines. So, down towards the wire, didn't
- 03:00 strike any booby trap lines and just short of the anti tank, it was only about two to three foot deep anyhow. And then the wire beyond it was about oh barb wire fence and coil wire and stuff like that. Extend about fifteen or twenty yards. But Len Herwig and Sergeant Wally Smith went down,
- 03:30 inspected the anti tank ditch as it was and the wire. Came back and pulled us back and they had two Bren guns with us. One had been left with some of the chaps back in our position. And got them to fire a magazine through each at the Ities. And there's oh about twenty-four of us so we'd taken on the whole
- 04:00 Italian Army see. But we only got a few shots in reply and got back to the thing. And on the morning of the 21st January, which was another Friday. No wait a minute, wouldn't be a Friday, third was a Friday wasn't it? Eighteenth, yeah, must have been about a Wednesday. Anyhow
- 04:30 we went in. And as I say I was in Eleven Platoon, we were in behind C Company, Fourteen Platoon. And we're oh about fifty yards behind em. And we're the second wave really. This Fourteenth Platoon hit a booby trapped line or mine field or something. And only nine of 'em was able to carry on with quite a few dead and
- 05:00 others wounded. Rudd Holland that champion light weight boxer, got through the knee, his brother got killed. But that nine we caught 'em up and they went on with us. When we got to the wire, we had three wire cutters which the engineers hadn't been there with their Bangalore Torpedoes and that. So we had to cut our own wire.
- 05:30 Out of three wire cutters, one bloke started to cut and broke, they were jerry [badly] built. Another

bloke had lost his, so all went through one gap. Forty, just on forty chaps. And two foot wide the cut. The C Company chaps dashed ahead of us and one of 'em picked up in one of those concrete emplacements,

- 06:00 picked up a machine gun and bashed it down on heads of the Ities there. And of course we overrun that position pretty easy. And they, C Company chaps rejoined their Company. And we went through and turned to the left. And the 2/2nd went to the right again and the 2/1st went through the centre. We'd reversed what we'd done in Bardia.
- 06:30 And our section was right on, turned out we were right on our extreme right flank. And we kept going and going and not meeting much opposition where we were. We were well inside the line of the machine gun post just inside the wire. Which was plenty of them.
- 07:00 We finished up against another sanger wall encircling an artillery post on the El Adem road. We were just short of that. All the artillery post had about six guns in it. They looked like dual service anti aircraft and
- 07:30 artillery. And any time that they'd had their living quarters below ground, they must have had jack hammers or something to get down there. And anytime they'd come up for, one bloke came up to have a leak one time and we're lining up to shoot 'em and Jackie Neuss, let him have his piss. Anyhow finally they gave up. And we had fifty of them. And so we sent Verne, Craig and Snowy
- 08:00 Elbourne, two West Wyalong blokes, back with 'em. And across the road there was quite a big crowd of Italians. They started firing at Snowy and Verne. And so they got in amongst the Itie prisoners and took 'em back that way, passed 'em back. And when they rejoined us they said, "Oh we've gotta retire, we're under our own machine gunfire fire here". We got
- 08:30 too far in front see. We'd been stripped to the waist and enjoying ourselves. Took our webbing off and even our shirts and that, getting a bit of the sun. So we strapped on our gear again and they'd decided to move on from behind us so. And when they reached us, these Italians across the road came out waving the big white sheet. And there was over a thousand of 'em.
- 09:00 I still reckon if we had to stay there bit longer, our section might have taken the lot of 'em. Anyhow from then on we just went round and round and just cleaning up little pockets and that. Until we reached just short of the coast road. And this was on the morning of the third day again. And it was all over so we started back in.
- 09:30 And there's a photo, official history photo of most of our platoon and with Tobruk in the background, across the bay in the background with the San Giorgio and oil tanks smoking. Snow and I wasn't in that photo, we were out scrounging for food. But I can name about seventy
- 10:00 per cent of the chaps in the photo. And then we went into this wadi, short of Tobruk. And there was an Italian water tank there with a hose through the radiator which was easy enough, just keep pouring water in. And went in one day and had a look at Tobruk. Wasn't much to see, the house, everything was shelled from the artillery and the
- 10:30 navy. And only went in the once. There was, in this wadi there was a hundred, oh well, yeah hundreds of big wine kegs there. The Italians used to use that rather than water I think, the wine. And I wasn't a wine drinker either incidentally. And our chaps had a marvellous time there. They had these big trailers there, like you
- 11:00 see on the road now with the semi, road trains and that and used to have impromptu concerts on them. There's a couple of photos there of the chaps in that wadi. And from there, we had a few days and what, and we went to,
- 11:30 went up to Derna on guard, our company, town guard. And we were in a second floor flat. Parquetry floor, a lawyer's flat it was, glass doors and everything. And only problem a small bomb had come through the bathroom and the plumbing was all out of order. But Snow and Vern were playing around
- 12:00 one day and Vern chasing Snow. And Snow shut a glass door in front of him and of course with army boots on, on parquet, bang. I think it was this arm it went and sliced him to the bone nearly. And of course he had to go back to Alexandria and to hospital. We were there oh well over a week. And back down to Amiriya, oh when we, he stopped on the way somewhere, can't quite remember that.
- 12:30 But we landed back at Amiriya and I didn't want to go to town one night. And I's left in charge of all the gear and that, well there's a couple of us there. And the sitting there amongst the gear and a couple of light, fifteen hundred weight trucks raced past and, "Anyone from Goulburn here?" I said "Well I's lived in Goulburn". "What's your name?"
- 13:00 I said "Dusty Kuschert". "Oh we got Bertie Kuschert here". Cousin I'd never met see. It was the 2/1st Machine Gun Battalion. Just come, just arrived back from England. And so he came over, it was dark I couldn't see him. We sat there and talked for an hour or so. And then he left and the following morning they come round looking for me. He'd gone the wrong way somewhere. Anyhow he
- 13:30 comes up again later. And he come back from camp and we were there for a while in Amiriya. Then they

took us into Alexandria and to go to Greece. And there's a convoy going but we, they loaded most of our battalion on

- 14:00 a cruiser, the [HMS] Gloucester. And Vern Craig came down in from the hospital to see us, his arm in bandages and that. We sang out and told him we were gone. He got caught, him in the bag in Greece. But you know we done Alexandria to Port Piraeus in twenty-two hours. They bombed us once but they had us all battened down
- 14:30 below deck. But we got over there with that and to Port Piraeus without any problem. Only to, only thing is that few trucks met us and they were ferrying backwards, ferrying them out to about seven mile out of Athens at a place called Daphni. And olive groves and we,
- 15:00 were one of the unlucky ones, we were just turning into the gates to the camp. And the trucks were available to take us in so we marched the seven mile. But oh well we were there. The rest of the convoy took another two days before they arrived. And so we had a marvellous time in Athens without those rowdy Aussies around. And found out where the ladies of the night were, but
- 15:30 they were lovely too. Just off the main square, main big round circle place. And I think it had an underground railway under it, in it. Don't know for sure. Anyhow the rest of the battalion and that, transport arrived. And they took us up north. As we're going up all the heavy stuff is coming out. We
- 16:00 landed up, finally outside Larisa. And some of the battalion, oh incidentally this time I'd, Len Herwig had been made Quartermaster, he'd been our lieutenant and captain. And he wanted a batman so I went batman to him. Lucky Len.
- 16:30 Unluckiest bloke ever to have me for a batman. But we were good friends. And Austin Whiffen was his driver in the fifteen hundred-weight with a canopy over the back. I was a cockatoo looking out for the planes. Landed up Larisa and finished up out at Tempe Gorge. And the Kiwis hadn't
- 17:00 been in action this time but they were there too. Do you realise we became Anzacs there, for a little while. Lot of the battalion went up further, up beyond Veria, Veria Pass. And this Scotty Nagle from Grenfell, he came back. He said "Dusty I found out the way to beat those bombers.
- 17:30 When they coming at ya and they drop their bombs, you run underneath the bombs, don't run away, they catch up to you. Just run underneath them, you dodge 'em that way". So I never tried that really. Anyhow the Germans started attacking and A-l-i-a, Aliakmon River or something they got to,
- 18:00 our chaps. And they were out of transport and that and they had to get back to Tempe Gorge. And we went out in our fifteen hundred weight. Three of us and Whiffen and Len Herwig and myself trying to find them. We had blankets, extra blankets and food and that. Round the foot of Mount Olympus in snow about two foot deep.
- 18:30 And Herge and I out most of the time pushing the truck. But the, anyhow they got back without our help. And we went into Larisa a couple of times. There was depots there for the food and that. And we made a big food dump up in the Tempe Gorge. There was a little light railway line running up through it.
- 19:00 And this day, the 18th April it was. A Friday, not a Friday. We'd been in and out with the three ton truck alongside to put the bully beef and biscuits in a big stack and went in for another load. And we picked up a Kiwi artillery officer.
- 19:30 And it was very quiet in there. I think the Germans might have been in there and they were waiting for something else. I think, that's only my opinion. And there was depots piled to the roof with rum, whisky, brandy and everything, beer. I'd see chaps on our first trip in, the chaps
- 20:00 with Bren gun carriers loading Aussie beer and four dozen in the crate. High as they could pile it on their Bren gun carriers. And we picked up about four, oh about half a dozen bottles of different spirits. And I'd knocked off drinking after Tobruk. And didn't drink for another two and half years really.
- 20:30 We were coming out of Larisa and get to the start of the valley leading up to Tempe Gorge. And there's four houses set in a square, brick houses with a communal well in the centre. They were about twenty yards apart the houses and the communal well in the centre. And we were standing alongside this house and over come these three or four German planes
- 21:00 and strafed us. Well I, I dunno whether it was accidental or what. I knocked Herwig over and we landed against the wall and they hit the window above us and the glass has fallen on our back. So, soon as they done that pass we got in between the houses so we could dodge round corners see. And
- 21:30 they didn't have any bombs thank heavens. We found out why later when we got up to where the food dump was they'd bombed that and there was food scattered everywhere. We hadn't had time to get out of the truck and I look back and I see the planes come again. And I slapped the top, Herwig went one way and Austin went another and I went that way too. To the right from the back of the truck. And soon as they done their first
- 22:00 I was out in the stubble, bit of tilled ground with stubble and that on it. Dunno what type, might have

been wheat or barley or something like that, they'd been growing. I was hidden behind a little tree about that size. And soon as they done their first I knew this eight foot gully was there, I made for it and, "Everyone get down!" I said. And I got there and I'm waiting for them to come round,

- 22:30 and I got me rifle. And they were underneath where I was sighting they were that low. But anyhow they left us and we got back to the truck. And the side I'd been sitting on, a bullet had gone through the tail board. And another one had exploded in our mess gear. We had the padre's uniform hanging up there, it was riddled with shrapnel. And my
- 23:00 dixie was, one half of me dixie was riddled with shrapnel. I left it over in New Zealand, with the granddaughter and her husband. And the three halves really because another half. So that night the Jerries [Germans] broke through and we had to get out. And
- 23:30 tried to get through Larisa and see Doctor Flashman. Our original Doctor Molesworth hadn't, didn't come over to Greece with us. This Doctor Flashman, I think he was NX124 number. They killed him in and a three ton truck overturned, some of them were captured. Some others might have been killed in it. And we went
- 24:00 out through swamps and that. And we were on the road south the next day. But while we were in Larisa. I went into Larisa one night to the picture show. I think I seen Life of Vernon and Irene Castles. While I was in there though there was an earth tremor. And when we got out there's chimneys fallen over everywhere. And another time I was sitting on a bale of blankets and a tent up in Tempe Gorge and
- 24:30 another tremor there. And so we, but anyhow we were going down oh the road towards Lamia. And there I heard Len Herwig ask a chap, "Any idea where the 2/3rd Battalion is?" I heard this voice that said, Bertie's, this cousin. I remembered his voice, he come round and I seen him face to face then and had a bit of a
- 25:00 yarn to him. And he came down and seen me in the olive groves before we got off at Kalamata. But just after Lamia we were driving along the road, main road going down the centre of the island. Oh well the peninsula you'd call Greece'd be on wouldn't it? And see this sight, German spotter plane
- 25:30 come flying over. And there was an airstrip across the river from us. And some of the ground crew firing Bren guns or something must have hit this plane, it started to go down. And so we went back and it crashed about seven miles back. There's a photo of it in one of my books there. And the chap about a hundred yards away said he'd shot it down. I said, "Look that was hit seven
- 26:00 miles back". They must have hit the pilot or something and just glided down and burned. And I salvaged a bullet out of that one. But anyhow we carried on. And I think it was about Anzac Day, it might have been the twenty-fourth or twenty-fifth we were coming through Athens in a hurry. And we were supposed
- 26:30 to get on board ships at Argos just over the Corinth Canal. But when we got there the two ships were blazing in the harbour. And so we carried on down to Kalamata right. One of the bays right at the foot. We were there in olive groves there near the beach. And the women of the village they were really peasant women.
- 27:00 They were very kind to us, fed us and stuff like that. And even gave us a shampoo to some of us. There was no mucking around or anything like that. They were just wonderful friendly people. And this Bertie Kuschert came and seen me the night I got aboard the destroyer, the [HMS] Hero, came in and took us
- 27:30 out to the Dilwara. He came and seen me there again. I never seen him since then. Have to find out one, I'd like to, that thing there they've got now through the web site and get in touch with them. I'll find out about all the Kuscherts who served. See we're all related in Australia the Kuscherts. And but anyhow we got aboard the Dilwara. We had to go up scrambling nets
- 28:00 off the Hero. I think the [HMS] Havoc was another destroyer taking them out. There was three ships, the Costa Rica, Dilwara and the City of London. And the following day over come the planes and Dorniers and that and they bombed us. Well on the Dilwara they straddled us; I've got a photo of that too. With one berthed on each side and well you only see one with the
- 28:30 berths. And taken from the Costa Rica. And the Costa Rica got sunk just after that with a near miss. They didn't lose anyone on that. But they all went to Crete; we went straight on to Alexandria. And from Alexandria we crossed back into Julis. And we went, so that's April, May. That'd be the start of
- 29:00 May, first week in May we'd be back in Julis. And back in the old routine, route marches and stuff like that. And training and getting built. And our 2/1st Battalion done a rear guard action in Greece. And another one on Crete. And they finished up less than thirty men, the 2/1st. And every Battalion received a hundred
- 29:30 reinforcements. And I was in Julis. And then to build the 2/1st up, the 2/2nd, was our battalion, they might have taken them from some of the other brigades too, a hundred and fifty men. Even some of our originals were transferred into the 2/1st Battalion. So then that was okay. And then the problem happened up in Syria.

- 30:00 And the Seventh Divvy [division] went up the coast. And when they got through Tyre and Sidon they sent out about, there's only a hundred or less than a hundred blokes in C Company. They sent them up to Sidon as a town garrison. And the rest on the 18th June, the rest of our Battalion set off for Damascus.
- 30:30 Most of 'em went by train, they went as far up Haifa then across to Deraa, D-E-R-A-A, over near Jordan border. But we had another fifteen hundred weight truck there. And I was still with Herwig and we went up to Deraa and when they got off the train we fed them. They'd been travelling, mmm, best part of a full day by train. Might have been
- 31:00 more. Fed them and then there was Palestine buses and trucks and that. And we were mixed up with the Fifth Indian Division as well. And took off for Damascus. And we's attached to the Sixteen British Brigade. The King's Own, Queen's Own and Leicesters I think they were.
- 31:30 And landed, these chaps had been on the, I didn't realise there was that few. There were three hundred and eighty-five OR's [other ranks] and twenty-one officers, other than C Company. That's just over four hundred of us went to Damascus. And landed at the bust at
- 32:00 Mezze which is the airport, Damascus airport. And up above big barracks at the end of the airport, there was a few forts up on the hills. And our chaps took two of them. And I watched the Indians take a third one. And the Vichy French they counter-attacked one of the forts and our colonel got wounded. And
- 32:30 a few of the chaps got captured there. But they were only oh a few hours in captivity. We had Colonel Lamb we had then. With England, they'd taken him away from us. And anyhow he was invalided out and Major Stevenson became our colonel then. He's
- 33:00 ex usher of the Black Rod in New South Wales parliament, a lawyer. And John Stevenson. And anyhow we went up with Captain McGregor of B Company, he might have been made a Major then. But anyhow he come from Maroubra Junction.
- 33:30 And he was in a fifteen hundred-weight truck and we were in a fifteen hundred-weight truck. And I went up to have a look at these forts, didn't go into them. And we're coming back down the hill and there's this pass through. And a Free French armoured car and truck load of this Legionnaires or whatever you like call them. Just in front of us and we, our two fifteen hundred-weights in behind 'em.
- 34:00 And as they come out from the Mezze village, the Indians opened up with a quick firer. And poor bloke in the armoured car, I just see, just took his head clean off. And they should have had McGregor, it only lasted one burst and they've suddenly seen the cross of Lorraine on their emblem see. That was Free French emblem. And McGregor
- 34:30 was, he was blowing his top. He wanted to shoot all these Indians. They just made a mistake but she's a bit hairy at the time. And anyhow they took us, Damascus was an open city. Even when the barney was going on with, from Mezze, you could see the trams, lights of the trams running round at night and stuff like that. We
- 35:00 never visited the place. We went through it, we went out the road which happened to be the, I'm sorry I can't think of it again, the training ground for the French artillery. They got in amongst our blokes and anyhow we're right up amongst it too in our little fifteen hundred-weight. And
- 35:30 this, we had to retire towards Damascus. And this fifteen hundred-weight of the Royal Horse Artillery of the Captain in it and his driver. And it got burst right alongside it. And we had another padre with us at the time,
- 36:00 Swindlehurst. He and I lifted this Captain Piper of the Royal Horse up, he was riddled. And his driver wasn't touched. Just like trying to lift a bag of water. He was that limp. I'll never forget his name, Captain Piper. And anyhow we went back through Damascus and they took us out to Jebel Mazar. And the,
- 36:30 jebel means mountain over there. It was over the plain it would raise a good eight hundred feet, nearly a thousand feet. And our chaps captured the top of it. Pushed the Vichy French off it. But then they were running short of ammunition and the Vichy French attacked again and got surrounded. We're back at B Echelon down to the
- 37:00 foot of it. And they were running out of ammunition, they had to slide out, steep faces and rock and that. And we got 'em out and we lost a few blokes mind you. And I was sitting in the back of a truck writing a letter and B Echelon and it was the Sixteen Brigade B Echelon.
- 37:30 it was. And I heard this noise and I looked out and I seen these going. And I thought that artillery's getting closer. And I looked up and about ten French planes coming over. So I dived in behind some tins of biscuits and bully beef, a case of the bully beef. And the captain, Quarter Master Captain of the Sixteenth Brigade,
- 38:00 Pommie Sixteenth Brigade, Eccleston was his name. He stood up and it blew, killed him of course, blew his arm right off. But that was our last camp, bit of a show there. They took us out to the coast then.

And we came in at Damour, just short of Beirut. And they gave up.

- 38:30 And I was sitting alongside a road when General Denst, the Vichy General went down to sign the treaty. He was in one of those flash French cars. And then some of our chaps, were on the guard of honour when they repatriated out of Beirut. Now we went back outside Damascus for a while and then Jebel Mazar, we call it
- 39:00 "Hungry Holland", and it was well named too. The most desolate spot you'd ever see, seven miles from the nearest water. No reason to be there. There was nothing there. No habitation. And I heard the eldest brother arrived in the Middle East with the 2/3rd Pioneer Battalion. So I got leave and went down to Palestine and went through the camps. And no, they'd left.
- 39:30 I met another cousin there. He didn't want to know me; he was a sergeant in the Catering Corps or some such. Didn't want to know him anyhow after. And got back up into Damascus, round Damascus and found out that Bill was just at a place called Dumar. Same letters as Damour in it but one's Damour, one's Dumar and just out in the Beirut roads. So got in touch we had a day in
- 40:00 Damascus together there. And he had an Abo [aboriginal] bloke with him and this Abo bloke put up three stripes. I never, forgot his name. And Bill wanted me to claim him; I said "No, I got enough troubles of me own". And he finished up at Alamein on the coast. And they beat, finally beat Rommel back. He wrote a good letter on that Bill.
- 40:30 **I think that's a really good place to stop.**
Right.
Again.

Tape 3

- 00:30 Well as I say we landed on the Orontes, from the Orontes in Colombo Harbour on the Tuesday before Easter 1942. And then on Good Friday we were, oh we were about twenty miles out of Colombo in a rubber plantation. I think it was called Dikhenia, D-
- 01:00 I-K-H-E-N-A. And on Good Friday the Japs raided Trincomalee which was on the other side of the island. Sunk the aircraft carrier the [HMS] Hermes and a couple of other naval ships. And they strafed Colombo; they went over where we were camped. And dropped a few light bombs there. Went in
- 01:30 on Easter Sunday and there were still a couple of bodies floating in the harbour. Have a look. But other than that, in Ceylon we were just, well of course we were garrison troops alongside with the rest of the brigade. And we didn't know whether the Japs were going to do a Singapore on us or not.
- 02:00 But about some time in August we boarded the Western Land. First time it's ever been out to Australia. And landed us in Melbourne. Is that enough on Ceylon, because we didn't do much there other than just camp duties and stuff like that.
- We'll talk about Ceylon later down the track. We'll talk more about it.**
- More about it, oh.
- Oh we will little later, so we can come to Australia.**
- 02:30 We landed in Melbourne as I say, oh might have been early September. Late August, September sometime. Late August, September. And got quite a surprise coming across we'd been fed a lot of McCaughy's herrings in tomato sauce.
- 03:00 And there was quite a pile of tins left on the mess tables. And we were throwing these on the wharf. And you'd think we were throwing 'em gold the way it was going. What had we come home to, so, but anyhow we got ashore and they put us on the trains and they
- 03:30 sent us on leave really. And we arrived at our certain hometowns or we'd peel off there. There was a lot went on to Sydney of course. I peeled off at Goulburn. Later went to West Wyalong. And then back into Ingleburn. And wasn't there long. We hardly settled in, they decided we had to,
- 04:00 they done a march through Sydney that's right. And I was on the guard of honour on that one. Opposite the Queen Victoria buildings. And we.... is it Albert Park behind the Central Station? There's a park in there, we're there and, landed there and they put us on the train. And they
- 04:30 brought us up this way and we went out towards Greta, Silver City whatever it was out there. And landed there and lot of us decided oh we'd go and have another day in Sydney. So went AWL [Absent Without Leave] of course. And when we got to Broadmeadows there's that many of us, they had to put an extra carriage on the train to take us to Sydney. So Snow and I got off at

- 05:00 Redfern and went out to visit these people out Botany Road, Botany. And great friends. And Nan'd back up in Rita the next day and they'd gone. And picked up our gear and caught 'em up in Brisbane. And they put us aboard a ship there, a Liberty ship, the Paine Wingate, P-A-I-N-E
- 05:30 Wingate. And we was on a load of petrol and bombs. And we took off for Port Moresby. And we were ferried ashore by the, it was oh a frigate or sloop the Swan. HMAS Swan. And we were in khaki
- 06:00 slacks and shirts. And of course I just forget where they ferried us to, a camp we were in for a while. And we had to throw all our khakis into a green dye. And once that started they, they, we, they took us up by truck the start of oh we went through,
- 06:30 how far did we go by truck, sorry the memory's slipped me on where we started from. But I know it was on the track by McDonald's corner. And there seen General MacArthur and General Blamey. And our colonel, Colonel Hutchison was our colonel by this time.
- 07:00 Steven, no, no he wasn't. Stevenson was still our colonel. John Stevenson. And yeah MacArthur was, Blamey was at Ower's Corner to see us off. And we got along the track a bit and our platoon was sent, side tracked along this ridge to
- 07:30 oh I'm getting too far ahead of meself, I'm sorry. We met the famous Golden Stairs of course. And our officer was Lieutenant Ron Woods. He'd been in the Long Range Desert Group, joined us over in the Middle East some place. And he'd been in New Guinea before the war and
- 08:00 one of the native boys had known him on this plantation he'd been at. He come along and looked after him like a batman. I'd given away my batmanship too, with Herwig of course by this time. And I went into A Company. And we were riflemen again. And we'd done the Golden Stairs, up these stairs and down these stairs. Oh, worse
- 08:30 thing a man ever done. All you had you was carrying. And I felt very sorry for the short legged chaps because the stairways were about anything up to eighteen inches high. Some of 'em nearly had to climb up 'em rather than step up them. Georgie Lovell specially. And but he was, one bright
- 09:00 thing on it. Sometimes at different times you'd get over a crest, you might have gone up a thousand or so steps. But they done by logs staked across em. I dunno who done the work. And they were about as I say anything up to eighteen inches high and eighteen inches deep. And
- 09:30 this captain from the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association], Captain McCabe. He'd be there, he had his native carriers. And he had this big urn and he'd have a cup of tea or coffee going along, alongside the track. I mentioned to some chaps, the Salvation Army chap who comes around collecting, around
- 10:00 the RSL [Returned and Services League] here. And he said "He's still alive". So I said "If you ever see him, tell him my thanks for the Kokoda Trail ". But that's by the, we got, finally got through the Golden Staircases we call 'em, mud and slush and everywhere. Not the general conception of jungle, it was rain forest really. And mud and
- 10:30 slush. Then we hit the flat going along the spines of bridges and that. And going different places, Menari, Efogi. I can't remember all the names. Then we come to two big sunken oh they were swamps really. The Myola One and Myola Two. And then when we got through them
- 11:00 we were in the real heavy rain forest then. And we our Company our Platoon, Six Platoon I was in. No I was in Eight Platoon then. Eight from B Company under Ron Woods. And we had to strike out along this ridge.
- 11:30 Sometimes it would only be one man wide. Very odd times it'd be two, wide enough for two men to be abreast. But we were strung out of that. With a platoon of thirty men of course it'd be anything up to sometimes fifty yards from front to back. You couldn't, you'd only see about ten blokes what with the trees and that and the winding. And suddenly
- 12:00 burst of fire from in front. And bang. Course we all went to ground. And Ron Woods and Dave Murray, our corporal he was came back. And this was happened about three or four o'clock. Round about four o'clockish in the afternoon. And then started to get dark and Ron Woods
- 12:30 started taking his webbing off and that and Dave Murray. And I said "What's going on Ron?" "Jungle Jim" we used to call him. And he said "I think Rossi Pritzley is still alive". We'd heard Dave Fernandez die badly on the other side of the track. Another chap, Ellesmere, he got hit across the buttocks, and he was sliced in about three inches, right across the buttocks. All he kept saying, "I won't have to walk back will I, I wont' have to walk back?"
- 13:00 But anyhow and Ron Woods said "I think Rossi might still be alive. We're going in". I said "I'm going with ya." and then Brickie Bairstow said "I'm going too". So we crawled in and getting dark. And got that dark you couldn't see one another in front of you. You'd run up, you'd bump into the bloke who'd stopped in front of you.
- 13:30 As I say the track was only about two or three feet wide in places, sometimes four foot. And you could

hear the Japs talking all of a sudden. And events on the rise, Ron Woods pulled up and he said, he could just make the outline of a big stump of a tree, nearly five foot across and only about eight foot high in front. He said

- 14:00 "The Japs were only talking about ten yards in front of us behind this stump." Found out later they had a good possie. And said "Rossi fell down that way". So I said "Well I go down and see if, I'll get him over me back and bring him up if he...." And I crawled out it was oh, what would a slope like that be about thirty degrees. Maybe that's ninety,
- 14:30 forty-five, about thirty to forty degrees slope. And all of a sudden I could hear the Japs talking but about fifteen yards, twenty yards down I could hear this gasping. It wasn't from his mouth it was through his back. He'd been hit down through the right shoulder, through his lung, his right lung and out bottom of his collar bone. And I crawled down, I
- 15:00 touched him I said "Don't make a noise Rossi." I'm frightened. And I was too. And I said "Here get over me, get on me back and I'll crawl up with you". He said "No if I turn over blood might run into me good lung and I'll drown". He'd been there a good three hours or better this chap on his own. And come from Bowral, Rossi. And so
- 15:30 he had a Thompson sub machine gun point four five. So I took that back up and I got a pen knife off Dave. And went down and cut his webbing off him. You know what? That bloke got up and walked with me. We got back up the track, walked a bit and he collapsed. And Ron Woods said "Well I'll go out and bring in our First Aid man".
- 16:00 And give him a morphia needle and blanket to carry him on. So Rossi was sitting on that shoulder. I was there, Brickie Bairstow, Dave Murray, we were all touching one another. And we couldn't see one another it was that black, just this rain forest. Trees about, everything about a hundred feet high.
- 16:30 And Rossi's there breathing through his back. And all of a sudden I felt a hand on me shoulder. It was Ron Woods. "Get up Ross, I can't get out, find me way out". This is all within fifty yards. So I said "Here you sit here Ron I'll try". And I crawled out, and you could feel the boot heel mark cause all been very wet
- 17:00 and that. Anytime I went down a slope either way I knew I was off the track. And I finally got out and got Bill Robertson with me. Gave him a needle and put him on this blanket. And we're going; we wouldn't have gone ten yards and the blanket split, rotten you see. Hit the ground, never made a sound. So we finally got out and I was buggered. I just pulled a ground sheet over or cape,
- 17:30 gas cape over me shoulder, head it was and went to sleep. They didn't even bother waking me up for breakfast the next morning. My third tin of bully beef. Feed three men to a tin, that's a meal. And so I went, they were moving on. So I went down and seen Rossi, I said "See you later mate". They were waiting for the native carriers to come and take him out, him and Les Ellesmere. And so we went
- 18:00 on to Euora Creek. Lost a few there. And I was still very tired. And that night I pulled off the track a little and went to sleep. My platoon must have moved on because they said after they'd looked for me couldn't find me. And I heard someone move and said "Oh they've been lookin' for you Dusty. Come
- 18:30 with us". So we crossed the creek up from the log bridge. It up oh was nearly up to your waist deep. And racing and went up this hill above it. And went up to the top of the hill about oh about half a mile up. Three of us were that, oh my feet were that swollen, me boots I,
- 19:00 and two other chaps were crook. And they sent us back down. We're coming, going down this hill the three of us towards the creek. And they said "Where'd you come from? We'd just been fighting Japs here, they'd killed three of our blokes there." And got down there and got the boots off. And me feet were completely swelled up; it took me nearly half an hour to get the sock out of me feet. Man
- 19:30 hadn't had 'em off for well over a week. And course they, they'd gone into the wrinkles of me feet. They got me, had to wait for another pair of boots to come. And new pair of socks of course. That's the only change of clothing I had in the three months or so. And then, what had happened
- 20:00 then. Oh that's right we, they cleaned the Japs off the creek. We went down, bypassed Kokoda, went through Kubara I think it was and into Oivi. Didn't see Kokoda that time. And oh there was about seven miles on beyond Kokoda. And the Japs were on this ridge right across. And I was with A Company still.
- 20:30 A and Don, D Company were on the right hand side of the track and B and C Company were on another side. We were getting a bit lighter on men by this time on and as we're going across the Japs above us killed two of our chaps and wounded this Gus Mooney. Still alive, you could see his brains, they took the side of his head off. He's living in New
- 21:00 Zealand now. And we carried him out and in back there. And Bruiser McKay, Bruce McKay and Roley Watts they'd been killed, we buried them in the one communal grave. And I used to sleep on the top side of the grave so I wouldn't roll down the hill. And the Japs had a full trench system above us. And they were sapping down the wood. One day,

- 21:30 well we're only there a few days but I went down through the trees to the creek to fill the water bottles. And I was wearing a sweater over this dyed shirt I had. And I there, all of a sudden a bullet hit a tree about eight feet above me. I thought "How in the name of God can they see me?" I suddenly woke up it's the type of greyish material of the sweater. So I immediately
- 22:00 took the shirt off and wore that as me undershirt then and me shirt over it see with our green dyed shirt. And anyhow all of a sudden the Japs had moved out. 2/1st Battalion's got in behind a few miles back and hit their main supply depot in their B Echelon and that, killed quite a few of them. And we moved on,
- 22:30 they made our platoon, oh a section of us really, the guard to the brigadier. Personal. And I had this Thompson sub machine gun, one of the worst weapons you'd ever want. I don't know why they ever used them. And Ben
- 23:00 Barnes had another one. And we.... old Brigadier Lloyd, "Killer Lloyd" they called him. He wanted to be in front of everyone but one of us had to be in front of him and another one behind him with a Tommy gun so. Anyhow we got to Kumusi River, a place we called it Wairopi. Because there was wire rope going over and had a log bridge going across with just stay wires on both sides. And I went across on the
- 23:30 flying fox really. And you'd get across the other side. And I was resting on my Tommy gun like this and all of a sudden "Oh Mr Dusty, Mr Dusty. Where's a Captain Woods, Captain Woods?" I said "Oh sick along, he had malaria. Sick along stomach Jimmy", this native, Sergeant Quinn, "Oh sick along stomach. Sick along stomach.
- 24:00 Not dead, not dead, sick along stomach". Malaria's what frightened us all see. And Harry was pleased I wasn't dead anyhow. But we carried on and Colonel Cullen of the 2/1st Battalion, he said to Brigadier Lloyd, he said "I wouldn't go any further sir; they just shot me horse here". He'd, when they'd hit this supply dump and that they got a few
- 24:30 horses. And they killed this horse, killed his horse under him. So that quietened old Lloyd down a bit thank heavens. And anyhow we congregated there at Soputa. And went in and Japs were oh about twenty or thirty yards in front of us holed up. And we were in swamp really. And you'd lay down at seven o'clock in the morning
- 25:00 and six o'clock at night they'd fire everything at you. You'd lay down in the swamp and you'd see the trees and that getting cut down above you, the shrub. Anyhow they sent us out on a big patrol, well big as it was. About fifty of us or more. And we were going to try to get to Sanananda on the Killerton Track.
- 25:30 Through this swamp and that. And by the time, three the first day about half the patrol had to go back. They were that, everyone had the malaria but a lot were sicker than the others. And officers and all were we had, might have finished up with one officer out of about four. When we finally got out in this big kunai patch on this track. It was a wide track, about five or six foot wide and more kunai grass is
- 26:00 eight, nine foot high. And our RSM, well he was only Corporal then, Bill Edmondson, "Baggy Bill" they called him. And he said "Well Dusty I want you to go five hundred yards down the track with these three other chaps and bring back any information". I said "Well I'll be in front". He said "No I want the
- 26:30 information back". And so Mo Nankivell, Wilkie Kerfoot and Andy Johnson were the three I had. I was only private. And as soon as we got out of sight I said "Well I'm in front, I don't want you buggers getting me killed". I used to do forward scouting for the section, ride off and see. We done our five hundred yards a bit down the track. And
- 27:00 found out where all the Yanks had come in at Soputa by this time too. And they were useless the Yankee infantry. They weren't like their marines and that. They used to go out at night and make a cup of java [coffee] and wouldn't come back in 'til the morning. Leave their position. And they put on an attack with some of our officers leading them one time.
- 27:30 And as soon as the Japs fired they all went to ground. One bloke had two, two of 'em would carry 'em out, they'd help 'em along. He hadn't been hit or anything. He said "They're firing, I don't want to catch him there". So he wasn't very taken with our first taste of the Yanks. MacArthur heard about it too, he gave 'em hell, they told me after. But
- 28:00 anyhow we went back and on this Killerton Track and reported to with that there was a nice copse of trees further down they could sleep in that night. And was well further on before we hit the tree line again. So was all like little saplings in this copse of trees. So we went down,
- 28:30 slept that night. Following day carried on, Clarrie Combo, one of our Abo boys, was leading scout. He got near the tree line the Japs opened up, they hit him in the wrist. He had an Owen gun, they'd issued a couple of Owen guns to fire 'em out at the time. And Clarrie went to ground first then he got up
- 29:00 put a cigarette in his mouth, lit it and just walked back. Wasn't very bad wound in his wrist and that. Another bloke got hit in the right chest. Hollister I think his name was. And this Andy Johnson, we were tail end Charlie, had a good fifty yards back, a stray bullet hit him in the heel. Through his boot then in

the heel. So they were the only three casualties. We had one

- 29:30 stretcher case. And we're, so, we're down to about thirty men or less by then. And so we had to get back to the battalion, back through the swamps. We found the way; we got back within the one day. Got back there and found that five of our chaps had been killed by, dropped short mortars from the Yanks. And which wasn't good news.
- 30:00 And so we were there and the Japs are still in their position. And one day we were getting a bit of food. And they're cooking, made a stew see. And this day Cyrus Sprague, or Griff Sprague was his name, Cyrus we called him. And myself, tall, skinny bloke. We had the two dixies of stew or buckets, one on a pole,
- 30:30 taking it around and the hate session started. And this bugger wouldn't go to ground. Of course I couldn't go to ground otherwise I'd spill the bloody stew see. And Gordon Terry one of our officers was hidden behind a little tree. He said "Everything fine Dusty?" I said "Yes I'm shit scared but these silly buggers won't go down. If I drop the stew, you blokes'll be into me". So I see Griff on Anzac, this last Anzac Day.
- 31:00 He said "Thanks for the mention". And anyhow things got worse and worse. And the malaria got that bad, we had Vin Josephs was our doctor then. He'd taken over after Eora Creek after his cousin Maurie Goldman got hit in the buttocks with the shrapnel off a mortar and got carried out.
- 31:30 And reported second, up in the hundred and four something the temperature. So he sent me back to Popondetta. And quite a few were going out and this was early in oh December. The sixth or seventh of December. We got to the Popondetta airstrip. And the old biscuit
- 32:00 bombers used to land there and take people out. And I didn't eat for three days. And I reported for the medical inspection one day and the doctor had one of those little canvas fold out tables. And I collapsed and knocked the table over him. He queried me for Scrub Typhus and said "He's on the next plane." so two chaps had to help me, I was useless. And Ted Bassingham
- 32:30 was one. And I was trying to think of his name the other night. And he this other bloke, anyhow got on the plane. Oh lovely, first plane trip ever, back over to war drome there out of Moresby into camp hospital. And it was only malaria I had thank heavens. I see one bloke from the 2/1st Battalion. Walsh, dunno his first
- 33:00 name, and he had this, we used to go down, he had Scrub Typhus and he just lost the will to live. "Come on", we tried to gee him see, "You'll be right". He said "I'm dying, I'm dying". He did too. Dead. 'Bout two or three of our own blokes went the same way. And anyhow I got discharged from there and went to a convalescent depot outside Moresby. And I was there
- 33:30 just before Christmas that's right. And I was mess orderly on Christmas Day and they had roast chicken, roast potatoes. I ate that much I couldn't move for two hours. I dunno who done all the washing up. But anyhow the following day I had the runs. So they thought it might have been dysentery so they sent me to Lux Lane which we call, you'll have to excuse me, they called it Shit Hill, see. But anyhow
- 34:00 colonel there in charge they fed me up on some dollop like corn flour and stuff like that and bound me up. And I heard the rest of the battalion being flown out just before Christmas. They were up Rouana Falls up in the oh plateau. So I got leave to go up. Thumbed a leave, lift up, thumb a ride up the
- 34:30 to where they were. I was dropped off at this hospital, thatched hospital with Snowy Elbourne, my good little mate, he was in there. And he was in a bed, they had concrete, ah coconut logs about that high off the ground with the side part of it. I slept under, on a stretcher under his bed that night. Next day we went up to the battalion and
- 35:00 they were waiting, some going on leave and sent home and that. There was the captain from the Graves Detachment there. And they'd been through and they'd catered a lot of graves. But there was eight of our chaps they hadn't found at Oivi. So Harry Nichols, Harry Anzac Nichols we called him, from C Company said, "I'd go in but I'm the next draft out". So
- 35:30 I knew where the two were at Oivi. And they and Don Company and there were six on the other side from B and C Company. So I said "I can go in". And I asked Harry Nichols about, little bit about where they'd be so. Flew in with this captain, took me back Lux Lane and I got discharged by the colonel. He said "You alright?" I was, cause I had malaria again I knew that.
- 36:00 I, we slept at Bomana. They got big war graves there now, Bomana airstrip it was. Slept there that night and the following morning we got, he had two privates with him plus meself. Got aboard a De Havilland Dragon a two engine job. And the co-pilot had to wind the under-carriage up and down. And landed in Kokoda.
- 36:30 First time I seen Kokoda. And old Arthur Carson, he was the Sergeant of our pioneer platoon, he'd won a DCM in the First World War in France. He'd been recommended for the VC [Victoria Cross]. Won a Military Medal with us. He was in charge of the native carriers there then. And had a bit of a talk to him. And we got a few native carriers and took off

- 37:00 down to Oivi seven mile down. And went in on the right hand side and found the six graves there. And went on to Oivi and slept that night. Following morning come back in and showed him where the other two were, McKay and Watts. Had a look at the Jap positions. They had full trenches in there, right across. And he wanted me to go on. I said "It's no good me going on, I dunno
- 37:30 any others that you've missed". I don't know where really they are because the man was in and out on patrolling a lot we buried. And so I walked back to Kokoda on me own and it was an eerie feeling too. And flew out on a smaller plane,
- 38:00 only pilot and myself. Landed there and went to Lux Lane and picked up me gear and went up the hill to the Fleet Street and seen Snow. And he was discharged the next day. Went up the battalion and "Don't bother to roll your tent, you're going home". So back to Moresby. By truck thank heaven.
- 38:30 And what'd we get on there. The Both, B-O-T-H. An old Dutch tramp steamer. And about three days later we landed in Cairns. And took us out to Redlynch for the night. Put us on the train next day, had a beautiful trip up to Ravenshoe. Nearly every station we stopped at, ladies of the
- 39:00 district had trestle tables laid out with cream cakes, all fresh and that. Looked after us real well. Landed at Ravenshoe and it was just patch and scrub and that. And person and I just threw a tent fly over a branch of a tree and slept on the ground. Next day we cleaned it up. And this Ian Hay was a staff sergeant who was supposed to get us all outfitted
- 39:30 to go on leave see. And he was that crook with malaria he had to go. And I said "Well how are we gonna get this? There's a hundred and twenty-four of us." And they said "Oh Dusty knows a bit about the Quarter Stores". See I'd been batman of the Quartermaster and that. So here I was private, full fenced private. And I'd indent for all different sizes of uniforms, boots. Well
- 40:00 boots were pretty easy. Just ask the blokes their sizes like socks and underwear and stuff like that was no problem. Throw 'em out on the trestle tables, help yourselves. And those that couldn't get outfitted I'd bundle that up and re-indent it for different size uniforms. And of course I got an officer weight uniform for meself and a few of the mates.
- Dusty that might be a good place to pause again now.**
- 40:30 Right.

Tape 4

- 00:31 Along came a truck load of Australia Comfort Fund parcels. And captain in charge. And we're all stripped off at the waist. And unloading them and that, and he said "Who's gonna sign for these?" I said "I am". He said "What are you an officer?" I said "No, NCO [Non-Commissioned Officer], no, just a private". "You can't sign these one you dirty sod, everything else". So funny thing we went into Wondecla, into
- 01:00 the Herberton picture show one night. And there's a film on Bob Hope and Caught in a Draft. And but this Herberton, real wild west town, kitchen rails out the front and rigs in the wall to tie their horses up. And the seating in the theatre, you walk down the central aisle and just like a continuous deck chair on each side all in canvas see. Anyhow
- 01:30 in one of the sketches with Bob Hope these two Negroes come out in one set of trousers. And someone yelled out "Dusty must've outfitted them". So that's by the by, so I's Quartermaster for a few days see. I never got paid that pay either, only got me private's pay. Ah, but, anyhow we went on leave. Oh it's wonderful trip and
- 02:00 we took us down to Innisfail on truck and we got on a train there and Brisbane. And then of course Brisbane to Sydney. And then sent us on our journeys. We were all crook with malaria still. But wasn't gonna tell 'em. Had twenty-eight days leave then I think. So this was still in January,
- 02:30 about the middle of January, 20th January something like that. I went up to Goulburn course first then up to West Wyalong and back to Goulburn. And when my leave finished I reported in sick. And this being February. And they sent me out to the 114th AGH [Australian General Hospital] at Kenmore, three mile out of Goulburn. The old mental asylum. I dunno
- 03:00 who was the sanest, the previous inmates or us. I was in there for about six weeks the first time. And course we go ackwilly [AWL] every so often. And one chap who become a brother-in-law, he lived in Kenmore Village with his people and that. Bruce Robertson, we used to go into town and
- 03:30 I'd go up home and get into some of dad's clothes in civvies. And one day my sister Sadie, the one who lost her husband in Malaya. She was up in Yass with another sister-in-law, Oscar's wife. Oscar joined up late in the army.

- 04:00 And she had the youngsters and mum wanted me to send a pair of booties up. So Bruce and I went down the Post Office. And I walk in the Post Office and this lovely girl, a local girl Bonnie Beasely behind the counter. And she said, "Aren't you in the army?" And there's a Provo standing right along beside me. I said "Oh I've been medically, charged medically, discharged medically unfit". And the Provo said
- 04:30 "Where's your discharge?" So I said "I don't carry it on me". He said "Have it down the barracks tomorrow morning". We were gonna go roller skating that night but we didn't. We couldn't get out to this Kenmore, out to the hospital that night. And laughing that much about it there was a six foot fence with barbed wire on the top, we couldn't get over the blasted thing, anyhow. So, what did we, oh come down the gate, Lum Jones used to be our milkman, he was corporal of the guard. I wait til I seen
- 05:00 Lum and whistled him over. And he marched us down through and bang, got to the ward. And we were up on the first floor and up these stairs. And there's Sister Circuit a nice blonde nurse, stamping her foot. "Where you two been?" And we told her the story. "Get into bed". Then she came around with a cup of tea for us anyhow. But anyhow we got discharged just before Easter and I'm doing the bookie-ing [taking bets on horse races] in the ward at the time.
- 05:30 Got discharged to, and I said "Well I'm gonna go to Randwick [racecourse] on Saturday. Spend you blokes' money that I won off ya". I'd had one losing day see and one said, "You gotta come out here and give us a go with our money. Someone else can run". "No, no". So I had to give away me trip to Sydney and went out on the Saturday and run the book. And I'd off
- 06:00 Monday. A bloke said "Well I'm half in with you". I said "Why didn't you run it?" Anyhow had a losing day so. That was alright. And Monday he didn't want to be in on the Monday then. Had a winning day on the Monday and on the Tuesday reported back in with the malaria again. In the same ward, we had, three of us had been discharged, landed back in the same ward at
- 06:30 during the nurses lunch break. And they'd come in "Oh" they said, "Oh no". And anyhow we had a great time then. And then I, another three or four weeks in hospital there. And so that, about the end of May back, we were leaving transit depot in the old Sydney Showground. And
- 07:00 expecting any day to be sent back up and report and then everyday and then given leave and then on Saturday morning for weekend leave. Used to book a room at the CB Chambers opposite the YMCA in Pitt Street. And anytime I'd come on leave, I'd send a wire down, they'd keep a room for me. She was a good little, nice clean place to stay. And had your own
- 07:30 room. And anyhow one Saturday morning I didn't bother going in. I went in on the Monday and had to front the colonel, oh he was a major really, Major Pollard I think. And that cost me another two day's pay and a pound fine. Or that was the third one. One prior to going over
- 08:00 the Kokoda Trail, I fronted Stevenson outside Moresby. So I had three lots of fines for overstaying me leaves and that. And this colonel, this major said "Well what's the story?" And I gave him the story. Anyhow I said, "Oh I wasn't", had started
- 08:30 drinking again that's right. Eldest brother arrived back from the Middle East, Alamein and that. While I was in hospital that's right. And we got leave to go into town this Bruce Robertson, brother-in-law and another chap. And playing cards in the first pub and I was running the cutter for the first couple of drinks. And on the third one I said "Oh bugger it I'm on it again". So two and half years I stayed I was off the grog.
- 09:00 Just because of Snowy Elbourne. And I told the story of leaving the transit depot that I'd met some of the mob who were going back to camp. And got on the grog and I was too sick to come in on the Saturday. But he still charged me. And then I said "Anyhow Sir I've been trying to get back to the battalion for two months". Was too. And sar major
- 09:30 said "Yeah we seem to have lost his papers Sir". Well I was on the train within two days. And back to Wondecla.

Dusty, if I can interrupt, did you meet your future wife at this time at all?

I did just before that. When I's in hospital, Goulburn. I was there, she worked in Rodgers, she's living in a boarding house in

- 10:00 Goulburn. And this aunt of one of me army mates were, Jean Blake, she was a school teacher, she was in this boarding house. And Cranky Blake had said "Oh you'll have to go and see Dusty in hospital". And she came in, "Where's this Dusty?" And they were like a visiting what they call a visiting crowd, they used to come out with
- 10:30 cakes and stuff like that. And my wife's there and that's where I met her. About, maybe about May 1943. Yeah. So just started to correspond with her. And didn't get married til I got out of the army in '45. But landed back up with the battalion
- 11:00 at Wondecla then. And big camp Wondecla. And started to play football every, I was in, went into Headquarter Company then. I was in Tank Attack Platoon, had these two pounder guns, they started that. That was Six, Six Section in Headquarter Company. We

- 11:30 started playing company football. And we were '43 and '44. Sometime in '44 we had another leave and home and that. But we got very fit and
- 12:00 at one stage in seven days I played five games of football and won the battalion mile. And I had a bruise like that on that leg the day I run the mile. I said to Kenny Colbert "Oh get in behind me Ken I'm a one pace man, I can't sprint. Takes me a week to run out of sight. And I'll break this mob up". And
- 12:30 round and round the football field, there's a bit of a slope on it. And got down the bottom and during the last lap and I knew there was one in behind me. And I thought "That'll be Ken". And I pulled aside and it was Johnny Ellis from A Company. And he had shorter legs than me. And I thought "Gee it's a quid for the runner up, only ten bob for second". So just lengthened me stride and went past him. And then a few weeks later I run second in
- 13:00 the brigade mile. Tried to do the same thing with a bloke who beat me. Oh he beat me by ten yards or better, just sat on me heels all the way and whoof. But I'd won two cross-country runs over in Syria, in Lebanon. In Lebanon really it was, Bech Mezzine. And
- 13:30 played football in Headquarter Company. They had two teams and I used to play in both teams. Sometimes I played two games in an afternoon I got that fit. Jumping out of me skin.

You did eventually return to New Guinea though didn't you?

Yes we were aboard the ship, we sailed, dunno whether it was Christmas Eve or two days before

- 14:00 Christmas 1944. On the Bontekoe, B-O-N-T-E-K-O-E, another Dutch ship, from Cairns. And we landed at Aitape A-I-T-A-P-E. Was on the beach for about two days getting stuff off the ship. And we went up this Danmap River. You might have oh within
- 14:30 the last five years or so they had a big tsunami wave there, tidal wave, cleaned out the villages and all up this river. Anyhow this river was about oh thirty, forty yards wide. Only a trickle of water like that when we went up it. And pools of water of course and rocky, rocky. And went up to a dropping ground, Mali Airs, Mali dropping ground, M-A-L-I. And we went up on the knoll house section. I was in
- 15:00 back in B Company now. Back in me old cpany. And there was an island formed in the middle of this river. With trees that big round on it. And it was oh about forty yards long, twenty yards wide in places. And our mchine gn patoon was on that. And that night, first night we were there, it started to rain. All the natives went to the hills.
- 15:30 And where we were it was raining that hard up on this knoll, there was water that deep on the ground, it were raining that hard. And it took that whole island away, trees and everything. We had several men drown there. That first night up there. And Snowy Parkinson he'd climbed up one of the trees and strapped himself to it. And they found
- 16:00 him, he survived. But it stripped every stitch of clothing off him plus the ring off his finger. They found another bloke, not, from our Battalion seven miles out to sea, floating on a tree. The Danmap, she wasn't a good place for us. And we went up further and then we went in, we were out on the coast for a while.
- 16:30 And went inland from Jaguar I think it was. Over the first range of hills into Mobam Creek, M-O-B-A-M. And we done our patrolling from there. And funny thing Easter comes in again. That's where we took this supply train down, we were at
- 17:00 further up, just over the ridge. And took this supply train down to the btalion hadquarters. And this Nugget Lang and I come back round the bend oh like an S, goose neck really. And the btalion was in behind us about a hundred yards across, bit of an isthmus. And heard a noise from the way we'd come down. And looked up and see these old two bandy legs coming, walking down,
- 17:30 round the tree under. I said "Nugget here comes a Jap. I'm first shot". We'd never had a first shot at a Jap. Anyone. And anyhow all of a sudden he put his hand up like that, found out later it was our telephone line it'd gone under. So I hit him with the .303 and Nugget had an Owen gun. And he fell in a bit of a hollow. And Nugget opened him up with a
- 18:00 burst across his back. And he was still trying to get this revolver out so I hit him there then. And that was it. You should have heard the crowd in behind us. First time any of us had a first shot at 'em. And then on Easter Monday we went out on the big patrol at full forward scout, that one to Wonginara Mission. And I had a couple of
- 18:30 Papua New Police boys. They'd show me which direction to head. And I's out in front and finally I could see the roofs of these huts up above me. And down there was this grey creek and all their signal system was there. We were after this Major General Nakaiau, second in charge of
- 19:00 the whole of the forces up there. And there was oh different like big switchboard but just roughly done on just on the side of the creek. And he, so they come, battalion, we could hear the Japs talking further along on the ridge. And must been getting close to our tucker time.

- 19:30 You could hear the dixies clanking and that. And they walked along, so they sent one lot up front of the track they were coming along. And then as soon as they hit, we went straight over to see if there was any on the other side. And the rest of 'em went into where the main huts were. Bt we lost
- 20:00 our Bren Gunner, Bill Adler there and officer Lieutenant Bob Varley. His father'd been Brigadier Varley, got caught in Malaya and sunk on the prisoner of war ship by an American submarine going to Japan. And was his first action really, young bloke. And they were about the length of the sofa away, the two of them, they got
- 20:30 killed, from me. And there was Bill Adler had the Bren gun. And when he dropped it his mate, our corporal, Alex Shaw picked it up. And this Jap come up out of a fox hole and he fired from the hip and took his nose off. And Nicky Pelavolaris went along with us, and he was under this long hut. He said "I'll get it, I'll get it" and he threw a grenade in the fox hole with this Jap. We got thirty-four Japs there. The general was out on an inspection tour, we missed him. There was a
- 21:00 an article in the Golden Evening Post on that. And someone sent it to me and I loaned it to a chap who's at the Fig Tree Home, Louie Norris, one of our Battalion boys. And gave him a few of the photos too. And I haven't been able to see him again yet. And but anyhow we were
- 21:30 sorry to lose our two boys there but we cleaned up some of 'em and got back. That's where that photo of Nugget and I, we're coming back from that patrol, getting that near that battalion when that was taken. And as I say that was Easter Monday that patrol happened and that was taken about the Wednesday that photo. And
- 22:00 all we done from then out was patrolling out from Mabab Creek and then they'd take us out to the coast for a spell every now and then. We were up, down past Jaguar or somewhere and Doug Christie our pay sergeant was under a lean-to, made a lean-to and he had a tail board of a Jap truck there. We
- 22:30 didn't have any transport up there at all. And he was doing all the pay-books and that. This Howard Pereira, Boy Pereira, he'd been wounded in Bardia through the right lung. And he was helping Doug with his pay-books. And we went to make a cup of coffee and there was a Liberator flying around, strafing an island about three miles offshore.
- 23:00 The Japs were there. And I was out on the beach see and logs and that. And all of a sudden this Liberator come round, you could see him, they looked about that, in the waist about that big the blokes in there. All of a sudden he gave us a burst. I dived behind a log and some of the bullets; Pereira had just gone for a cup of coffee for he and Doug. And where he'd been sitting the bullets ploughed through the pay-books and everything there. Done about twenty pay-books. If they'd been sitting there we
- 23:30 would've been done. And yeah they decided to give us a burst. We'd been waving to 'em all, each time they'd come round. And all of a sudden they gave it to us. Point five's they were too. But we didn't like the old Yanks. But we went down; we come out the coast at different times, about three times for spells on that. And all we're doing patrolling and cleaning up and stuff like
- 24:00 that. B Company be one section and C and A and Don Company be another section. So one of our officers he and that Varley, they haven't got 'em in the list of blokes who were killed in there. But Ken Pope was killed in a place called Vox
- 24:30 Two there, he'd been with us a while. Varley hadn't been with us long. But anyhow about the time they dropped the bombs, we were getting close to Wewak. And then on this patrol we captured a Jap. First one we captured. And he said "Nagasaki gone, Nagasaki gone". Anyhow the war finished within a couple of days then,
- 25:00 on the fifteenth. And they sent us up this above Wewak to Shibarangu, Wewak was about seven miles down in the distance. And Ted Winner our postal sergeant had gone home, oh he'd been crook and that and he'd been sent home anyhow. And I had to do the postal sergeant's job then. I was still a private mind you. And Doug Christie and I made a double deal with our
- 25:30 ground sheets and gas capes and right next door to a field bake house. And big portable refrigerator and steak and eggs and stuff like that. And bacon for breakfast. We'd get a fresh loaf of bread one day and just eat the crusts. Next day we might only eat the guts out of one and throw the crusts away. Best eating campaign we ever done right through though that one. Used to drop frozen sides of beef and stuff like that at times too.
- 26:00 And anyhow towards the end of August I went up to with the mail to the rest of the battalion. And I went and seen the colonel, Colonel Hutchison then. NX100 is his number. He sat me on the side of his.... he had this fold out bed and a fold out chair, he's sitting on the chair. And he said "Well Dusty", he said, "What about coming to
- 26:30 Morotai with us? We're going, and from there we're going to Japan Occupation Forces". I said "Ian, I'm finished with the war. I'm going home, gonna get married". So I was aboard this ship, the old Katoomba we'd come away from in Wewak. Supposed to be a three day trip to oh back as far as Cairns. Anyhow but took us eleven

- 27:00 days to get to Brisbane. Went down the coast of Madang, stopped there. Finschhafen, stopped there to take on water. Across, back of Rabaul, back of New Britain to Jacquinot Bay, took on some troops. Took them round into Rabaul, Occupation Forces. Went across to Bougainville. And put a couple off there and took a couple more on.
- 27:30 And set sail then from then. We landed; they stopped out stream in Townsville. The crew went on strike for half a day for some reason or other. And took us about eleven days to get to Brisbane where it should have been only four or five. We were on a Cook's Tour, we were still getting paid. And that, Brisbane course down to Sydney and
- 28:00 Marrickville. Finally got discharged on the 15th October and got married. Had ninety days, ninety-two days accumulated leave to go then so. Got married on the 27th October and done me leave and then went back on the

- 28:30 railway, for a while. So that's the army. There's a few things I'll think of. Tomorrow we're gonna...

How did you go slipping back into civilian society?

Oh well I had a lot of memories and things like that. And the thing is

- 29:00 things had changed a lot in the six years I'd been away. And I wasn't living in luxury. I'd become a Fifth Class Assistant Station Master. And they sent me to; I had the choice of two. I could go to North Star which is on the border of New, Queensland, end of the railway, end of the railway
- 29:30 line. Or Harefield which is the first station out of Junee. Junee to Wagga Wagga in these times, I dunno whether it's changed, was single track, the main line. So you had your electric, staff and ticket system. Each train had to get that to get each, so you were safe working each,
- 30:00 to get into the next section. You've got Junee, Harefield, Shepherd's Siding, Bowman then Wagga Wagga. Lost our first child, was stillborn in Wagga Wagga. 1947, January '47. And I gave the railway away about May or June. Went to Sydney. Started
- 30:30 Litfords, an army mate and his wife, Ted Trusty in Maroubra Junction. I started working for General Motors. I was working for General Motors when the first Holdens come out in Pagewood. And then, from there I went out to Bunnerong Power House and worked there til I left in 1954, running a border.
- 31:00 We had, oh it was a wonderful experience the army but I wouldn't recommend it, unless you're brilliant like this Sir Francis Hassett for a lifetime.

And you eventually did have children?

Well I say we lost a daughter, still born, She went to

- 31:30 full time in Wagga Wagga hospital, January 1947. Then Bruce come along on Friday 13th February 1948. And he's fifty-five now, yeah.

Has he ever served? Has he ever been in the services?

No, no. I wouldn't

- 32:00 want him to. He's an asthmatic Bruce anyhow. Doesn't smoke, doesn't drink that much. But as you see he's a pretty good cook and he likes his own cooking so. Had him playing, we started a kid's soccer team in New Zealand. Course he was only
- 32:30 what about, '48, he was only what about six, rising seven when we went to New Zealand.

When did you go to New Zealand?

1954.

What took you there?

Oh well Bruce as I say was asthmatic and Audrey's health wasn't the best. And her people were all in New Zealand. She was born in South Australia. But

- 33:00 I asked mum and dad about it. And dad said "Well you make up your own mind son". So I said "Well I won't go till after the Rugby League Tests were finished in '54". And we went over there on the Monowyan October '54. And I worked in the freezing chambers first then. And then I went into
- 33:30 Humes Concrete Pipes and that. Finished up in the wire shed making the reinforcing and that. I gave that away when I retired in '82. Yeah but they were there....it's RSA [Returned Services' Association] not RSL. And
- 34:00 they're not, they don't look after their own returned men anything like they do here. Good lot of chaps. I met one chap in the Workman's Club I belonged to. I finished up an elected life member of the Otahuhu Workman's Club. It's

- 34:30 nine mile out of Auckland or Otahuhu. And I was tied up with the Rugby League there. And then they had a good Rugby Union team. And we run a bone of contention, indoor bowls. I run that for about forty years. One chap came over and he brought over a little seal with 'Bone of Contentment' on it. On the back it's got a little plaque, the first Aussie
- 35:00 to win this award. On the front, I'm an Honorary Kiwi. Had a lot of good friends. Yeah. I belonged to the RSA for a while in Otahuhu but a lot of Pommies were running it and they'd never been anywhere or done anything. And they were fiddling the peter [fiddling the books], so I gave it away.

Were any New Zealand soldiers

- 35:30 **that you might have served with in the RSA?**

Oh I'd met a few when we'd been away. But the only time we ever fought with them was in Greece for a little while. Tempe Gorge. We become Anzacs then. Says in the book. Not for long. But one chap in the Workman's Club, he'd been in the

- 36:00 27th Machine Gun Battalion. And part of them went on to Greece with us on the Gloucester. So we used to play a bit of snooker there and we used to be the Gloucester Gladiators. Phil Pride, been dead little while now. We had quite a few chaps in Otahuhu oh the future ex Naval blokes they'd been on

- 36:30 the [HMS] Lysander and the [HMS] Achilles. And the Battle of the River Plate and they sunk the Graf Spee. But another Pommie bloke there Ted Press I's talking to him one day. I said "When we left Perth we had a battleship with us the Ramillies. He said "I was a boy sailor on it". And he was only sixteen. 1941, ah '40, 1940.

- 37:00 **And when did you return to Australia?**

11th April last year. My wife died on 9th November 19, ah 2001. And Bruce,

- 37:30 and Carmen were over of course for the funeral. And said "You coming home to live?" I said "Oh," I said "No it'll be too much worry, too much problem. And oh no, no". So they got the ticket and everything. And they got a Freedom Air flight and they landed here, somewhere round here in Newcastle. I was in their car a quarter of an hour after the plane landed. Wonderful trip, they wheeled me off in a wheelchair.

- 38:00 Oh had a wheelchair. And bang, straight to the front of all the queues and no worry. Ah no. No they're looked after me well here. Make me too fat that's the trouble. I go down the RSL Fridays and Saturday afternoons. And they've got a draw on Friday,

- 38:30 I go down about four, half past four and they pick me up after the draw at seven o'clock. And Saturday I go down about half past four and wait for the Ode at six o'clock and come home then.

Was that your first association with the RSL or had you joined after returning from the war?

I joined the Maroubra Junction in 19-

- 39:00 '46 when I, oh I joined the Maroubra Junction, they gave me a send off there. I've still got the two pewter, half pint pewter mugs, 'To Dusty from President & Members'. And one from PP's table, Piss Pots. Still got them. Cost me a shout there one day. I never used to wear that, wear a hat other than that. One day I

- 39:30 was going fishing and I had to go in the club and get something for a mate. And I wore me old army hat in there. And it cost me a shout around. Yeah, a lot of memories.

Well that might, Dusty, might be a nice place to pause for today. We've come to end of the tape and that's just nicely wrapped

- 40:00 **it up.**

Tape 5

- 00:32 **Good Afternoon Dusty, how are you?**

Very good thanks Cathy.

Nice to see you again. So we might pick up your story again. But I'd like to if I may go back to your reasons for enlisting.

Well patriotism on one way I should say. But ever since I's a youngster and that

- 01:00 and learning of Gallipoli. I was very much interested in what the Australians had done in the First World War. And in our school in Goulburn at Bourke Street Public School, above the Headmaster's entrance door there was a big picture of 'The Landing at Gallipoli'. It always took my eye.

- 01:30 And from an essay to a competition, we used to call them in those days, the landing at Gallipoli, that was my forte really. But it was all from what I'd read and this picture of the landing at Gallipoli. And
- 02:00 made me think how great the Australians were. But and when the war broke out, I'd just turned twenty-two about ten days before when they declared war. And as I say I was in West Wyalong and working on the railway. And recruiting day on, as they say,
- 02:30 on the 13th October which was a Friday, black Friday. And when the head porter came over, Jack Rodgers, and I was loading wool, as I think I said, off a four horse drawn wagon into the railway trucks. And he asked me, "Do you still want to go in, want to join up?" I said "Yes". So got on the push bike, it was
- 03:00 a mile and a half into town from, it was three stations at West Wyalong. Top towns we call it. That is Wyalong, then Central Wyalong's only manned station and West Wyalong. Another porter, Don Dean, he used to go along there when the rail motor went through and going out towards Ungarrie or Lake Cargelligo and Tullibigeal.
- 03:30 But it wasn't manned, they had a little ticket office there, it was closer to town. If anyone wanted to travel. And I got into town to volunteer. I think it was a sergeant was taking all the particulars down and when I said I was working in the railway, he said "Oh I'll have to look". I said "Well I'm not, I'm out of work". And he said "Oh railway, no you're right,
- 04:00 porter". See even at that time they were thinking of essential interests I should say.

And can I ask you, did you have an idea or any understanding or sense of, or who the enemy was?

Oh well the Germans was the only ones at that time. And well we thought

- 04:30 once we got away and stuff like that we were done what we were told. We were trained to obey. And no-one, I didn't see anyone shirk it really. And in fact our battalion, I meant to tell you that, one of the only two,
- 05:00 I don't know what the other battalion was, only two battalions fought four different enemies. And our battalion was one of them. So, that's a distinction I suppose. But as I say we became a big family really in the battalion. Everyone depended on everyone else.
- 05:30 There was no one out business. And we were fortunate to have Colonel England as our commanding officer. "Black Panther" we called him. We became his cubs. And when we came down from Libya he was
- 06:00 transferred and became a brigadier and they put him in charge of the Infantry Training Battalions. Much against his will. So we got another colonel, Major Lamb became our second colonel when we went into Greece. But when we landed back in Julis after Greece, it was night time in the tents at Julis. And brigadier he come round to every tent. Finding out
- 06:30 what happened to who and what. He knew us all, marvellous man. And I think that's what made our battalion so good. Because we all wanted him to be proud of us. And I don't think we let him down.
- 07:00 **It doesn't sound like you did let him down.**
- None of em. I'm not speaking for myself here mainly; I'm speaking for my battalion, all of my mates. And even now Anzac Days are, well I was fortunate enough to get down to Sydney this last one and
- 07:30 met about forty or fifty of 'em. Bout four or five ex officers. Our last doctor, Flynn Josephs. And they make a fuss of me when I get there because I've been away in New Zealand so long see. I did do quite a few trips over for Anzac Day. And they really looked after me. But I was just one
- 08:00 of the Battalion. I didn't win any gongs, any medals I wear I only earned them. We had quite a few chaps were decorated. And I didn't decry em a bit. I would've like to got one but I didn't.

Can you tell me how you came to be a special runner?

- 08:30 Well there was two from each Company. That was only in Bardia we done that. When two from each Company were seconded to Battalion Headquarters for Bardia. And after Bardia, on the third day when it was all over we went back to our companies. But we wasn't used in the capacity
- 09:00 as a runner because we didn't have to be. Because they laid their telephone line, the sigs and that. And there was Div Sigs [divisional signals] and we had our own signal platoon of course. And they laid the lines of communication and sigs operate alright, it wasn't needed. And that's
- 09:30 why I think we was, they didn't use runners in Tobruk after. But oh well, up in Syria well as I say I was batman in Greece and Syria but...

Can you tell me what a batman is and does?

- 10:00 Oh well he's supposed to, if you're in camp, you're supposed to have the officer's shaving gear ready and have his uniforms and looked after him and stuff like that. A general handyman. But Len Herwig was unlucky because I think he was the untidiest looking officer of all because I was his batman. And he got two MID's [Mentioned in Dispatches].
- 10:30 And our driver, Austin Whiffen, he got an MID [Mentioned in Dispatches]. And I was with 'em all the time and I didn't get one. But when we, well it was a way, the way it was, I didn't have to walk as much as the others, I was in the truck a lot see. He had a fifteen hundred-weight truck when he was Quarter
- 11:00 Master. He, as I said before he'd been our officer up in Bardia and Tobruk. So when we got to Greece he asked me would I go batman and I said "Alright", seeing he was Quartermaster, so I wouldn't have to walk so much. Had a truck to ride around in. Used to get me in a lot of trouble that bloke. I rang him after the war; he's an inveterate smoker and always coughing so. And oh
- 11:30 I think it was well after the war I looked him up in the phone book and I said, he come on the phone I said "Is that Len Herwig?" he said "Yes". I said "Let's hear you cough". He coughed, I said "Oh that's you Len, this is Dusty here". He didn't abuse me either. That's how we were, we, they were friends. We
- 12:00 had our, we were disciplined and any time we infringed and that, we got punished for it, like you just had to take it. That was it.

Were you ever punished?

Oh well only as far as

- 12:30 the three times that I took an extra day off. Like on our final leave in 1940, '39 really, when I coming back through from West Wyalong and Goulburn, I stopped off to see mum and dad for an extra day. That cost me loss of two day's pay and a quid. And then I fronted the Colonel on the Orcades down around the Bass,
- 13:00 below Victoria somewhere I think it was. And second time was when we done the march through Sydney. And I was on the honour guard on that. And we got on the train you know at Central and came up this way. And went out to Greta or Silver City they called it then. And a lot of us decided when we got there, "Oh we'll have another day
- 13:30 in Sydney". And we arrived at Broadmeadows here or near here. And the Station Master had to put an extra carriage on the train to take us all. And of course got back the next, got back after twenty-four hours and they'd all gone to Brisbane. So caught 'em up there. And Colonel Stevenson was our colonel then. We, no,
- 14:00 no, yeah it was Colonel Stevenson. He was, he took over in Syria. He, that another two day's pay and a quid. And the third time was when after I'd been in hospital and malaria quite a bit. And I got sick and tired of reporting in. One Saturday morning I didn't bother going in to get weekend leave
- 14:30 at the old showgrounds, leaving transit depot and the major there. He fined me the usual two day's pay and a pound. But got me back to the battalion they'd lost me forms. He said to us, I told him that, I said "Oh sir, I'm trying to get back to my battalion I've been out of hospital now over a month. And
- 15:00 I thought I'd be going any day". And the sar major happened to be there, he said "Yes Sir we can't seem to find his papers". I was on a train in two days. Up to Wondecla. And that's where I started to get fit again then. I went into Headquarter Company there. And
- 15:30 so I started in B Company then I was at battalion headquarters with Herwig. And then through the Kokoda Trail I was in A Company. I said to Herwig "I'm leaving you Len. And going back to my rifle company". Then I got back to the battalion finally in 1943. I was in Headquarter Company, they'd started these
- 16:00 Tank Attack Platoon, two pounder guns, which we never used in action. And so, when we're going up to Aitape Wewak Campaign, British New Guinea I asked for a transfer back into B Company to where I started. So I finished back in there in the same section, Six Section. Eleven Platoon. And that was my
- 16:30 lot although the last fortnight after the war I, up at Shibarangu we, above Wewak. Or you could see Wewak seven mile down in the distance. I done the Postal Sergeant's job because he'd gone home, Ted Winner. And that was the second time I'd done the postal
- 17:00 job. When I arrived back from hospital one time in Syria to Hungry Hollow. Ted Winner was away in hospital somewhere. And about two foot of snow on the parade ground and everything. They were just shifting out of tents into Nissen huts. And all the mail was piled up everywhere from Christmas of 1942 that'd be. Yeah, no, Christmas '41. And
- 17:30 so we cleared all the mail up, back log. That's how I got to know what, where everyone was. And of course there's a lot of, you get a lot of parcels and mail and that, chaps'd been killed in action or something like that, or gone home. And you'd have to see one of the officers in charge. And

- 18:00 they'd look after that or any valuables that might have arrived. Like a watch if some chap'd been killed, they'd have to look after it and get it sent back. Or if they're parcels, just open 'em up and deal 'em out to the chap's platoon or something like that. I was very fortunate
- 18:30 on the railway, they had a Ladies Institute who used to send the parcels about two, three times a year. We had a pass for 'em then and we used to get the Australian Comfort Parcels. And then any parcels from home as well see. I was well looked after in parcels. Always made sure that the ladies at the Railway Institute, I'd write and thank them and anytime I got home leave
- 19:00 I'd go and see them and talk to them.
- And did you write letters home?**
- I got that way sometimes I'd be writing about fourteen a week, different people. Well sometimes when you're up in the action and that you couldn't write that often but. In fact
- 19:30 when we're outside Tobruk I was in Six Section. And Hughie Johnson he'd joined up in West Wyalong too with me, he'd written a poem about his section so we said "Write one about us". Do you wanna hear? I only know six verses of it okay.
- \n[Verse follows]\n"Now the boys of Six Section want a little rhyme,\n To see their name in writing, they think it would be fine.\n So give them your attention, I won't detain you long,\n
- 20:00 Forgive and don't abuse me if I happen to be wrong.\n
- \n[Verse follows]\n First of all there's Christoff, otherwise they're Corps,\n They commonly call you hooty with a bugle like a hawk.\n He's a little superstitious since he crossed the main,\n Because a fortune teller told him he may not return again.\n Next is Divvy Richards a lad of a different type,\n And after twelve months service they pinned on him a stripe.\n Before he joined the army was droving sheep out west,\n Now he's droving Dagos and thinks that that is best.\n
- 20:30 Then there's Snowy Elbourne just bubbling full of glee,
- \n[Verse follows]\n Spends all his time in Rischoon a Jewess there to see.\n Some day he may be sorry, some day he may be sad\n If it should ever happen he becomes a dad.\n Then there's Dusty Kuschert the lad of football fame,\n Spends all his time writing love letters to some dames.\n On his return to Aussie will strike a tonne of strife,\n Trying to make his mind up which one to make his wife.\n
- 21:00 \n[Verse follows]\n There also was a Scotsman, Cluney Campbell is his name,\n
- A Scot without his bagpipe is quarter not quite sane.\n If he becomes a daddy, he'll tell ya he was caught,\n Cleaning his teeth on the footpath while he was tanked with port.\n Next in line is Tonic, his proper name is Neuss,\n If met when he was mellow, you sure will cop abuse.\n Ask him his opinion of the army and the like,\n He'll tell you there's no future, for neither man nor wife."n
- 21:30 I forget the rest. The first four are from West Wyalong and Cluney Campbell and Jack Neuss are from Cooma. And Hughie Johnson, we called him Padre, he was anything else but a Padre and he was West Wyalong. Works on a wheat or sheep farm out there from West Wyalong and the roughest looking bloke you'd
- 22:00 ever seen. He got caught in Crete. And we had two chaps repatriated after Crete. Smiler Handley and this Montefiore. They must've exchanged some German prisoners for them. And there were others beside them had been repat [repatriated] over, and two from our Battalion. And they, course they went home, they weren't allowed any more part in the war. But Montefiore said "Oh that Hughie".
- 22:30 I said "Hear anything of that Hughie Johnson, Padre Jo?" I said "Yes he was in solitary in Crete". And I crawled down a pipe and had to talk to him. "What happened to you Padre?" He said "Well they had me with a hoe covering up a cable, and every so often I was chopping the cable". So they,
- 23:00 never know what happened to Hughie. NX609 something.
- So you had a few girls to write home to?**
- Pardon?
- You had a few girls to write home to?**
- Oh well really know a West Wyalong, used to write to Snow's, one of Snowy's younger sisters.
- 23:30 She's too young for me but I wrote to them. And then another family, the Withers, I wrote to Beryl Withers and she'd give the news to the people. And about three different girls I knew in West Wyalong I'd write to. Some more regular to than they, Una Elbourne and Beryl Withers, more regular than the others. And
- 24:00 of course, then I wasn't allowed to go on the final parade in 1939, oh it happened in January 1940 really before we sailed. Because I'd been a day over on me leave. And when they came back they had one of those little Australian flags. And they gave me that and I took it over

- 24:30 the Middle East with me and at Julis I sewed it on the outside of the tent above where we entered the tent. And it faded and there was an address on that. Young girl, Lucy, I can never think of her name now. I wrote to her. I've been trying to think of her name. And then through her, one of her cousins was writing
- 25:00 to me. And they lived in Mosman, I was writing back to them. And then there was another, Aileen Wyburn. She was related to Beryl Withers and in West Wyalong. And they were living, her father had a little grocery store opposite the Duke of Waterloo Hotel in The Rocks, right opposite on the corner. And they lived just round in
- 25:30 one of the terrace houses. And old Les Wyburn and I used to write to them of course and visit there when anytime home on leave. And with the one in Mosman, oh they lived along; I don't know whether it was Mosman Road or not but right up the end. Used to go across by ferry. Gwenda, Gwenda Manell, yeah.
- 26:00 And she had a sister and her family. I got to know them see through writing to this Lucy. So there's quite a few and of course mum and dad. Sisters.
- And what did you write about?**
- Oh just let em know I was still okay. And wished I was getting some home cooking. Stuff like
- 26:30 that. Just so they wouldn't worry too much. But oh no there's another, I don't know, where'd I met Annie Goldwyn, she lived at Bowral just out of Goulburn. And on a little farm. She and Agnes Whittaker. And she sent me a photo and that. Don't know how I got to be that, her. But when I arrived back
- 27:00 home from Ceylon had a nice necklace, a good one, it'd be worth some money now. And I gave it to her, never seen her. I think I took her to the pictures once in me life. I think I met her, I'd known her before
- 27:30 I went down to Goulburn to play that game of football in July 1939. And the night after, the Saturday night we'd meet at Laertertafel Hall they had a dance there and her sister was there and I escorted her home. And but I can't think of her first name. Platonic friendships they were. But ...
- And in a sense you say you were writing home**
- 28:00 **to let them not worry about you. But were you also writing do you think, I'm wondering, to boost your own morale?**
- Oh well it was something to do and that. I used to like getting mail too, I'd get a lot of mail back see. Dad was always wanting to know how I was of course.
- 28:30 And then when Bill arrived over, eldest brother, we'd done three campaigns by that time. And he wanted me to claim him and I said "No bloody way, I'm in enough trouble of me own". And he finished up at Alamein. He wrote a beautiful, great letter from there, they were on the coast. And he came home, I was still in hospital really, in '43 when
- 29:00 he came home. And I'd been off, hadn't had a beer since Tobruk. And we went into Goulburn on leave one day. And he, Bruce Robertson and he had a friend; Bill had a friend with him. We were playing cards in the first, oh, family name they call it, down, North Goulburn and I was running the cutter. And afterwards, on the third one I said "Well I'm on it again." so I
- 29:30 started drinking again. Course in the Kokoda Trail you couldn't get any beer anyhow. But I didn't have a drink in Syria, ah in Greece, Syria, oh Ceylon and of course the Kokoda Trail. And also it wasn't there. I was only a beer drinker. I didn't like spirits, didn't like wine. There's plenty of wine in Tobruk.
- 30:00 After Tobruk they had big barrels of it. I think that was in place of water for them see. And our chaps had a marvellous time in this wadi. Where'd those photos go? There's a couple of photos there...
- Yeah ...**
- Oh I'm sorry, oh, oh I forget about that. And, the...
- Can I just ask you how you felt about having**
- 30:30 **your eldest brother in the service?**
- Oh, I was very pleased to see him. I had got leave and went down to Palestine to try to find him. But as I say I met a cousin who didn't want to know me there. But, Chappy, Kuschert. And I get back up to Syria and he's just through Damascus on the
- 31:00 Beirut Road to Damour. And yeah so we had a day in Mezze really. He had to come through Damascus. Mezze was the airport for Damascus, about two or three miles out. That's where we'd gone up and first met the Vichy French.
- 31:30 **So were you able to keep track of where your brother was during the war?**

Ah well no. He wrote this letter in the end of 1942 or somewhere in '42 after Alamein to me. I never wrote to him. He used to be a reporter on the local paper

- 32:00 for years in Goulburn, Bill. Married a girl from Yarra, seven miles out. And he was the first married of course in the family. And she, she wrote to me too Gert, too. Or Grace she liked to be called. Lovely woman.
- 32:30 Then we had great friends. They had lived in West Wyalong one time but they were living out on Botany Road, the Currys. Nancy, she was a lovely looking girl and everything. And Snowy, I thought Snowy would've married her. But he used her as an excuse that, the time that we caught the train here at Broadmeadows. When we got back I said, when they, "What's your excuse?"
- 33:00 And Snowy said "I went down to cancel my wedding to my girlfriend because we're going away". And I said "I was going to be the Best Man that's why I was down there". We were tellin' lies of course. We stayed at, when we went down there we went straight out to Botany Road, and at Botany itself. And just stayed at the Currys that night.
- 33:30 Wonderful family they were.

You've talked a lot about the blokes, the mates that you made in the infantry. In particular your relationship with Snowy.

Snowy Elbourne, oh well we were cabin mates on the Orcades. I showed you that, and those of only four difference in our numbers. And then

- 34:00 we had another very good mate. And he and Snowy, Snowy was a very good lookin fella, beautiful, his own teeth, beautiful teeth. And only five foot four and just a touch over it. Blonde. And Dave Newham he was dark headed, and he was very well educated and that, and from Grenfell. And
- 34:30 he and Snow, they were ladies' men. They used to do alright. But Snowy had this young lady in, she was only about eighteen I think in Rischon, Julie someone, I didn't know her surname. Only met her once, she was beautiful girl but. They made
- 35:00 friends and they went their way usually sometimes on leave. And because I wasn't a real ladies' man that way. I didn't mind writing to 'em and talking to 'em in that way. In fact I used to have to write to Snowy's people because he was a bad one to, bad correspondent. Then we had
- 35:30 an older, elder bloke who Alan Hutchison, they called him dad. Joined up in West Wyalong and when they're coming away and Snowy's people were a bit tearful over him. And he said "Well don't worry I'll look after him". So his nickname was "Dad" after that. And we had Syd Clift and we name, he was always yakkin'. So we named him "Yabber" after the
- 36:00 great cricket supporter in Sydney Cricket Ground. And Jack White, NX6109, he was "Ghandi" for some reason or other. And Padre Johnson, well then Harry Goering he got "Herman" and "Tiger". And then he could tell
- 36:30 so many stories, "Corporal Bullshit" we called him too. And then Nick Elliott who had the same number as "Tiger" Goering for a while, 6080. "Tiger" had taken his and Nick was out in the western line when we had to go into camp. And "Tiger" hadn't been in there for recruiting day. And he said "Well I'll take his number" So. And
- 37:00 Nick finished up with a five figure number. And he was named "Hesitation" because he stuttered. "D-don't want a b-b-bloody f-five f-figure number. T-t-think I'm a j-joke ch-choco". Yeah. Oh we had some characters in the army.

And what was it do you think about that mateship

- 37:30 **that saw you through?**

Well you knew if something happened to you, you had someone who'd look, who'd try to help you. And if something happened to them you'd be going to help them. And that's what, it's hard when, as I said about that Tim Dempsey, our first one in action. When just after

- 38:00 our I officer[Intelligence Officer] got killed when, and they got up to go and we got up to go and Tim Dempsey went down. Oh he was only six or eight feet in front of us when he got hit. We'd caught up, right up to the company. Oh there's that many stories I wished I, and
- 38:30 a lot of people think a man was telling lies about it. But no, it's all the truth. As I said, you're going into action with their overcoats are all on, their pack on their back, a rifle with bayonet on it. And you see them through the dust and the smoke and the early morning light. One bloke'd go over to his mate
- 39:00 and get a light off his cigarette and get back in line. You know. They reckoned we.... I told you that, they reckoned we sang "We're off to see the Wizard". I'd defy anyone to hear anything other than the noise of the shells and that. That's awe inspiring. And you just wondered, "Is anything coming my way?" We had one of our officers, oh one of the C Company of us, Toby

39:30 Alexander, he, outside Bardia he had a leg taken off, killed him of course. With a bouncing shell, a dud. I think he was one of the first casualties.

That's a really good place for us to stop.

Mmm?

Our tape has just run out.

Has it, right.

Tape 6

00:30 **Ah Dusty, just like to take you back to your first feelings of going into action.**

Pardon?

How did you feel when you first went into action?

Exhilarated and frightened. I was frightened all the way through the war. I was frightened, I'd show I was frightened.

What, what did you...?

01:00 you just wonder whether the next one's gonna be yours or not. And course in Bardia and well, Tobruk wasn't so bad, like the initial advance. But in Bardia the Italians had over four hundred artillery weapons aimed at us. And they make a hell of

01:30 a row. And when they explode they make a bigger noise and a lot of smoke and dust. As I said of course it was all rocky, sandy type of soil. And it's made it worse in a way, if it had of been soft sand the explosions would have been muffled

02:00 more. But not outside Bardia. In Tobruk well as I said that 14 Platoon hit the booby traps oh mine fields in front of us. And out of thirty-two only nine could carry on. And they went in through the wire with us. We cut our own wire there. We only had one wire cutter finally. They lost one

02:30 and one jerry-made set broke. And we all went through one gap. About, mmm, twenty, thirty, forty feet of wire. Like there'd be apron wire, the fence and a coil. Went through a gap about a yard wide. If they had of been a set line on us we would've all been gone. The Italian posts

03:00 were dug in and concrete. And they run for about fifty yards along and underground and come up at different points, they'd have machine guns mounted and that. And when, in Tobruk as soon as we got through the wire the chaps out of 14 Platoon raced down. And I see one of 'em pick up a machine gun and slam it down on their heads. Ities underneath and

03:30 they'd live in, they were right round the wire those blokes. But we were fortunate, when we broke through we were on the flank and we were well inside them and that. Got ahead to the Alamein Road and artillery post. And we must have been over half a mile in front of the rest of the troops, just a section. That section I just showed you, Jeff Walker and

04:00 that was about, what, Verne Craig wasn't in that. Verne Craig was with us because he helped Snowy take the prisoners back. The fifty odd prisoners we got there. And oh after that we just, after the rest of the battalion caught us up and bang, the Italians gave up just over

04:30 the Alamein Road. Well over a thousand of them. And we didn't really meet any more opposition, we just went round. And any little pockets and that, they'd wave the white flag, well. Only firing we done really was well outside the artillery post. As they coming up we'd, relieve themselves, we'd fire and Jack Neuss'd

05:00 leave em alone, no, let him have his piddle. But...

Did you have any lucky charms?

No, no, we just had our meat discs [identity tags] on as we called them. And old tin hat, you could put, if you got frightened you could pull it down to your hips.

05:30 **On that point, was there a wound that you feared most?**

Oh, not having had one, but seeing a few got hit, chaps, when you see a chap who gets hit through the stomach and stuff like that, it's terrible. And worse, but even, like, well Gus

06:00 Mooney he got the side of his head blown off you could see his brains see. And he's still alive that chap. That's at Oivi, just beyond Kokoda. He's living in New Zealand now, he came over a couple of times, same time as I was over on Anzac Day. And helped carry him out. Didn't think he'd live but he did.

- 06:30 And Ross Pritzley, that chap I had, we went in and I was lucky enough to be able to help him up the hill and out. Shot down through the shoulder and through his lungs and that. Oh one lung. He was the gutsiest bloke I ever knew that bloke. Never whimpered or anything. Oh, I
- 07:00 on leave one time and I met him outside Nick Simmons in George Street. And he had a couple of mates with him; he was out of the army of course. Had a bit of a talk with him and then after the war I went to Wollongong, the youngest brother, he's still there the youngest brother. Or the younger brother, younger than myself really. Youngest brother died. And he, I found out Ross was there so got in touch with him,
- 07:30 we had a great night at the club. Boys from Bowral. There was a different clique see. We were West Wyalong, there was quite a lot from Goulburn. Goulburn was really the headquarters of the 3rd Militia Battalion. And then the Bowral Boys and then there was the Bega to Berlin or Bust Boys.
- 08:00 And Cooma, Wollongong, they're scattered all around now, our battalion. A lot in Sydney of course and different suburbs. Like there was one, we landed in November as I say into Ingleburn in 1939. And issued with
- 08:30 giggle suits first and our hats. And leaving into a town, Sydney. And this couple, Bob Holt and Snowy Parkinson, went down the Great Southern Hotel, they were having a beer. And the barmaid looked at Snowy. And Snowy was eighteen years old and real fresh faced and blonde and Hooker was heavy weight, boxer
- 09:00 and dark and that. And she said to Hooker "You're okay but he can nick off and come back when he's eighteen". Hooker wasn't quite sixteen at the time. He got wounded once in the desert. But he had a lot to do with boxing here, or in Sydney, after the war and that. In fact I went looking for him in Sydney one time. One trip
- 09:30 over from New Zealand and couldn't find him. And I was standing in the line, waiting to go through the customs over in Auckland. Then all of a sudden turned round, the bloke next door to me is Hooker Holt. I said "I've been lookin for you". He had one of his sons over for a fight that week. He's dead now. R.G. Holt. Bob.
- 10:00 He comes out Lakemba way. Oh we had a clique in the B Company, the Bing Boys they called themselves. Just happy go lucky blokes, the twin brothers, the Boyd's. And Jackie Humphries, Hooker Holt.
- 10:30 Oh I think Boy Pereira was on the fringes of that too. Joey Grey, they sent Joey Grey home, snarled at him. But he was just a high spirited boy. He would have made a good soldier and they sent him home in about June, July in 1930, 1940. When that honest John Lennon, From West, joined up in West Wyalong from the jail or
- 11:00 the cells I should say. And he needed it. "Honest John" we called him. Yeah. Anything else but. We had another bloke in West Wyalong, one, this "Bogan" Simpson, Jack Simpson. About seven or eight kids. He put his age down see. And "Why do they call you Bogan?" He said "Well I swam the Bogan with a bullock dray tied to me back."
- 11:30 Course he could spin a yarn old Bogan. Anyhow, the training and that, they got, had a few like it, the battalion put their age down and the training and that got to them a bit. And they formed 'em into the Old and Bolds Brigade. Made 'em a guard company. They had to guard Divisional Headquarters or something like that. And
- 12:00 Jack Simpson, yeah, Bogan.

Can I ask you after the successes in Bardia and Tobruk, which were considerable victories for the AIF...

Which was?

In Bardia and Tobruk they were victories for the AIF.

Yes.

Then you went to Greece and it was a totally different story.

Was it ever, yeah. Course when we're going up as I'd said before,

- 12:30 all the heavy stuff was coming back down. Heavy guns and stuff like that. And about the time we reached Larisa, the Greeks were surrendering, as a whole. And Churchill wouldn't believe 'em but they were. And
- 13:00 the Germans broke through on the north and come down. As I say we were mainly stationed, our chaps, we were B Echelon really; we were in this Tempe Gorge. It was a long valley leading up into this Gorge. Round about the foot of Mount Olympus. And the Battalion was further up through Veria and that.

- 13:30 And that's where Scotty Nagle went up one time and said...he knew how to beat the bombs. "When you see 'em coming down that way, you run in underneath 'em see". But I never tried that. The battalion finally got back to us at Tempe Gorge. And that, and on Friday the 18th April, that's when the muck hit the fan. And the Jerries were in Larisa.
- 14:00 And that's when Captain Flashman, our doctor, was killed trying to get through, get out through Larisa in a three ton truck. And some others were killed in it, the rest captured. And we got out through a bit of swampy ground. And then it was just procession down through the
- 14:30 centre of Greece. Through Lamia and places like that. I wouldn't be able to tell you all the names. And it was somewhere, believe it was the 24th or 25th April we come through Athens. Then we were supposed to go to Argos for the ships there to get out on. Just over the Corinth Canal from Athens. And the ships were burning in the harbour so we carried on down to Kalamata.

And when you

- 15:00 **received word to pull back, was it every man for himself?**

Well we tried to keep together. The 2/1st Battalion done one of the rear guard actions there. And what was left of them, this was on Crete, and they finished up after Crete, and Greece and Crete, less than thirty men, the 2/1st Battalion.

- 15:30 One of our sister battalions. As I said they when we were landed back in Julis they allocated a hundred new reinforcements each battalion. And then before we went up to, we went up to Syria, they took a hundred and fifty out of each of the 2/2nd and 2/3rd and put them into the 2/1st Battalion. To try to re-build the battalion, even some of our
- 16:00 original soldiers and some of the new intake even, all went in the 2/1st. Become a new battalion really. And a party of about fifteen or sixteen of 'em did get out through Turkey. Come down through Syria or Lebanon back into Palestine. And they were
- 16:30 very few.

So, just so that I can get that straight in my mind, when you were in Greece and heading towards Athens, you were travelling...

Semi-convoy type of thing. We were well strung out, there was three ton trucks. And I was in a fifteen hundred-weight. And as you get down you'd

- 17:00 Len Herwig'd, "Any idea where the 2/3rd Battalion is?" And bang we found that and we finished up, I dunno the name of the place. It's about twenty miles short of Athens it was before we reached Athens. And spent a night or two there. And they collected there
- 17:30 really. And but we weren't all that, we were fortunate that we stuck together and we, most of us were on the Dilwara. Some were on the Costa Rica, they finished up in Crete. Some of them escaped from Crete. When we landed back in Palestine and
- 18:00 after we get a hundred and fifty taken off us, we were just over half a battalion strength even then. Because when we went up into Syria, C Company of about a hundred men, had gone up the coast as garrison duty at the Sidon, out of Tyre. The rest of us
- 18:30 there's three hundred and eighty-four, this is official history, three hundred and eighty-four ORs [Other Ranks] and twenty-one officers went towards Damascus where we become attached to the 16th English Brigade and the 5th Indian Division. And we went up by truck to Deraa. But most of the
- 19:00 battalion oh the three hundred odd men, were on the train for about eighteen hours to Deraa. We got there and fed, met them there and fed them. And they put 'em into Palestine buses I think they were and trucks. And then it was English transport and that before us for 'em. We took off for.... didn't stay overnight
- 19:30 there they just stayed for a feed. And they travelled all night and they went into action the next day. At Mezze. They were out on their feet really. They'd been travelling for over twenty-four hours in a bumpy old train and then in transports. Then it's straight into action. Took two of the forts, two of the three forts. And
- 20:00 when Colonel Lamb at the time, he was still in charge. And he got wounded in the leg and some of them got captured for two or three hours. Got 'em out of that and beat the Vichy French off again. He was seconded out with the injuries and that's when Stevenson took over. And from there we went out
- 20:30 through Damascus on the Beirut Road. As I say it was just a training ground for the French artillery. And they killed a few of our boys there and we had to retire back. And they come back through into Mezze. And from there they took us over the coast and we finished up at Damour just short of Beirut. When
- 21:00 the French, the Vichy French decided to surrender. And I seen General Dents, we were sitting alongside

the road when he went back down to sign the treaty. And then some of our chaps and others from other battalions, had to give a guard of honour to repatriate 'em out of Beirut. But from there we went up

21:30 north, there's a Tripoli up in Lebanon too, short of Latakia. We went inland to a nice little village, Bech Mezzine. And oh it was lovely there. Stone houses and stone walls around 'em. And on Sunday the civilians there, the girls in their Sunday frocks and stuff like that, looked beautiful.

22:00 We were just resting there. But oh we played a bit of football on the stony grounds. Oh before we left Mezze, our battalion had a rugby team, mainly officers and stuff like that. I played in it too, but I was only

22:30 still a private. And we beat a French side. Does that make me an international footballer? But anyhow that Bech Mezzine, the officers played the sergeants a game of rugby and I was a referee. And sergeants won it. I never got invited to the dinner that night. Had a lot of little stories like that

23:00 comes to mind.

How do you think the morale was after the evacuation from Greece?

Oh we were a bit down in the mouth but we were fortunate as I say that we came out with better than half a battalion strength. Whereas 2/1st Battalion as I say was down, about thirty men. Big difference isn't it?

23:30 But of course as I say, they done a rear guard action above Athens. And then a lot of them landed on.... what's left, landed on Crete. Course when the Costa Rica got sunk on the convoy, three ship convoy coming, they all

24:00 went to Crete as well. That's where some of our battalion landed on there because they were all embarked at Kalamata. I think there was at least two British destroyers were taking us out to the transports. We were on the [HMS] Hero and some of them were on the [HMS] Havoc I think. We did hear that Lord Louis

24:30 Mountbatten was in charge of one of the destroyers at that time too. But later on the Hero got sunk around Crete and the cruiser, [HMS] Gloucester which we'd gone to, gone over to Greece then from Alexandria, it got sunk too off Crete. I don't know whether it was bad luck for them or not. Was

25:00 Bill Jenkins, he had a story on Kalamata. They were sent out as a stand patrol at Kalamata. And they were told when they stood down they needed to come back and go to the head of the queue at Kalamata and tell 'em "They were stand patrol". Which they did and which he's only telling us, telling us there a few months ago on this.

25:30 And a lot of 'em were really, "We've been sitting here for hours and hours waiting and you blokes taking over the queue". Bill said "No that was alright". I remember on the Dilwara coming out and they were bombing us. I think they were Dorniers or something. I see one with a hole straight through its wing. The

26:00 ship's guns must have put a hole went straight through the wing, didn't bring it down. But they were frightening days but thrilling. But frightening.

What do you think is your perhaps strongest memory of the Middle East?

26:30 Fondest oh, leaving it was good but ah...

I actually didn't say fondest, I said strongest.

Strongest. Oh our first day in action definite. Definite going to Bardia but wonderful experience. Seeing these chaps through the dust and smoke. And just going along as if out on a morning stroll really. You know bit faster'n a morning stroll.

27:00 Marvellous sight. There's a good photo of it in that, our battalion history book there, War Dances. Just wondering whether you're gonna cop it or get through. Which we did, most of us. As I say Toby Alexander wasn't so fortunate. Tobruk was

27:30 much different, other than the 14th Platoon hitting the mine field or booby trap lines. Cause we'd been out a couple of nights before and hadn't been searching for booby trap lines and hadn't struck them see. So we must have been just one section across when we finally went in. We had gone in, we'd been in a

28:00 night or two beforehand, the 14th Platoon would've got through. So, it's just a toss of the coin isn't it? Yes as they all say "There's no glory in war but there's a lot of glory won by it". Yeah.

28:30 It's hard to pick out the most courageous thing you see in anything like that. But it was the friendship with the chaps and the way everyone depended on one another. Course our training given us that, dependence. And be there if someone needs help. Or

29:00 either way. And we were fortunate that way that we had the officers that we started with. And there was

no dogs amongst 'em. Going on a lot further to the Kokoda Trail, when we're going up there we heard about what the militia was, how they'd run

- 29:30 and everything and that. I've read books on 'em, we done it hard, they done it twice as hard. And they didn't dog it either. When we're going over and up a place like Efogi and Menari and stuff like that. Our padre and doctor and Bill Hart and Maurie Goldman, burying chaps and they were caught in ambush. One bloke was pulling a sock on.
- 30:00 Another bloke was writing a letter, been ambushed and that. A dozen of 'em laying there. Underneath their ground sheets and stuff like that. They'd made a little tent out of a ground sheet. Yeah, as I said we done it hard but they done it twice as hard, the crowd that got pushed back. They were meeting Japs, hundred to
- 30:30 one, hundred to one they were fighting against. And anyone that tries to tell me they were cowards, or dogged it or run, no, I'd tell them they're bloody liars. I reckon, I reckon they were as good as any Australian soldiers.
- 31:00 There's a lot to be said for the old slouch hats y'know. No, I get a bit emotional when I think of these things I'm sorry. Yes and that book, Those Ragged Bloody Heroes, it's a must for anyone to read.
- 31:30 And to really know the terrain and stuff like that. And supply lines and tucker. You're lucky; one tin of bully beef was a meal for three men. If you had it. If you didn't have it, three men went hungry. When we started out, we had, everyone had about three or four tins and you'd open one tin and.
- 32:00 If the supplies didn't get up there, well you went hungry. Biscuits, well, I had a spare pair of socks and used to, I put a lot of biscuits in one of them and slung 'em on, they run out. And I only had one set of teeth in, had to break em that way. And they were hard. But oh, it's hard,
- 32:30 hard to try to explain really. But I'm proud I was there, very proud. More so proud of the men that I served with. They became
- 33:00 as I said, like we were family really. And yet when you were in camp the greatest rivalry ever between each company. Or platoon against each platoon or section against section. Was all friendly. When we were,
- 33:30 shall I jump ahead, when we were up in the Tableland in 1944 [Atherton Tablelands] everyone was getting browned off, we were playing football every day. And route marches were a thing of the past these days. Because we kept fit by sport and stuff like that. There was swimming and everything. Anyhow everyone was getting browned off.
- 34:00 We used to have a beer night; oh this is something I gotta tell you about. And of course we invented, or someone invented a Lady Blamey. It was a drinking glass; it was, remember the old full bottles? You'd get a piece of string, soak it in kerosene, tie it round, light it and plunge it in water, it'd break off clean, get a
- 34:30 stone and smooth it down. A Lady Blamey that was a glass, not a schooner or middy. That was, it held about a pint anyhow. But everyone had their Lady Blamey. I dunno whether she realised she was so honoured. But then they, as I say, I was in this tank attack platoon, 6 Platoon it was in Headquarter
- 35:00 Company. Only been formed up there and we put on a guard competition. Twenty-four hour guard, each section, each platoon had to put one on. And anyhow we won it, 6 Platoon. We had an eighteen gallon keg, full pig and a pound
- 35:30 each and a day off. And down the bush to drink the beer and cook the pig. They never run another one after that. The only march I done through Sydney was, oh that might have been '44 too. I was marker of the battalion on that. I missed
- 36:00 out on the first one in 193-, pre-embarkation. And then second one I was on the honour guard opposite Queen Victoria Building. Then I was on again, then I was marker of the battalion for the third one.

And what's marker of the battalion?

I

- 36:30 was there and they all formed up on me. I was number one. I dunno why but oh well. I think when the war finished there was only about thirty-four of us original members. Another thing I was proud of.
- 37:00 But oh no, that battalion, there's that many stories, if a man could get 'em all together and oh what. We had some characters. And this Jika McVicar, he used to play for Balmain I think, rugby league and he's a hard man Jika. Original man. And we get into Cairo and
- 37:30 the Gulli Gulli men come round with their scrawny chickens and that. And Jika grabbed one of these chickens and bit its head off and said "Now make that one come alive". But,

38:00 what else were the other things?

Well I'm just thinking the same myself, so I think perhaps we might leave the Middle East now unless...

Pardon?

I think we might leave the Middle East now.

Oh yes.

Is there anything else you want to say about the Middle East before we move on?

Oh, not that I can think of Kathy. But in Ceylon well it was just

38:30 ordinary guard, I wasn't, being Lenny Herwig's batman I wasn't on, didn't get guard duty see. But we had our stand tos and stand downs each day. But we never had any action or anything like that. That was like on

39:00 the Good Friday they bombed Trincomalee and they strafed Colombo which was.... they flew over us but strafed Colombo. But couldn't see them through the trees, the rubber trees and that anyhow. So Colombo was much different to the Middle East of course. You had steamy hot and I never even got, used to go

39:30 into Colombo on leave a bit but I wasn't much interested in it. Never went up to Kandy, could have had a trip up to there. Never went there.

Tape 7

00:35 **Dusty I imagine you used to play a lot of football, bit of sport before the war, it seems you carried it on in the war.**

Only 1939 was me first football.

You played a bit though even while you were away on service?

Oh yes. Had a cricket team and everything. I was never a cricketer. But

01:00 we had our company teams and stuff like that. Especially up in the Tablelands after the Kokoda Trail. There was two teams in Headquarter Company, I used to play in both of them too. Sometimes two games in an afternoon. And I got fit. But our battalion team, got photos there of it, they won the 6th Divvy Premiership up there.

01:30 We were fortunate in we had Colin Wyndon with us. He was a Randwick rugby player and a Wallaby after the war. His brother had been a Wallaby before the war. And as I said to you in 1939 Paul Wyndon was on the tour to England with the rugby but the war intervened and they all had to come home. And Colin Wyndon went

02:00 Captain of Australia after the war in England and at Twickenham. And we had him playing five eight at fourteen and a half stone, Rugby League. And had a chap from the south coast, Noel Tate, he only died the 1st March last. And he was our goal kicker. I don't know whether you've ever seen Joe Jorgensen kick goal for Balmain. Used to kick 'em

02:30 high as the goal post from the halfway. Noel Tate was the same. But one time a story, our battalion was playing the 2/1st Battalion. And Padre Glover from the 2/1st Battalion he yelled out to our pay sergeant, and Noel Tate had a kick from the sideline, "A brick, he misses!" that was ten quid see.

03:00 And Jack O'Loughlan said , "Righto you're on". Noel put it over so Padre paid up. He was a Roman Catholic padre. We had a Church of England padre with us most of the time.

Did any of the men ever get injured playing these football games?

Oh not seriously injured no. No

03:30 I once run the Battalion mile with a bruise on that thigh, covered the whole of that thigh. And had a chap rub me down before I run this mile race, but I won the mile. Yet I'm that slow, it'd take me about a week to run out of sight. But I used to love the game. And I did, as

04:00 I say I never played it til I went to West Wyalong, and I turned twenty-one. Football season was over when I got up there, in '39 I started playing then. And I got picked for the New South Wales Railway side to play Queensland. And lo' and behold had to travel to Goulburn to play there. Two hundred mile, travel down on the Friday night. Landed about half past one, oh well half past twelve,

04:30 one o'clock in the morning. Went up home and could have gone to a hotel. And I went up home and

stayed. And went down the Imperial Hotel the following morning and met the manager and rest of the team. Got issued with a blazer and gear. And we packed it, scrum down in the lounge. That was our training, we went and played that afternoon, I was second row. We had four taken off injured, no replacements. I finished in the

05:00 back line, we were one short in the back line with a three man scrum. We got beat of course. Went to a dance that night down the main street. The next morning the Queenslanders and that walking up and down. And then went and played the New South Wales side at (UNCLEAR). Made up a team anyhow and we played Goulburn District. We won that one, I propped that though. Then went back to West Wyalong that night. And now

05:30 they come off for spell after five minutes eh. Yeah, they were hard days. I had a cracked nose on the Saturday on that one. But that was the only real injury I ever got. Oh it wasn't an injury really, didn't put me off. But in the army man got that fit he could go all day. And

06:00 I think it stemmed back from when we were kids in Goulburn. We lived near the sports ground and they'd be playing cricket in the centre. We'd run round and round all us kids. Anyone that walked a step was out, might run twenty mile. If you walked a step you was out.

I'm just wondering Dusty,

06:30 **if during your training times at, either at Ingleburn or even in Palestine, were there ever any accidents, people getting injured?**

Oh, not that I can think of. Oh we had one bloke Peter Ireland was killed on a motor bike.

07:00 I think it was just prior to, he was riding a motor bike up to Brisbane I think. In part of a convoy and he got killed somehow on that, Peter Ireland. But we didn't have many serious accidents in transport or anything like that. Other than

07:30 well other than during any action like when our doctor got killed in Greece. I understand he was in, course they threw a grenade in with him. Killed a few and captured the rest. Just getting out of Greece. But no we didn't have that many accidents. And you wouldn't call that an accident it was meant to be I think.

08:00 But as far as the football went there were odd sprains and things like that. Nothing serious really.

Well in terms of other mishaps or ills that befell the soldiers not in combat, some picked up diseases in particular

08:30 **places overseas?**

Oh a few did yes. Of course everyone got malaria in the Kokoda, in Papua New Guinea. And odd ones got that scrub typhus. In fact I was queried for that the time I was flown out. But I didn't have it but they just lost the will to live. Vic Shannon

09:00 and a couple of others died of it. And a chap from the 2/1st Battalion, "Wog Walsh", as we called him. Tried to cheer him up and get him out of it when he was in this hospital outside Moresby. No, he just didn't want to live. That's the way it affected 'em. Terrible thing to see 'em. But we had a chap who

09:30 helped me aboard the plane at Popondetta, one of the two chaps. And they thought I had scrub typhus. He, Ted Massingham, after leave going up to Wondecla, and he was on this train, he was sleeping on the floor and going across the Burdekin River near Tulley. Big iron bridge and makes a hell of a racket, he just dived up off the

10:00 floor and dived out the window. They never found his body. Landed in the Burdekin River. He was an original man of the battalion too Ted. But we had Jimmy Ireland and two or three

10:30 died of illness. But only know that, picked their names up in the back of the battalion book. But they well, three thousand went through the battalion, you could expect the odd one like that I suppose wouldn't ya?

11:00 And deaths like that and deaths during the war there's death. Just over two hundred of the battalion passed through. They got all in; well they didn't have two of 'em in. I've put two in the other day, two officers killed up in last campaign. Ken

11:30 Pope and this Bob Varley. In the write up of the action where Bob Varley got killed, they mention him in that, but they haven't got him in the list of dead in the back of the book. He was only about three or four feet away from me when he got hit in the throat. And our Bren gunner, he was next to him, and he got killed at about exactly the same

12:00 time, Bill Adler. Hit through the body. It was, no, through natural causes, it wasn't that many really. Accidents I should say and sicknesses.

12:30 **What of times when you had leave for instance in the Middle East, were there certain diseases**

that men would catch?

Oh some of them did get them yes in the red light district. They'd go to the special hospital. And mainly they cured 'em and,

13:00 and they'd be back in the battalion. And some of 'em didn't learn, they'd get it again. I was fortunate I never contracted it.

Was there any kind of protection passed out?

Oh well you had the condoms or no, and then you had the Condy's Crystals

13:30 to wash after see. That was always a must.

I'm not familiar with that, what did that involve?

Well wash your member in the Condy's Crystals after. After being with the ladies of the night. In Greece the girls there, done it for you. Very nice.

14:00 We thought we were in a private home until when we went in Greece after being in the Middle East. Gamviti Street, mmm. But oh one time in Syria we had a short arm inspection they called it. Lot of chaps found to have warts on their member okay. And

14:30 I went through and, Molesworth. Anyhow I went back to him and I said "What's these Sir?" And underneath me foreskin I had little white specks see. "Oh" he said "That's just incipient warts" he said but only from irritation with sand and that under. So they sent me down to this hospital outside Beirut. And they take 'em off with an electric needle.

15:00 So did that. I was told they were non venereal. But some did have the venereal warts and sometimes they'd have clumps about that size on. Thank Christ I didn't have them.

I imagine an electric needle wouldn't have been very pleasant.

Oh, it's only just a needle.

15:30 Course as I say they only pin eye, bout a pin head white spot that's all it was. Just needed a touch and yeah. I don't know whether if I had of let 'em go whether they would've evolved into something. According to Jim Molesworth, our doctor, they would have.

Did that prove to be a, was

16:00 **that any sort of...?**

Well I didn't visit many red light districts after it I'll tell you that. After seeing what chaps could get. But first time I went in one in Tel Aviv I walked out. I walked out in disgust. Didn't go

16:30 in another brothel till Cairo, Burqua. In the First World War the Wazza was the brothel there in Cairo. It was in behind the Burqua. And in Alexandria it was Sistora Street, the street of little sisters.

These are areas that the First AIF

17:00 **with some renown visited frequently.**

Oh yes.

Were you aware of following in their footsteps?

Well there wasn't any virgins there. I don't think. You had to prove yourself a soldier see. But

17:30 well the need was there I suppose, and a man was that fit. But as I say after, don't think I went in one in Syria at all. And definitely not in

18:00 Ceylon. And there's nothing like that in Kokoda Trail or this last campaign either. I never visited one of those red light districts in Sydney either. In fact I never had any time for the Cross [Kings Cross]. But no I didn't,

18:30 I can honestly say I didn't contract any social diseases they call it, isn't it? Quite a few did.

Was visiting the brothels something that was almost expected of you as an infantryman?

Oh yeah well I think you had to experience it to call yourself a soldier at the time. But course there was

19:00 a lot of chaps who never did, I admire 'em too. But I visited oh about half a dozen times I suppose. As I say I, like knocking off the beer, I gave it away anyhow. Didn't miss it a bit. And

19:30 got into football and got fit that way. And bang, and kept himself fit. Once running the malaria out of me system on the Tablelands. But then when we got the second, another type of malaria up in Aitape/Wewak. But no had two bouts in hospital there I think. It was,

20:00 I think that was the MT [Malignant Tertian]. The first lot I had was the material tremens and the second lot was malignant tremens. And I don't recommend it to anyone either of 'em. Every third day you'd just, be shivering and shaking. Shivering and sweating. And the headaches. Course when we came out

20:30 of Kokoda Trail and got back home we all had malaria. I'd been flown out at Popondetta to Tent Hospital outside Moresby. The War Drome I think they called it. And they discharged me there and I knew I had malaria still. But we came home on leave and done our leave and even this

21:00 brother-in-law of mine, he had it. And bang, we went in hospital as soon as our leave, wasn't gonna do our twenty-eight days in hospital, so went straight into hospital then. I was in that the best part of three months really. I got discharged over Easter in '43.

21:30 And I went back in on the Tuesday after Easter, the same ward. I'd gone in the end of... I done March, April, had a week off, May oh May, I think it was about the end of May I finally got out of hospital and down to Sydney then. The LTD

22:00 Depot. That's where I, they lost me papers. But I's enjoying meself, I was staying at the CB Chambers right opposite the YMCA in Pitt Street. You had your own room there and clean place and all. Was restaurant next door for your meals. And anytime I was coming on leave I used to wire down and they'd keep a

22:30 room for me. That was very good. But I got sick and tired of it and I was trying to get back to the battalion. And of course I didn't go in for leave one day as I said and one Saturday for weekend leave. And I got fined over that. And when I told 'em I'd been trying to get back to the battalion, they lost me papers, they had me on the train within two days. Yeah.

23:00 So, another part of me life started there with football. Five days a week, sometimes two games a day. And training on these two pounder guns. Which I'd

23:30 seen in action, first day in action in Bardia where I showed you the photos of those tanks didn't I? Yeah. And there's a photo of the gunner got burned out and in that lot too. And, they never used them when we went up to Aitape/ Wewak. We had no transport there, we got off the ship, we had no transport. We were on our feet for the whole of the eight months.

24:00 And patrolling all the time. And you'd make a bit of a base camp and patrol out from that. Then go on a different big patrol. Like the Wonganara Mission one was a big one. And as I said I forward scouted that one. That's where we lost Bill

24:30 Adler and Varley. We missed the General Makai who was supposed to be there really. But he was out on inspection tour somewhere. He was the 2IC [Second in Charge] of the whole of the Jap forces up there. And then done

25:00 another patrol, oh forward scout another patrol up the hill, we out on the coast really. And had a battery of our 2/1st Artillery there. And I was in B Company in that. And the patrol from A Company had been up this ridge.

25:30 We could see the top of it from where we were, we were about eight hundred feet high. And had one chap killed. So we went up the following day. And I was forward scouting and that and we went up there and all of a sudden I seen the top of the huts up the top and dived behind a tree. I'd just passed a fox hole, a Jap fox hole on the track. And we had this Lieutenant Pring

26:00 from the 2/1st Artillery with us. And he got in this fox hole and he called down the artillery fire. We went down, back about a hundred yards behind him. And we called down this artillery fire on this Jap positions up above us. Even the shrapnel was, some of the shrapnel was whistling down around us. He got a Military Cross for that. We cleaned the Japs out of there.

26:30 But the next patrol we met up with the Japs. The Japs were, Atom Bombs'd been dropped and the Japs were, surrendered. All, "Nagasaki gone, Nagasaki gone". And within a day or so the war finished. And we went up Wewak to Shibarangu

27:00 And I done the postal sergeant's job then for a fortnight before we come away. But that's all it was just patrolling all the time. We kept to the big ones, Wonganara Mission was one of the biggest patrols, was the biggest patrol we done up there. And I had a couple of

27:30 the Papua New Guinea and native Police, they'd point me the way and I'd go ahead, til such time as I could see the huts and that. And then the problems'd start. But we got to, about thirty Japs on that. Plus two of our own was killed as well though. It

28:00 was bad. And they were from here to the door, both of them were within from here to the door away from me. But used to be a terrible thing having to carry a dead body back. But the native carriers,

28:30 I couldn't say enough about them. Both in, especially in the Kokoda Trail, the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels they called 'em. And we had native carriers of course up in Aitape/Wewak too. They done a good job too. If they had to take out any wounded, they looked after 'em like a mother looking after a child.

29:00 Oh well. No she's an experience, six years of it, just about. Few days short of.

Dusty I'm just wondering about how else you men tended to entertain yourselves in moments of spare time. For instance when you were on troop

29:30 **ships, how would you keep yourselves occupied?**

Oh well on troop ships they used to give you rifle drills and stuff like that. And lectures, and you had a lot of spare time too. You just watched the waves go. And that's all they could do too, even on the Orcades. There was over a thousand of us

30:00 on that. Course we were fortunate, Snow and I, we were in a two berth cabin. We even had the steward running up and down the corridors and between the cabins and that. But I know, on the other troop ships of course, you were just in holus bolus, and you slept where you could. When I was on the Bontiko, coming out of

30:30 Moresby to Cairns, I just found a possie round one of the masts of the deck and that and just slept there. Had a blanket and a ground sheet and that. Little bit of a pack for a pillow. But that only a few days see. And the same thing going up to Aitape. Another Dutch ship.

31:00 And you tried to get out on the deck, but you didn't want to be below deck, you's always frightened of submarines see.

Did you ever get sea sick?

No I wasn't but Snowy, Snowy, every day Snowy was. He used to put me to bed when I used to get crook on the grog. And he was a good colour as he'd go down.

31:30 And and I used to say to him on the ship, "Come and have a look at the waves Snow". Oh, poor little bugger. He wasn't very, only five foot four but very strong and wiry. Good lookin' bloke. Him and the other mate Diggles, Dave Newham. He was me best man, I was best man for

32:00 him. And oh we had a lot of fun. Snow always wanted to be on a mill pond. I never worried about the ships and I loved flying. Course the ship out from Popondetta was the first time I'd been on a plane. And bucket seats in the old biscuit bomber.

32:30 And what'd they call them, a Hudson or something I think didn't they? DC3

DC3

or something. And, no there, and even coming home on the Katoomba, I tried to be out on deck all the time

33:00 there when the war was over. But that was a nice ship too. But we were eleven days aboard that to get to Brisbane. Never come back into Sydney on all our trips away and to and from. We left from Sydney and when we finally arrived back from the Middle East we landed in Melbourne. And then we left from Cairns on, no left from Brisbane, landed in Cairns.

33:30 Left from Cairns and landed in Brisbane, that's right yeah.

Did you ever pull into any foreign ports of call?

Oh well when we first went away we landed in Colombo for one day. And anchored off Aden, never went ashore. Only a couple of the officers went ashore there for some reason or other. And as I say we got off

34:00 half way up the canal at El Kantara. And then we came away from....of course our next ship was the cruiser to go to Greece. And twenty-two hours from Alexandria to Port Piraeus. We were two days ahead of the rest of the convoy. And of course come out on the Dilwara from

34:30 Kalamata and into Alexandria again. That's, and we left from El Kantara on the Orontes and landed in Colombo. And left Colombo on the Western Land and landed in, Melbourne. And then as I say we left from Brisbane, landed in Melbourne I said didn't I, and then we left from Brisbane

35:00 on the Paine Wingate, it was a Liberty ship. And, that to Moresby. The Swan took us off, took us ashore there. The frigate or sloop or something it was. Then the Both, it was just a Dutch tramp steamer took us out of there to Cairns.

35:30 Then another Dutch ship the Bontekoe and then the Katoomba was the final one. It was a nice ship the Katoomba. Cause the war was over and all the worries were over.

You mentioned before the threat from submarines. What was the most frightening aspect about being on a ship?

36:00 In case there were any rounded up and looking at you. But our first corner of course we were pretty well protected. As I said before when we left Perth, oh Fremantle really, we had a battleship, the Ramillies, forty-six, forty-five, forty-six thousand tonner. And HMAS Sydney, original

- 36:30 one. And there was a couple of destroyers which you'd never see and others around. There was about fifteen troop ships on it too. It was a big convoy. And, and the aircraft carrier the Eagle. And they, the Eagle and the Ramillies and some other, was putting naval steps.
- 37:00 Left us at Aden just as we got in the Red Sea. And when we got off at El Kantara we crossed back over the canal to get on board trains and went into Palestine and the Kiwis went into Egypt see. The Al Mardi camp.
- 37:30 Somewhere out, somewhere near Cairo. Their first action was when some of em were over into Greece with us. I don't know, still can't understand why they didn't use the Kiwis beyond El Agheila, Benghazi. When as far as some of our chaps went, we
- 38:00 they, well they had the Italians beat. And they went right through Tunisia and Rommel wouldn't have had a foot-hold there. Like easy one like he had, did have. El Agheila wasn't far beyond Benghazi and there was a lot of coast line from then on.

So you'd sometimes share these troop ships with New Zealand and

- 38:30 **other foreign soldiers?**

Ah well as I say we fought with New Zealanders in Greece and Tempe Gorge and stuff like that. And in Syria we were attached to the 16th Pommie Brigade, King's Own, Queen's Own and Port of Leicesters. The 6th, the 5th Indian Division, Ghurkhas and stuff like that. When we up at Damascus. But that was

- 39:00 oh on the tail end of Kokoda Trail, at Soputa there, the Yanks came in. "How ya going there? Oh. Draftees." They were useless. Even their officers said that. And I think MacArthur got disgusted with them too. But but they were the only time we had the five troop ships.

You mentioned before that the

- 39:30 **the Anzac story from the First World War held some fascination for you?**

Oh it did, yeah, did.

When you fought with these New Zealand troops in Greece, what did that mean to you, if anything?

Well we did become Anzacs there, we were ANZ Corps. In Tempe Gorge, just for a couple of weeks. Freyberg, Freyberg and Blamey in charge. And Maitland Wilson was the Pommie

- 40:00 general. He had overall charge. But there was very few Pommie troops in Greece with us. In fact they were going out when we were going up. They'd seen the writing on the wall I think. Course Greece wanted to pull out at that time too. When we were going up. And they finally did pull out when we hit Larisa. So we had to get out. Our
- 40:30 first colonel, he was bitterly against anyone, the troops going into Greece. But they took no notice of him of course. He was only a colonel then, they made him a brigadier after in England but he was opposed to troops going to Greece.
- 41:00 **Well Dusty we might pause there because we've come to the end of another tape.**

Tape 8

\n[Verse follows]\n

- 00:07 "Well", said the CO to the private "Have you anything to say,\n

Be the crime you are charged with we inform you here this day?"\n "Yes Sir", said the private "I'll tell my tale to you,\n Place yourself in my position, see what you would do.\n After leaving Tel Aviv Sir as I was chamfered down,\n I saw this lady standing; her bike was on the ground.\n

- 00:30 The bike I saw was punctured, I gave to her my aid,\n

Repaired for her the damage, a little while I stayed.\n We then became acquainted, she came from Tel Aviv,\n And said that in Australia she'd really like to live.\n And holding me so tightly she placed on me a kiss,\n And said 'you darling, take what you like for this'. \n This Sir is my story, believe it if you like,\n I took her word Sir, and took the flamin bike".\n

- 01:00 Used to rattle 'em off old Wal. He wrote a poem on me in 1975 or '77. It was:

\n[Verse follows]\n "He got caught in Greece, wounded in the leg.\n Got caught while trying to get into Albania.\n A Kiwi was helping him." \n

Another one was:

\n[Verse follows]\n“As the Officer walked in the mess room, he heard a hell of a din,\n So he stopped with his mate in the doorway and gently peered within.\n

01:30 A fierce verbal battle was raging, and tempers were blazing red hot.\n

The cause was the meat being tainted and whether to eat it or not.\n ‘Any complaints?’, asked the Pippa, ‘What’s all this hullabaloo?’\n What’s the cause of your trouble, is it something to do with the stew?’\n ‘Yes, yelled the leather lunged private, just take a sniff at this meat,\n At twenty-five yards it’d stun ya, at ten it’s a knockout complete’.\n Officer sniffed at the meat dish and found what he wanted to learn,\n

02:00 Yes it was slightly tainted; it was almost beginning to turn.\n

And as he made for the doorway the private he bellowed out ‘wait,\n some of the meat may have turned Sir, but mine’s gone on down the straight”.\n

Old Wally.

Do you recall the one he wrote about you?

Oh, got it somewhere but it’s a long rigmarole thing.

02:30 Will I get it? Oh no I can’t. I’ll give it to youse after; you can take it away if you like. I’ve got it written in there. But, no he’s a good bloke old Wal. He’s dead now. Doug Pincham his mate, when we went through Damascus and out in that

03:00 artillery training ground of the French. He got hit in the leg and this chap Conway, Conway, I’ve been trying to think of his name, went. And he’s dressing his leg up and all of a sudden another shell just about took his, well he finally had to get his leg amputated, this Conway, get his leg amputated from about there. This shell would’ve killed Doug if he hadn’t of been there I think.

03:30 But he lost a leg doing it the poor bugger. One chap who’s in that and got hit in 14th Platoon, Louis Cass. And outside Tobruk, he had one testicle shot away. Afterwards, after he got

04:00 treated and that and come out of hospital and he went to the red lights and tried himself out, “He was alright”, he said. So. But then up in the Kokoda Trail when, after Eora Creek and we’re going round towards Kobarra. And he’s laid down, we’re laying down of a night there and alongside the track he had his rifle. All of a sudden he jumped up and hit his rifle and shot himself through the ankle and he lost his foot over after that, poor bugger.

04:30 Fighting the Japs and then shoot yourself. They tried to send him to self inflicted wound. Who’d do that? In the middle of the Owen Stanleys. Or over the Owen Stanleys then. Louis Cass. We had to stretcher him or help stretcher him out. Or to somewhere where the

05:00 Fuzzy Wuzzys could pick him up.

Dusty you’ve got a good recall for these poems you recited for us. Were there songs that the men used to sing?

Oh, well no, not, Mersa Matruh:

\n[Verse follows]\n“All the walls are made of hessian and the floor is four by two,\n And the sand bags let the howling camps and through.\n You can hear the bloody Ities roam around at night\n

05:30 In my flea bound bug bear dug out in Matruh.\n

All the bully beef and biscuits they are scattered all around,\n The jam and margarine they are but few.\n I’m like a bloody clam in this land of heat and sand.\n In my flea bound bug bound dug out in Matruh.\n Oh I wish I had a pretty girl to sit upon my knee,\n To relieve me of the stress that I am in.\n Oh how happy I would be if she’d settle down with me\n In my flea bound bug bound dug out in Matruh”.\n

06:00 I dunno who wrote that. I’ve got that written down; I’ll give it to you if you like, if you want it. Oh you’ve got it on tape anyhow that 6 Section one that was written outside Tobruk wasn’t it yeah. Hughie Johnson, padre, anything else but. He was a character, Hughie. You wouldn’t

06:30 think he’d be able to write any prose or poems. He was the roughest lookin’ character ever. I looked rough but he looked rougher.

On what occasions would you recite these poems or sing these songs with each other?

Oh I’d memorise them, I’ve

07:00 told ‘em quite a lot over in New Zealand of course.

During the war time would you?

Oh yes but a lot of 'em have never heard of Wally's poems. I've written 'em into our battalion newsletter, The Chocolate & Green. And they printed 'em there if anyone wants to see them. Those type of things should be kept.

07:30 Everyone should, who's been through the battalion, should know about them. Tell the story on them and everything like that. And I get about three or four of these newsletters a year see. Done in our colours and that, I've got some there, old copies. And he started, well they did a little, about a fifty page book in

08:00 late 1944. And called it the Chocolate & Green. And a photo of the battalion football team was in it. That's where I got the copies of that. And I took it over to the Bluey Norris, he's in the Fig Tree Home. And what was left was all tattered and torn, a few pages missing but. And it cheered him up a bit anyhow, to be able to read. The photo of the band's in it with him in the band and

08:30 that. Only used the bands when in camp and that. They were all from different companies, rifle one and stuff like that.

What about souvenirs, did you keep anything, souvenirs you picked up?

Oh well I had a lot. All, lot of Italian stuff when they were going out. Quite a few thousand, Snow and I are each side and we'd see

09:00 the unit patches or something like that and you'd take that. And they had, the Italians had little elastic belts to keep their waist in trim I think. And I had about three of these and I adorned them with a lot of these different unit things. I gave em away to someone over in New Zealand really.

09:30 Even my dixies, the three halves. The one that'd been hit up in Greece and the new half. And I had them all decorated and that. I gave them to my granddaughter's husband, before I came away. And he liked 'em so I gave 'em to him. And there was a bullet out of

10:00 the spotter plane, the German spotter plane been shot down in, near Lamia. I gave him that too. I finished up with a revolver one stage. I sold that to a bloke in Ermai camp. Was a Jap one. One I got on Good Friday really. 1945 yeah. First time

10:30 we'd ever, had first shot at 'em, anyone.

How did you come to get that revolver?

Well we were mad at this Jap, he come down, I told the story, yesterday, it's on the tape. I didn't talk about the revolver on that. He had it, he was trying to get it even after I'd hit him through the body

11:00 with the .303. And Nugget fell in the hollow in the creek bed, Mabam Creek. And Nugget, across his back there and he's still trying to get this revolver out. So I hit him there then and, I claimed the revolver. Didn't kill him, murdered him the poor bugger.

11:30 You just said you were using a .303, this is in your time in New Guinea?

Yeah, I used a .303 most of the time. I did have a Thompson sub machine gun after Ross Pritzley got wounded and I pulled him, helped pull him out and I took over his. It was first time, I'd never had any training on it, first time I fired it, one of the shells fell

12:00 down in the works. And there's bullets going everywhere, and I'm trying to get this thing, spent shell out of it. As soon as I could get rid of it, I did, got back, got a .303 back. Best weapon we ever had was the Bren gun. Best infantry weapon. That was a good gun, you could fire it from the hip and prime

12:30 and two legs in front, you could fire off that. Had a tripod which very rarely we had to use for ack-ack, use ack-ack. And it was only, terrible weight to have to carry though, with the tripod. And no, great weapon, we got issued with them as I said about end of March

13:00 1940 in Julis camp. We got rid of all our First World War equipment then.

Did you ever have occasion to use your bayonet in combat?

No, not really. We threatened some of the Ities with it. But up in the rain forest and stuff like that, they're only an impediment. We had of had cause to use em, we could

13:30 have used 'em, we had 'em all the time. Open a tin of bully beef and that with 'em, something like that. And, or a tin of peaches if you're lucky enough to come across some. Yeah. Old bayonet.

And what of other guns that you were issued with, like the Tommie?

14:00 No, well when we first went away the, they had a Lewis gun, Vickers machine gun they had right through of course. They had machine gun platoons with that, Headquarter Company but. The Lewis gun well, it was a round barrel type of thing and a round magazine on top.

14:30 And there were quite a few stoppages, First World War stuff. And then the .303, then later on we got the Owen gun. Light automatic see. Only that long, but it was .38. It was a good weapon. And there was one in each section by me. About four in a platoon,

- 15:00 platoon headquarters had one. But tail end of Kokoda Trail a couple were on trial there. And they found 'em alright so they put 'em out on issue. And it was, they were good for the type of terrain you was, the country you was fighting in,
- 15:30 through the trees. And of course you never struck real jungle it was all really rain forest what we were fighting in up in the Kokoda Trail and even Aitape/Wewak, which is more open really up there. And didn't have the long vines. Certainly there was a few in the Kokoda Trail but no Tarzan type of ropes for swinging around.
- 16:00 **You mentioned yesterday the Tommie Gun?**
- Thompson sub machine gun. I didn't like it. As I said, first time I fired it one of the empty shells fell down in the works and I hadn't done any training on the thing.
- Was that an American gun?**
- Yes, in America, in the old days they had a round magazine on em. But up
- 16:30 there you had a magazine come down the top. You had oh well that's what the Owen gun had. The same type just about that long, that wide, wait a minute, about that wide. And course then the length of the bullet
- 17:00 that way and fed em in from the top. Course they could carry, an Owen gun chap with the Bren gun pouches on, they were big, he could carry a dozen extra magazines no trouble see. And his number two'd have extra magazines for himself, same as on the Bren gun. Bren gunner usually had two or three blokes with
- 17:30 extra magazines. If, they were banana shaped magazine on them. And I think it held twenty-six or twenty-eight rounds. You had, had to be really careful on feeding 'em. Course they had ribs on the cartridges and make sure that the ribs were the right,
- 18:00 they didn't obstruct that way, that they'd feed, ones that come down, didn't foul the next one across the ribs. Otherwise you get a stoppage there. That was about the only stoppage on 'em really. Sometimes we had to give it a bit
- 18:30 more, had a round thing that oh we had a little key on it, you twist it to give it more gas type of thing. From its own emission. And you had to keep it clean, if that clogged up a bit of course, it'd slow the rate of fire down. You'd just open it up
- 19:00 a bit until such time as you could clean it.
- How quickly would they fire normally?**
- Well you could fire the whole twenty-eight off if you like. Or you could put it on single shot or you could put it on three to five.
- Three to five meaning?**
- Shots....
- For one depression of the trigger, would fire?**
- Yeah. You put it on single, three or five it was. Or
- 19:30 you could just go bang and let the whole twenty-eight go. And as I say you could use them from the hip. Had a strap over it, that's the easiest way they had to carry it. And they used to carry it across 'em, in front of themselves with this strap across it. And two legs only about that long and they folded out underneath the barrel. Or one,
- 20:00 your number two used to carry a spare barrel in case they overheated. No they were good, very good. They were the best infantry weapon I reckon we had.
- It's sounds as though you needed to make adjustments to fighting in New Guinea with your weaponry?**
- Yeah.
- 20:30 **What other difficulties did the jungle fighting pose for you?**
- Oh well it, of course sighting the enemy was very haphazard what with all the trees and stuff like that and bushes. And didn't know whether
- 21:00 there'd be a Jap behind every tree or not. But in fact up in the last campaign, this little Johnny Perry, he got in behind a tree and there's a Jap man the other side. And he knew he was there and he had a machete too, some of them used to carry this. And just about lopped his head clean off, the Jap's head off. That was at Fox Two I think, there where Ken Pope got killed, one of the

21:30 officers. I wasn't there I was told about it afterwards okay. They were different company. Yeah it used to be about two or three machetes to a section and in case you hit heavy undergrowth or something like

22:00 that. Everyone didn't have a machete but. They kept em razor sharp and they were about that long, blade about that thick. Handle about that long and you'd get a good grip on it.

What other problems did the physical environment give you?

Oh well there was

22:30 the, like wet clothing most of the time, mud. Lot of places you're in mud and slush all the time. And even around Soputa when the Japs were only within twenty or thirty yards, you'd know, they'd been, we had to make our own little doovers in

23:00 the swamp. And you'd be laying down in water and when they, as I said these Hate Sessions, they called 'em, morning and night they'd fire everything at you. And you'd lay there and you'd watch the shrubbery getting lopped down above you, couple of feet above you. But you had to put up with those type of things. And not put your head up to have a look while it's going on.

23:30 Hate Sessions you called them?

Hate Sessions yeah. Well they were getting rid of a lot of ammunition. I mentioned that about after we'd done this went out the Killiton Track, we're trying to get through to Sanananda. About fifty of us, or fifty or sixty of us. And a lot of 'em came back the first, within the

24:00 first day with malaria and stuff like that. And we finished up with oh about thirty of us anyhow left and. And finally had to get back to the battalion. But this Killiton Track was through this kunai patch where we struck it. The kunai grass was up about six or eight foot high. The track itself was about three or four or five foot wide.

24:30 Well travelled, but when we hit the end of it and the Japs were there, we were tail end charlie at this time. We'd done a patrol, four of us had done a patrol the day before down this way. Five hundred yards we were supposed to go, might have done eight hundred yards. But we were still in the kunai then. But this Clarrie Combo, Abo, Aboriginal boy, he was in

25:00 front with an Owen gun. And the Japs opened fire, hit him in the arm and he went to ground. Then all of a sudden he got up and lit a cigarette and just walked back. They didn't fire at him again but we knew they were there. And we had to, one bloke was stretcher case, got hit in the chest. Then Sandy Johnson alongside me had got hit in the heel. So we had to get back to the battalion through

25:30 this swamp. We got back within the day really. And that's when we found out that five of our chaps'd been killed with the dropped short mortars from the Yanks that were there. I think there were, the five of 'em their names started with 'H'. If memory serves me correct. Norm Harrington was one, Holston. Yeah.

26:00 Yeah we didn't like the old Yanks, at all. They got the Yanks to put on an attack with a couple of our officers. And as soon as they fired the officers found they were the only ones standing up. And the Yanks were all on the deck. And one bloke was crying, he said, "Go there, they fire at ya,

26:30 they want to kill ya". "Oh". "Yeah". Yeah course they wasn't marines or anything like that I don't. I think the Yanks had a better class of soldier than what we met there. They were the draftees I think. Mmm, yes they were, we were pleased

27:00 to get away from 'em. It wasn't long after that a man was, had to go, report crook and nearly a hundred and five in the shade I was I think. Back to Popondetta and they made a landing strip there and flown out. And as I said I crossed

27:30 the Owen Stanleys four times. Only once on foot though. Flew into Kokoda and out of Kokoda again to find the, locate the eight graves at Oivi. Some good mates went; we lost a lot of good men at Oivi. Round about eight I think, there was another ten or twelve on the track.

28:00 Jeff Walker, separate, was our Bren gunner in Libya. Dan Hutch, joined up with us in, ah Hutchison, he joined up with us in West Wyalong. Ace Edwards, A.C. Edwards, that's how he got the Ace. Tom

28:30 Casey, he was B Company, Ace Edwards was C Company. I dunno who they were for there at the moment, there was on that side. Of course I knew where, as I said I knew where McKay and Roley Watts were. Bruce McKay we called him "Booser", very natty dresser and that. He was in shorts and long socks.

29:00 And carried his toothbrush in his sock, always Bruce. That's where Gus Meadie got hit. Yes we had a bad time at Oivi. If the 2/1st hadn't got in behind 'em they might have still had us there. Had this full trenches there, mmm.

29:30 Colonel Cullen, Paul Cullen of the 2/1st. He changed his name from Cohen. He and his brother. His brother was in the AGS [Allied Geographic Section] somewhere. And when they went overseas they

changed from Cohen to Cullen.

30:00 But he was a mighty fellow too. And he thought he might have got captured by the Jerrys and having a Jewish name, they wouldn't have been, wouldn't have looked after him too well.

Dusty it sounds like you obviously saw a lot of action in New Guinea and a lot of

30:30 **unpleasantness there.**

Yes.

Is there a particularly saddest memory of your actions in New Guinea?

Oh well there's quite a few sad ones that. Well when we, as I say, when Ross Pritzley got hit and this Ellsemore got hit across the buttocks. And Davey Fernandez he took a little while to die,

31:00 we couldn't get to him to help him. And you could hear him crying, crying out for his mother all the time. And then when I'd heard Rossi got hit and we went in and got him out thank heavens. And he was badly wounded. But he was one of the gutsiest blokes I ever knew Ross. I always reckoned. When I crawled down to him and touched him I said "Don't make a sound" I'm frightened, I was too.

31:30 You could hear the Japs about; well we were about twenty, about fifteen, twenty yards down the hill on a slope like that. And it was just a razorback ridge. And we found out the following day the Japs were on a bit of a knoll behind this big stump. And about that high above the track. Natural little fort it was. You could hear 'em talking, we were within

32:00 ten yards of 'em. And oh where Rossi got hit he must have been close, he must have been just round on this stump going around this way and Dave Fernandez the other way. And they caught the lot of them. And but then after that, Eora Creek, Franky Richardson was trying to get across this log ridge and he had his tin hat

32:30 on, but they clipped the edge of his tin hat and in above his eye and he was gone. And Bill Duff our RSM he got killed there. Lost a few there at Eora Creek. Our doctor, Maurie Goldman, he was sheltering and a mortar burst and he got it in the buttocks and he had to go out on his face Maurie. But he lived

33:00 Maurie. And after we got away from there, that's when Bluey Cass shot himself in the foot and we finished up at Oivi then. We must have lost about twenty men killed there. Fifteen anyhow. And then nothing happened, didn't get any more trouble til we got down to Soputa

33:30 inland from Buna and Gona. And I suppose they say we lost some there. Everyone had the malaria by that time. And we were just hanging on. In fact they were supposed, when I went there, out they were, the battalion

34:00 was supposed to be coming out in two or three days. They nearly got back to Popondetta and they had to, the Yanks wouldn't go in. So they had to go back in the line to make sure the Japs didn't come out. And they were there for oh about a fortnight or more. No,

34:30 no, bad things happened there. Last campaign was a lot different to it. Although as I say we lost seven men drowned on the first night up Danmap River. We were on the beach on Aitape for a couple of days and walked up the river and the first night it rained and took this whole island out and seven got drowned. In our machine

35:00 gun platoon. And of course, we didn't lose them in batches like we did at Oivi, the only odd one or two here and there as we went through different camps, different patrols and that. That's all we're doing, patrols and that. And others, and Wonganara Mission was a big one.

35:30 And after that as I said we done the patrol up the hill when Lieutenant Pring got his Military Cross. Called fire down on himself, well just beyond himself.

36:00 There was only a couple of Japs left after he called all this artillery fire down. And we cleaned them out and a lot might have cleared out when the artillery fire hit 'em. We don't know, it wasn't a permanent camp out there. Only had a couple of huts, palm thread

36:30 huts there that wouldn't have slept half a dozen each. But odd times through that campaign, we seen how hungry they..... we had to bury some of the bodies of our blokes, that ate parts off you could see. Even found a human tongue in a dixie one time. And I'm not telling lies on that either. They were cannibals there at times. The Japs.

37:00 **Dusty you've mentioned that at times, and not surprisingly, you were frightened during this whole campaign. What fears did the jungle hold for you?**

Oh a man'd be shot, maybe through the stomach or something like that. When you hear a man dying with a stomach wound, it's terrible.

37:30 I was frightened; I was frightened I would show I was frightened. Man had to show up, had to be there

with his courage. And I don't know whether they were as frightened as I was. Wouldn't have messed me pants frightened type that way. Am I gonna get through this, am I gonna get through this? No, but...

How do you think you

38:00 **did get through it?**

Luck. Luck. I was there when as I say when blokes got killed with from here to the window from me. The same time and sometimes I wasn't at the front when you're going like there was Pritzley.

38:30 Man was fifty yards back and only one or two men could go along at a time on a track. And just fortunate I was in that position. I could have been in theirs couldn't I? I done a lot of forward scouting on the last campaign especially. Two or three times up on the Kokoda Trail and that frightened thing. Your number two scout'd

39:00 be about ten yards behind me and the rest ten yards behind. And I could hear every sound they made. Shake me fist at 'em and, yeah.

Are there any other experiences from your time in service but perhaps especially in New Guinea that you'd like to share with us as a last memory?

Oh no,

39:30 not really just pleased when it finished. So happy when they said "It's all over". When this Jap, the first Jap we really captured and he said "Nagasaki gone, Nagasaki gone". And then a day or two after it, bang, the 15th August, finished. Then I, then we had to go up Shibarangu.

40:00 They had Japs penned up there as prisoners, and disarmed and everything. And they were watching them and but I was doing it easy as the postal man's job. And eating fresh hot bread and having steak and eggs or bacon for breakfast. Oh, lovely.

40:30 Best eating campaign we done really.

Were you happy then?

I was. This Doug Christie, he only died a couple of weeks ago Doug. And he was a pay sergeant. I was just a private still. We had our, made a double doovy out of the 'S' capes and ground sheets. And rest of the crowd was all, well away from us. And we could see right down into Wewak.

41:00 Gracie Fields came and done a concert down there one night. We could see the lights and everything there. And hadn't been any mail anyhow. But this Major General, Denny Williams said, "Where's the mail Kuschert?" I said "Oh I went down and seen Gracie Fields". He was an original. "Oh, what?" "No", I said "There's been no mail deliveries Sir. I didn't, I haven't been down the hill at all".

41:30 **Oh Dusty on that story we might come to a close.**

Oh right. Well I hope it suited you anyhow. I've gotta run down sometime eh. How many we done today?

Tape 9

00:34 **Okay Dusty there's a matter I'd like to ask you about and that was something you just mentioned just before about finding fellow soldiers who'd been mutilated. And especially the time ...**

It wasn't our battalion, not our battalion. That's, their

01:00 bodies, or parts, you could see where thighs and buttocks or something like that had been cut off and the rest were on there. They even sometimes had biceps. And one time we found this human tongue in a dixie lid. And they, at least four times

01:30 I've seen bodies that'd been mutilated like that yes. In the last campaign at Aitape/Wewak.

What was the reaction of yourself and those with you when you found a tongue in the dixie?

Well we were all horrified really. But and we thought "Well, we won't be showing any mercy to the Japanese whatsoever.

02:00 No matter who they are." And we didn't. As I said Good Friday, Mac and I didn't kill this bloke, we murdered him. Really. He didn't know we were there, we watched him walk down. He wasn't gonna ask him to surrender. First, we'd never had a first shot at a Jap

02:30 in the two campaigns. We were just getting some of our own back for some of the chaps who'd been killed by them. And no, I had no time for the Japs whatsoever there. With the Italians we felt sorry for them. But the Germans

- 03:00 we didn't really come face to face with them or anything like that. Or I didn't anyhow face to face with 'em. And the Vichy French we, we fought them and they fought back and they seemed a worthy opponent at times. But the Japanese more, well call them animals as far as I was concerned.
- 03:30 And I think they've proved it anyhow with what they done in Malaya and that. In fact I was unfortunate to have a brother-in-law who was caught with it, by 'em. And they murdered him on the Sandakan Death March along with about two and a half thousand others. Only six survived. That were just on two and a half thousand. I told you that's gonna be on SBS
- 04:00 too, soon. If only, Sadie Brown, sister's married name. And no, I had no kind feelings whatsoever towards the Japanese. As I say
- 04:30 finally we felt sorry for the Jap, ah the Italians. The Germans, well we were beaten by them but they, I think they were, they fought, the ones that were in Greece and that, fought the war the way they thought. And they fought it as soldiers, they were good soldiers too I think. And
- 05:00 the Vichy French even, they knew how to fight. But they didn't mutilate anyone or anything like that.

Were many Japanese taken prisoner in the last campaigns in New Guinea?

Ah, we, what, when we got to Sop, I'll go to

- 05:30 the Kokoda Trail and Soputa. They found a Jap there; you could nearly see through him, he was transparent. And they fed him some bully beef and he was that thin you could see it going down through his system. Through his throat, down through his ch.... you could see the passage of it below his ribs even. But he died, but
- 06:00 one, they'd captured one there, and Brigadier Lloyd was there. And this Japanese tried to attack Brigadier Lloyd himself. So Brigadier Lloyd just said "Get rid of him". They shot him straight away see. Then the only Jap we, as I say,
- 06:30 we captured after that was a couple of days before the war finished. After the atom bombs had fell and this Jap was saying "Nagasaki gone, Nagasaki gone". So I said "It should've been Tokyo" but anyhow, there were a few other Japs caught. And they, up above Shibarangu some of our
- 07:00 battalion and other battalions were just guarding them there till they found out what they had to do with them. Cause the war was over see, they'd have to be repatriated overseas I suppose. But I didn't see them only this one just before the war finished. Well on one of our patrols. That's the only one that I know, that we ever captured.

What was done with the tongue that you found in

- 07:30 **the dixie?**

Mmm?

When you found the tongue in the dixie, what was done with it?

Oh we just buried it.

Did you make a report of it?

Oh it was reported in yes. Even one of these bodies that they'd been eating parts of, they were sleeping from here to there, they had a lean to with fronds and thing with rod flooring in it from here to the,

- 08:00 here to the sofa away from him. They were, they were hardly human really. And the stench of the body must have been against 'em after, everything. They were hard soldiers.
- 08:30 Yeah but oh well. New Guinea really was the.... oh well the Yanks on the different islands did prove that they could beat 'em with rate of numbers and stuff like that, the marines and that. But at Milne Bay
- 09:00 that's where the Japs suffered their first land defeat ever. And that was by part of the Seventh Divvy. So, Bruce Kingsbury got a VC there I think. And I think the only VC in our Brigade was the 2/2nd Battalion in the last campaign.
- 09:30 And as I say we had quite a few blokes were decorated and double decorations. MC's [Military Cross] and DCM one bloke and we had a DCM winner from the First World War, which I spoke about before, Arthur Carson. He'd been recommended for VC in France but he won a Military Medal with us
- 10:00 in, I don't know where Arthur got that. But he finished up in charge of all the native carriers at Kokoda, in that campaign. I met him when I flew in to find those graves. And, mighty little man, he wasn't a big man. He looked a soldier all the time.
- 10:30 And we was with the Battalion, he was Sergeant of the Pioneer Platoon. Which used to go around and with the RAP [Regimental Aid Post] and that and picking up any casualties or looking after 'em. And then later on looking for the bodies of those that'd been killed.

- 11:00 **How did you view the acts of these Japanese that had mutilated bodies? Did you think it was ...**
- Well we, we couldn't pin it on any specific Japs. We'd found them after they'd left 'em see. But you could see where they'd be, the hut they'd been living in. And the bodies of course by this time were, you could see where they went, parts had been cut off them.
- 11:30 **When you say pin it on some of them, so did you...?**
- You couldn't say "Oh that Jap done it or that Jap". Just...
- Did you think it was a criminal act?**
- Well I would reckon so, cannibalism. You don't know whether the chap was dead when they done it. Might have been tortured 'em and
- 12:00 then, tortured and then cut pieces off him. Killed him that way. We don't know though. But I think the Japs might've learned their lessons through those wars anyhow. Maybe we helped to teach
- 12:30 'em part of the lesson.
- Having seen things like this in New Guinea, when the war came to an end there, how did you go settling back into life in Australia?**
- Oh well we landed as I say in Brisbane oh somewhere round 12th, 13th September. And then from there they brought
- 13:00 us down into Sydney. And we were given leave from Marrickville L&T [Leave and Transfer] Depot. And then had to report back for discharge. And as I say I was discharged on the 15th October 1945 from Marrickville. And given book and I had ninety-two days accumulated leave from then.
- 13:30 So, on the twenty-seventh I got married in Goulburn. And so the wife and I had free train travel. Of course and I wasn't going back, I was still employed by the railways see as well as being in the army for six years.
- 14:00 And I was supposed to get the difference in pay all the time I was in there. That's why I never bothered about going for sergeant or anything like that. Not that I ever, I did get to lance corporal once. I didn't, tossed it in, no good to me. And so we travelled around a bit the wife and I. And
- 14:30 we went back to the railway and they put me through a school for a couple of weeks and made me a Fifth Class Assistant Station Master. And I was given a choice of two stations. One at North Star as I said right on the border of Queensland end of a railway line somewhere, I've never seen it. Another one at Harefield just out of Junee, about seven mile out on the main line. Single track between Junee
- 15:00 and Wagga Wagga then. Dunno whether it's changed now. And had a house, railway house. There was a Fourth Class Assistant Station Master there, he had a house. He had all the day shift. And then chap used to, he didn't live, I had a house right behind the platform. Had five rooms in it.
- 15:30 Wouldn't be much bigger than this place with a sleep-out, no electricity, no water laid on. Every time the expresses and mail trains or other trains went through, you'd think that they were coming through the house. And my wife was reared as almost as a lady see.
- 16:00 She didn't know what had struck her. Found out about fuel stove and, Kookaburra I think it was. She found out all about the different parts of them though. She was cleaning it with kerosene and course knew every little part out of it. I didn't know many parts of it either. Black with soot. We got over that. And ...
- 16:30 **Did you struggle to settle back into civilian life?**
- Oh it took its time, it took its time. I wanted to play football. I did but I was on shift work see, I was from four o'clock to midnight or midnight to eight o'clock. And when I was on the midnight to eight o'clock , I played two
- 17:00 games of football in Junee I think. But it was too much to do; I couldn't get into training or anything. And so I had to give that away. And then January '47 wife had to go to the maternity home, ah hospital in Wagga Wagga and lost our first child there, daughter.
- 17:30 Went full term but she was still born. And that took the gloss off living a bit. Upset the wife, wasn't very strong for a while. And about May or June I tossed the job in, I went to Sydney. Well might have been earlier than that. Now we got down to Maroubra Junction and were living with an army,
- 18:00 Ted Trusty and his wife in Gale Road. And she'd, Jean had just given birth to a daughter, Kaye. I met her Anzac Day. And she was that tiny I used to bathe her in a pudding basin. Her legs was as big as that finger. And I reminded her, she couldn't remember but I reminded her of that on Anzac Day, Kaye.
- 18:30 And then in 1948 the son come along on February the thirteenth. And Doctor Goulburn or Doctor

Josephs or they were in practice, they were our doctors. They were practised together with

- 19:00 Doctor Goulburn's brother, he was a naval, ex navy man. The three of them in practice in Maroubra Junction. And they were supposed to deliver the young bloke. But Audrey had to be rushed to hospital about four o'clock in the morning to St Jude's up in Haig Street, Maroubra Junction, private hospital. And they didn't get there in time so the
- 19:30 matron delivered the son. And I was working at General Motors then in Pagewood. And I went to work and I'd rang up and they said "Yes, you can come and visit at ten o'clock". So I got leave from the work for a couple of hours. And I went in to see the baby and all. And after I come out of the hospital, the private hospital,
- 20:00 I walked down Haig Street to the Maroubra RSL was right on the corner of Haig Street and Anzac Parade. So I walked into that and table of the old diggers and that there, "What is it a child or a female?" So that was alright, so. We wet the baby's head and then I went back to work for the day. Of course
- 20:30 visited the wife each day then. We had to; the house wasn't big enough for the two babies in there. And after a while we moved out and applied for a Housing
- 21:00 Commission flat out at Herne Bay. And I was in the last flat down near Canterbury Road. The last flat of the whole lot.
- Dusty if I can ask, earlier in one of the poems you recited, it was said that you wrote to so many girls you wouldn't know which one to choose.**
- Well we touched only lightly on when I met Audrey my
- 21:30 wife. When I was in hospital in 1943, in Kenmore Hospital, the mental asylum it was. The girl, they put the sane ones out and put us in there see. And it was only three mile from home. And Audrey, I didn't know her at the time, she was working in Rodgers, a big departmental store there. She was a Berlei Club consultant. But this Frankie Blake,
- 22:00 his aunt, she was a teacher there. She was in the same boarding house as Audrey was in. First house was in Sloane Street I think it was. And she got Audrey to come out visiting the hospital see. I've gotta see this Dusty in the hospital. And she come in the ward and, "Dusty, where's this Dusty?" And that's where I met Audrey then. And so each time I used to go over the hill,
- 22:30 I used to call in and see her and that. And that's how the friendship started. And then when I, course that put another one on me mailing list then when I went, in the last campaign. So she wanted to go back to New Zealand and I said "No. Wait til I get out of the army, we'll get married." And so
- 23:00 we got married as I say on the 27th October. And I left General Motors and went out to Bunnerong Power house just as a fireman. Then received my fireman's boiler attendant's
- 23:30 ticket. I was running one of the big boilers there. And we finally bought a house in Pagewood, in back, close to the works here. And just off Bunnerong Road town gardens it was. Little two bedroom brick place. And just down the end of the street was Bonnie Doon Golf Course.
- 24:00 And next door to that Eastlake Golf Course and next door to that the lakes. And I used to go down there at night and get all the green cuttings and course there was all white sand in the Pagewood. No matter how far you dug down. And I used to put the grass cuttings in me garden. Had my garden going there. And some
- 24:30 Saturdays I'd go into town to the markets and get all the old cabbage leaves or something like and bring 'em out by the trams in those days, and put them in the garden. I had quite a good garden there for a while. Grew a few vegies. And so we were there 'til, Audrey wasn't too well and Bruce was an asthmatic. And her people were all in
- 25:00 New Zealand. And she'd been born in South Australia, Semaphore. And she's bit homesick for her people. She had two sisters and a mother and father in New Zealand. So I said "Oh well, I seen dad and mum", I said, "What do you think? Shall I up stakes and go to New Zealand?" Dad said "It's up to you son". So I said "Well I wont go 'til after the
- 25:30 Pommies....." were out on a Rugby League tour. And "I won't go til after the third test". So about October of 1954 we booked on the Monowai and we sailed over to Auckland. And first three months we lived in one of Audrey's brother-in-laws
- 26:00 caravans behind her people's place in Papatoitai, was about ten or twelve mile out of Auckland in Wintieri Road. And then we, then we got a flat in Otahuhu in, old Mrs Bailey, her son was a well known chap. And we were right next door to the school it was. In fact I used to cut the hedges alongside the school there.
- 26:30 And there for about six years and then we had a house built down in High Street in Otahuhu. And moved down there in about 1962 I think. It was '61 or '62.

Dusty, leaving Australia you would have been leaving behind a lot of old army mates and...

Oh yeah, everyone. Everyone.

and a lot of, well a lot of your past. Was there something particularly about your army life that you missed, both I mean, leaving then but even after the war?

27:00 I missed Anzac Day and stuff like that. Used to go to the Anzac parades over there but they were all new friends. Had to make a different life whatsoever.

What about when you'd first come back from your service, what did you miss about being in the army?

Oh well the camaraderie of the chaps. As I said we were a big family our battalion.

27:30 The Panther's Cubs. But I used to give everyone a lug bashing about how good the blokes were and THE Battalion and the BEST Battalion and stuff. And...

Did leaving that behind have any effects?

Oh it was hard.

I mean did you have any dreams or nightmares about it?

I didn't have nightmares but I'd dream of different

28:00 things and wake up and oh yeah, yeah. And as I say, memories that good of course I'd say oh this time of the year we were so and so and doing this and that. Yeah. I still do it.

What stays with you the most? What clings to your memories the most from your army time?

28:30 Oh well just about all I've told you here. I'm proud of my army career. I didn't win any medals, gongs or anything like that. But I'll put my army, six years in the army, up against anyone. There are better soldiers than me but I've

29:00 done everything those better soldiers done too. I think I proved I was a member of the platoon. I didn't bring any disgrace on it. And I was proud to be an Australian. As I say I'm a third generation Australian. And even in New Zealand I used to say to them, the drinking mates in the Workman's

29:30 Club. "Well there's only two type of people in this world, Aussies and those who prefer to be". I used to get a lot of chiacking over that.

Is that pride in Australia and in your battalion something that you've passed on or want to pass on to your children and grand children?

That's what Bruce and everyone have told me, I've written all these experiences down. And one of

30:00 my nephews, Rodney Brown, Sadie's son, her, his wife Lynne, she's got it all typed out and everything too. See when they started to do our battalion book, The War Dance, I was in New Zealand, was I in New Zealand or not? And they asked anyone for experience. I wrote.....

30:30 my handwriting gets to be a scribble, so I printed out about twenty-three pages like that up til the time we came back from the Middle East. I sent that in, I, they sent it back to me. And I could see they'd marked parts. And I could see a few little parts through the book. But they used part of mine, but not as much as I thought they

31:00 would. But then Bruce and them, he pipped at me, so I wrote all about it the Kokoda Trail and Tablelands and Aitape to Wewak then. I've got all that in there still. But Bruce was very proud of my army career. And

31:30 they said "You've gotta do this", and when this come along he said "Write in on that". And I did. Oh well I rang 'em up really. And told 'em "I was prepared to do, sit here for an interview with you people". And I'm pleased you came along, such a nice couple of people. And I hope I haven't bored you.

32:00 **You mentioned before that you're third generation Australian. Your family originated in Germany?**

No mum's people were Welsh, Rhodes. R-H-O-D-E-S.

But your father's were German?

Yeah.

Did you ever cop any backlash about that?

No, no, no. No. Well the old man's more Australian than me I think. He was. Course he played Aussie

32:30 Rules and cricket and everything. Even Rugby League he played for a while in Goulburn. North

Goulburn but he played Aussie Rules in Goulburn too. Until he was fifty-seven or after, forty-seven or after. Everyone knew him, old Bill. Yeah. No he's more Australian than a lot of em. And as I say, well his grandfather came out as a free immigrant,

33:00 as it says on that obituary notice there. And they finished up with, in fact they reckon one of the, he was a Vintner and two of my sisters were travelling through Victoria and they found one of his vineyards there is a heritage place now. So we must be Australian. Bruce was fourth generation Australian.

33:30 There was a lot of people who wouldn't be third generation Australian like myself I suppose. I was born in '17, well mum and dad were married in 1906. He died in '66 so they were married sixty years when he died. Makes us just about the time he died he was due to come over to visit on Air New Zealand. But

34:00 he dropped dead and that's it. Mum lasted til 1979. Her people had farms down at, out of Corowa, Daysdale. I think that's where dad met her. Mum was born really in Boweya, B-O-W-E-Y-A, is that how you pronounce it, in Victoria, Boweya. Bowayay.

34:30 **Dusty do any of your grandchildren march with you in Anzac Days?**

Well my, my grand daughter wheeled me round in my wheelchair this time. But Bruce has carried the banner one time and one time I was over. But I've carried the banner before but.

35:00 **Will you want them to keep marching for you?**

Oh well I'd I had two sets of miniatures made and Paul's got one of 'em and one of my great grandsons has the other over in New Zealand. He's half Maori. They took him down to Rotorua and he said "I don't like this place, it stinks". And he said "There's too many Maoris here". He was over

35:30 here at Christmas, he only five. And, oh, box of birds. I took him down the reptile farm I said "Oh see the weptiles". He said "Reptiles, Dusty, reptiles".

Is there any message that you've...

Mmm

Is there any message that you've passed on to them or that you would like to leave for them about your war time?

I've got,

36:00 I've just got the book and I've got, as I say, I've got that written out and stuff like that. And they can, and Lynne's done it in. And they've got that. As Bruce said I wouldn't talk about anything for about twenty years.

36:30 But they've been at me all the time so I've gotta leave em some written thing about it. Course he's met a lot of the battalion too. And my first captain, finished up a lieutenant colonel, he lived in Maroubra Junction. Bruce knew him and then he was, our padre, he christened Bruce. Lisa's met him. One time I

37:00 come over, Bruce took us on a trip round, went down as far as Narrandera, he was out at Cowra, old Bill the Bish. I called in and seen him there. Won a medal, Military Cross with us. He was a great fellow. He'd didn't go to Greece with us. Oh wait a minute. Oh Greece, no, no he went to Greece that's right, he didn't go to Syria with us.

37:30 That's Swindlehurst with us in Syria. Not padre.

Is there any last thought you'd like to leave with us today?

Well only that I'm very pleased to meet you people and thanks for giving me the opportunity to talk about my battalion. Which is THE Battalion. What you should do is read the foreword in the book that

38:00 General Sir Francis Hassett wrote about us. Course he's biased, he was our first adjutant. But he's still alive, they tell me he's not too well though down in Canberra.

Well we'd like to thank you too Dusty.

No thank you. Look, I wished I had a lot of memorabilia or whatever they call

38:30 it, been able to show you too. But as I say it frittered away. After Syria, after Libya I had about four blade razors, beautiful, the best of blade razors lifted from the Ities and folded bayonets and other things like that. And put 'em in my kit bag and put that in store before I went to Greece. And I got it back,

39:00 up in Brisbane one time coming down on leave. And all that was in it was the old uniform and a pair of boots that was looking at you up like that. And a few other old things. Even football sweater from 1939 from New South Wales Railways. It was gone and things like that.

You haven't lost what's up here though.

No, no.

And you've shared it with us and that's the important thing.

39:30 I'll never lose that.