Australians at War Film Archive

Valmarie Nethery - Transcript of interview

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Tape 1

00:38 **Give me a 5 minute overview of your life from where you were born up to where you are now.**

I was born in Ramsgate, which is between Dolls Point and Brighton. I was one of the oldest of four children. I had one brother

01:00 and two sisters. My father was a publisher with the Sun newspapers. We lived not far from the beach. That was where we had to spend a lot of time. We had a big block of land next-door to us where we'd play cricket with just old kerosene tins as stumps and that sort of thing in those days.

01:30 I went to school at the local convent. Then to Hurstville after that for my secondary education, which ceased when I was about 14. Then I had a business college as they called it in those days, for a short period of time. We had a car, which was a little bit unusual in those days because cars were just coming

02:00 to the homes of people. My father bought this green 1927 Chevrolet, which had windows, perspex type thing, we used to put up on sticks up the side of the car. So we were a little bit fortunate in that. My father was never out of work during the Depression years. We just did normal

02:30 things like have bonfires and go to the local park nearby for swings. My mother had a number of older sisters. There were not a lot of younger further generation in that family, so we were quite an interesting species I suppose for the older sisters who hadn't married. We would occasionally visit my grandmother who

03:00 lived in Botany. A rather forbidding old lady, I never liked her very much. She was always in black and she wore a big cameo at the throat of her black frock. Her hair was always in a little bun on top. She came from Ireland when she was 5. They were shipwrecked on their way out from Ireland off; I think it was the Cape of

03:30 Rio de Janeiro. They were taken care of there in the British Embassy until a ship came by some 5 months later and the family then went to Melbourne. My grandmother married down there and then came to Sydney. That's my mother's family.

Where did you work during the war years?

04:00 After my formal education I had a job in the city where I was paid 16 and fourpence a week. Then I went into teaching shorthand and typewriting in a business centre. From there I had the opportunity to go to the wartime Department of Division of Procurement, which was a subsidiary of the Customs set up, primarily for wartime services

04:30 to the community and elsewhere. I was just in a typing pool there for a while. Then after a short while I was given a task to work for the shipping priorities manager, it was a Mr Kirk and I worked with him for about 3 years in that role. That was very interesting because the war was then in

05:00 its full swing. A lot of the work was secret work. Messages were coded and that sort of thing. The Australian Government had a lease lend agreement with the United States in the same building that we were. There were quite a lot of American administrative personnel on a full floor. We didn't personally have much contact with them,

05:30 but the senior management certainly did. That was their role there. I worked mainly of a day from 9 till 5 or thereabouts. But one night a week you would be rostered onto what they called a teleprinter machine in those days. I guess it was almost the first form of a computer type instrument. I remember feeling very excited

06:00 that I was given a chance to operate this, just as a typewriter kind of thing, but the messages would go through to Melbourne and Adelaide. Melbourne I remember we would send to the ES&A Bank, which no longer exists. We'd even formed a friendship with the girls in those, Melbourne and Adelaide, doing

those times all over a few words on this machine. We'd work there

06:30 till about 11 of a night and then they would close down till about 8 in the morning. Of an evening, because of the location of the building, the ACI building, which still stands there at the foot of William Street, it was known as the Glass House. It's nearly all glass bricks the external walls of it. We would go to

07:00 Kings Cross for luncheon without a qualm, without worry about it, we would just wander up there, innocent young girls, and we'd even have the night of our rostered teleprinter shift we would even go up there and have our evening meal and then walk back, not at all concerned about the elements of other folk at all. Even though it had a name in those days it was certainly not like it is today.

07:30 That went on for somewhere about 4 years. I know I had my 21st birthday there at the DIP we called it, the Dip. The girls gave me a wonderful full volume of Henry Lawson's works, leather bound, which is now in the possession of one of my sons. It was a rather wonderful time for me. It was

08:00 a growing up period where I rubbed shoulders with all different kinds of people. My parents were actually very suburban. They'd never moved from the city environment at all. So it was a real awakening for me rubbing shoulders with people in this big enterprise. I remember there was a lass there, Winsome Pern, her father was a doctor in our

08:30 local suburb of Ramsgate. She put me onto an Italian lady, Gladys Verona, in Bathurst Street, who taught singing. I was a bit keen on that. So I'd go to her and pay 2 shillings and sixpence a week for my lessons. I was always struggling to find the 2/6d. Seems extraordinary in those days that things were so,

09:00 but that was the way it was for everybody. So that went on for some few months. As the war progressed I had 3 girls who lived nearby my home. They were musical. One played the piano, one the violin and one the cello. We formed a little group. There was a lot of demand

09:30 for people to entertain the groups of soldiers in Ingleburn and other places. Even in hospitals. On one occasion I went to the jail. I would sing, the girls would play their instruments. I remember going to the jail, it was a bit of another unusual experience. In Hyde Park, during the war

10:00 too, there was a huge marquee set up. It was called the Anzac Hut. Again there were always calls for people to entertain lots of soldiers, airmen and Americans going through Sydney. The Americans were much later in the peace though. They didn't come into the war in the early part.

10:30 So that was rather exciting. I think I had a pretty charmed life now, really, looking back on it for those years. Home in Ramsgate I can remember my mother, there were blackouts also called for during the war, everybody had to black out their homes. We did that, but the other measure they took to safeguard

11:00 damage, which never occurred, but it was always anticipated it would, was to attach base curtains, stick them onto windows so that in the event of any gunfire or anything like that that the shattered glass wouldn't spread, it would just be all contained. I can remember the windows looking so dreadful for a long, long time.

11:30 About just 25 yards down the street there was a lovely big park. A lot of Australian troops camped there for a while. My father got to know quite a few of these fellows just by walking to the beach backwards and forwards and so on. He often asked them up half a dozen of them and they'd have a beer

12:00 and a cigar. He never smoked cigarettes, my father, but he always smoked a cigar. On occasion, what he thought was a festive occasion to do those things. We thought that was also pretty good having all those big, uniformed people in the home. What else would you like me to talk about?

12:30 **Tell me more about your grandmother.**

My mother's mother?

Yeah, what she was like.

My mother's mother, her name was Winifred Dwyer she was. She had 5 girls and 2 boys. That family went to Melbourne

13:00 originally. After her marriage to a fellow named John Luby they came to Sydney. She lived in Botany Road there. The home was still there up to about 10 years ago, but it's now covered by a factory addition. Because we had a car we were expected to visit and we did,

13:30 but it wasn't something we looked forward to. Also in those days, I remember we always had to wear a hat and gloves, even as children, to go and see grandma. She had on the front veranda a big cage and she had a sulphur crested cocky [cockatoo] in that cage. She used to talk to it and he'd talk to her. She'd talk, I' don't know what it was now.

14:00 I always remember that cocky because it was fascinating to us to hear this bird talking. When we'd go inside we'd have to sit down and stay put. We didn't seem to enjoy a lot of freedom in that house. She was quite a forbidding old lady. She was always in black. She was a widow and she'd lost her husband many, many years before.

14:30 I never knew him, my grandfather. I knew all my aunts. My older aunts, 3, 4 of them, they didn't marry. They all played an instrument, which in those days, looking back, seems to be rather wonderful because there was not a lot of money around, but somehow they all had a little bit of musical knowledge.

15:00 I can't remember much, except when she died I knew we had to go over and grandma was laid out in the front parlour in the big bay window. It was a big house with a bay window. There were many of them around like that then. She was laid out on the front parlour I guess they would have called it there. We had to go and

15:30 kiss grandma on the forehead. I can't remember recall that to this day. It was not a very pleasant feeling because she was very, very cold and very pale. She lived till she was about 80 something, about what I am now. I remember being forced to do that. I didn't like that at all, but it remained one of those things

16:00 that one doesn't forget. That's really all I remember about grandma except for when she died there was a little division in the family assets where one of the aunts that lived at home was left the family home. One of the others, who had not married, was a little unhappy. There was quite a big division in the family then which I recall upset my mother considerably.

16:30 She was involved in supporting the one that had been left the home. I think she was the least well off of the three unmarried ones. That all came together later in life of course.

How old were you when your grandma died?

I find that a little difficult to answer except that I do know we had the car. So I was born in 1921,

17:00 it was a 1927 Chev and I was probably about 8 or 9, thereabouts.

Was it a custom to kiss the dead?

I'm not sure, but I do think that it must have been because there was strong insistence, even though we were children, that we had to do this.

17:30 **Was your grandmother Catholic?**

Yes, she was.

What influence did that have on your family?

I am Catholic, my mother was Catholic, and my father. Dad was not terribly, he had respect of his faith, but he wasn't a strict Catholic at all. My mother was,

18:00 but she was very good. I recall a man that died next-door to us. He was a very fine neighbour, a carpenter, and he often helped my parents with little things. He died. My mother, in those days the Catholic Church was very strict on attendance in Catholic Churches. I recall that she went to our parish

18:30 priest at Kogarah to more or less seek permission to attend the funeral and he refused. She was most upset about that, but she went, to her credit, and I've admired her all my life for that. Thank goodness those things have changed. The discipline isn't quite as, it should never have been as it was really, but I think

19:00 myself, the Irish were very dogmatic, just unbending. But again, I think that's changed too. We've been to Ireland a couple of times.

Why did your grandmother and her husband come to Australia?

I don't know about her husband. I don't know very much about him at all. She was only

19:30 5 when she came to Australia with her parents, the Dwyer family, there were 7 that came from Ireland to Melbourne. I don't know anything about him at all. My mother, somehow we never talked about him. I don't know for what reasons, but we were never given any information on him at all. So I can't really say much about him.

Was your mum similar to your grandmother?

20:00 No, not, she was, I think, possessive. I know when I said I was going to get married she said, "wait a minute, do you know what you're doing?" This had been playing for a while when my husband to be came home. We became engaged after a short while. We planned to marry in the September.

20:30 We didn't' know where we were going to live. A mutual friend of both Cyril and myself, his father had a little semi-detached cottage at Cammeray. All of a sudden the people left there and our friend said, "Dad said you could have the cottage, but you have

21:00 to move soon." Because people were paying lots of money for what they called Key money to get into houses or flats because during the war there was little or no building taking place. So then we brought our plans forward to July. I was married on the 5th of July 1947. We went into this, but I still wanted to be

21:30 a bride. I didn't even have a dress at that stage, because the plans were come September. So there was a bit of a hustle and we got married about 6 weeks after we acquired the little semidetached cottage at Cammeray. In that interim period my brother and my husband's brothers all took part in occupying the house at Cammeray on a rostered basis for

22:00 6 or 7 weeks while our plans materialised. So when, again, my mother, I said, "we're going to get married now in July" she was quite startled. There was no reason for it other than to occupy the cottage. She was pretty good after she got used to the idea. I think being the eldest of the family,

22:30 I was then just 26 or 27. I'd more or less done as I was told all my life. I wanted to go into the VADs [Voluntary Aid Detachments], but she wouldn't let me, so I still abided by whatever my parents wanted me to do. So this was the first break in the family and I think that she was probably a little bit

23:00 afraid for me. I had grown up. I was aware of lots of things. Parents and mothers in those days weren't bent on enlightening daughters on the facts of life very well at all. Our schooling then also wasn't as broad as it is now in today's classes.

23:30 I have a couple of very good friends, we often compare notes about our developing years and what our parents, particularly mothers, told their daughters and what they didn't tell their daughters. A lot of our mothers were very much the same kind of people. You had to find out a lot of things for yourself. I'm not quite sure how they thought we were gonna do that.

24:00 Mum was very good and she gave me a lovely wedding. She was a very good mother-in-law to my husband. We lived at Cammeray for about 2 1/2 years and my husband joined the Shell company. He was then transferred to Bega. With that again, the family said, "you poor kids" because they were

24:30 so suburban they thought we were being thrown to the wolves I suppose. We couldn't wait. We just loved our time in Bega. I had two children before I went down there. We were there for only about 2 1/2 years and then we were sent to Grafton, the other end of the state almost. When my third child was three months old

25:00 we went by sea plane from Rose Bay and landed on the Clarence River. That was to be a lovely time for us, about 10 1/2 years in Jacaranda City. We loved it.

Growing up, what advice do you wish your mother had given you which she didn't give you?

Well, Michael [interviewer], I don't really want to go into the deeper facts of life, what

25:30 marriage would entail for me. I was aware of what I was going in to. At that age I most certainly should have been. Mothers didn't tell us what marriage was about with a different sex. How children really came into being. I think I learned myself from friends

26:00 and awareness of the girl next-door when she had her first child. And books. We weren't encouraged a lot in reading. I was, and still am, a great reader. I didn't for many years with all my children, but these later years I've been able to get back to that and I've become a very string reader.

26:30 I really can't answer that. I remember when I was having my first baby, Paul, who's now 55, but my father said to me on one occasion, I thought it was an astonishing thing to say, I was developing of course, somewhere around 6, maybe 7 months. He said, "when do you go to bed?" I thought that was

27:00 an extraordinary thing to say, but I've never forgotten it because I find it quite funny really. I don't know whether he expected me to go to bed for the next remaining two months. Of course I didn't. I think it was a pretty narrow world. It's different now.

Were you close to your mum?

Yes.

27:30 I don't think I was as close to her as my two younger sisters were. I think I had to fight for a lot of things, first things in the home. Like getting a schoolgirl's magazine. I can remember taking a threepenny, they don't have them now, and buying the school girl's magazine, because I wanted something that

28:00 other girls had. I got into terrible trouble over that. There was a wonderful story in those books called "Valerie Drew – the School Girl Detective" who had an Alsatian dog. Unbelievable I guess, but quite fascinating when you wanted to hear stories of brave people and things other people do.

28:30 She was wonderful. She was a wonderful grandmother to my children. She'd come out here when we moved here. She had a stroke and she lost one eye in that, but she recovered, except for the eye. My brother lived down here a short way. She'd come here by train across the ranch and put a hand up beside, because she couldn't, to get across the road, to stop traffic. She was

29:00 pretty good. I think I was probably closer to Dad, the things I liked to do. He was a little bit of a showman. I know when he retired he was given say 5,000 pounds from the Sun associated newspapers. That was quite a lot of money.

29:30 It wasn't an ongoing superannuation sort, it was a lump sum. He, our old house, which is still there, he did up the front of the house. Put a new roof on, new walls, new brick front, but my mother's old kitchen was still not even thought of. He was a little bit of what one sees on the outside. He got another

30:00 car later. A Vauxhall, which had wind up windows. I can also remember going in that car and being told to behave a little better in this car. Because it was a more pretentious vehicle we had to be a little bit better behaved. He'd give you a hit over the backseat if you were mucking up or anything like that. He used to sing.

30:30 He sang a lot of those old musical stars, Kitty Blewitt and Gus Blewitt. He knew that Roy Wren, you probably don't recall those people. During the Depression he would sing at a lot of concerts. They used to have concerts at the local theatre on a Sunday. There was no charge

31:00 allowed legally on a Sunday for anything that was on. So they just gave a shilling, silver coin, people gave what they wanted to and they'd have a hat or a box or something like that. He used to sing lots of songs. He was pretty good, had a nice voice. If I went to the pictures, at school I can remember we were not allowed to go

31:30 to pictures very much at all, but I had friends that used to go to Saturday matinee. I remember there was a serial, they used to run serials for about 10 or 12 weeks, "The Indians Are Coming." I would wait for my friends at school on Monday to hear what happened. We'd go racing around the playground playing "The Indians Are Coming" and things like that. Dad relented more as we got older. I can also

32:00 remember sitting on the dining room table, swinging my legs, looking at the old fashioned black clock with little gold pillars on it, wondering how much longer I was gonna have to beg if I could go to the movies for something that was on. Come say, this would have been when I was about 15, because it would be night time I'd be watching that clock and thinking, "Daddy will take me" but he didn't. We had a good life. I've no

32:30 complaints at all really, about my parents. When I left school, lots of girls would leave school on their 14th birthday. That was the legal age you could leave school and you could also be employed. A lot of girls, my very close friend whom I see now about every 3 months, she left the day she was 14. She didn't come to school.

33:00 I was dying to leave. But my mother said, "No, you stay on". So I had to stay. Then I went to the domestic science school at Kogarah because I don't think Dad was as education minded as my mother was. So my mother sought for me to go to the domestic science school to do a business course. Later I went from there to the business college,

33:30 St George Business College at Rockdale. After that I went into reading shorthand speed. I had to do a little bit more work and I became a typing teacher, which wasn't difficult at all. My first job outside that was in Bathurst Street, an importer by the name of, I would have been about

34:00 16-17, in Bathurst Street, Sydney. His name was Jack Affriat and he was an importer. A large, flourish, Jewish man; black moustache, grey hair, and florid complexion. He used to sell a product called New Plasmic. New Plasmic was to look at like a glue in a tube.

34:30 This man used to advertise in the Sunday papers a drawing of a woman's face, one with many lines and the other one clear. This New Plasmic was meant to take away the lines and wrinkles of age. He had quite a clientele

35:00 of people who would come in. Newcomers, he would show them how to use this on their arm. He would apply this and then to his sales pitch for about 10 minutes while it was drying. Then he would remove that and he would dust it with talcum powder. Of course it was a stringent like fluid, which would tighten the

35:30 skin and they'd have a nice, soft skin. They'd go away and pay 15 shillings for a tube of this New Plasmic. He had a companion there, an Englishman, Lindsay Cocking. He imported trassers, which

36:00 probably aren't used at all today. It was a big square warehouse type room. Affriat was one side and Mr Cocking was the other. Mr Cocking was a tall Englishman with a gingery moustache. He always wore a soft, fury looking, lovely brown hat and tweed suits. But along the four walls around were these things like legs and

36:30 straps and things, artificial limbs. Also more personal support things. That was his jig, his work. They were friends, but they operated their business quite separately. Mr Affriat used to send me around to his friends in the

37:00 T & G building, which is now no longer there. A lovely building with beautiful apartments in Elizabeth Street opposite Hyde Park. Trying to think of their name. A very lovely gracious Jewish couple had the most beautiful apartment there. I loved to go on these messages.

37:30 They were friends of his. Mr Affriat would also send me to buy his lunch. Alternately one day he'd have a half [pint of beer] at this Sergeants in Margaret Street. I don't know what's opposite there now. It used to be Farmers on one side. A huge Sergeant shop. One day I would buy a horseshoe roll, buttered.

38:00 A horseshoe roll was quite a large roll in those days. The other day he'd have a half a raisin loaf, buttered. I'd deliver that to him. After that job, that's when I went back to the business college to teach and read shorthand speed and that's where I met my husband. He was a police cadet at that time.

Tape 2

00:44 **Tell me a bit more of why your father didn't like you going to the cinema.**

Not really except that probably finances were a little bit of a restriction there.

01:00 He would have a wage. Mothers didn't go to work in those days at all. I know my mother used to give him two shillings every day for his lunch, which was another custom that seemed to prevail at that time that she got all the money and Dad was given so much back again. It's not like that now either.

01:30 He was a bit of a showman himself. I really don't know, I think it was once again because I was the eldest wanting to do things that they hadn't. My parents were married late in life. They weren't young parents. I think my mother was about 32-33 and Dad was about 35. He lived till he was 93 and my mother died when she was 78.

02:00 I think their late marriage made them a little more possessive of us, clinging to us a little bit. When I got married he offered us a block of land he owned. We had a big paddock next-door, we called it a paddock in those days, I like that word. There were four blocks of land there. Whilst our home was fairly humble Dad had

02:30 acquired all this land. He retired on the 5,000 pounds and my parents lived on that. But gradually, with the increase of food and goods generally over the years, the pound of butter they might have paid one and twopence for was suddenly a lot more. So they

03:00 lived on that and gradually that capital disappeared and then he sold one block of land and then sold another block, until finally that asset had gone and they then got a pension. My mother said that was the most wonderful feeling that day, because she knew she was going to be secure.

03:30 In 1947 he still had all that land and he offered my husband and I, he said, "you can have a block of land as a wedding gift" which we thought we pretty good. But he said, "you must live there" right next-door. We weighed up that and we said no. Then I think he also

04:00 offered that to my brother. I'm not sure, the other children have never said, but he did start selling the land after that. That would have been a great little bit of security for us to start off, but in stead we went to our little place over at Cammeray for 27 shillings a week. I think that was a good thing. When he died the estate was divided

04:30 by four. My husband and I bought that home from the others. I felt I couldn't let it go for a long time, but it's now gone.

Why did you and Cyril not accept the land?

Not accept it? I think we both felt that would be too much control over us, too much

05:00 supervision over us, position. I do really think my parents were possessive. When I went I said to my mother "we're getting married" and she said, "wait a minute, are you sure you know what you're doing?" and I was 27 and my husband was 28. Course we knew what we were doing. We'd been friends for a long time.

05:30 She just couldn't accept that at the outset, but she came around. I had a wonderful wedding for wartime. I remember Cyril racing around trying to get bottles of beer. I was married in the morning, 9 o'clock in the morning because as a Catholic, if you wanted what they called a Nuptial Mass, it had to be in the morning. Again the church has changed there. You can get married

06:00 anytime now. Saturday or Sunday. Afternoon, morning. So that seemed to be the thing that we both wanted and I was married at 9 o'clock in the morning. I got up at I don't know what hour, I got dressed and down we went. I had my first plane ride after that to Brisbane. We went to Currumbin for our honeymoon. I can remember Cyril and some of his friends racing around because this was

06:30 47, the war ended 1945. You just couldn't buy a lot of things still. They'd get one bottle of beer here, one bottle of beer there. Gradually they built up something like a dozen or so for the reception, which we had in a hall. Different now.

During the Depression years, what are your memories of

07:00 **those years?**

Not a great deal. I was at primary school then. I remember my friend Cath, whom I see every 3 months

now, her father, he was a carpenter. He was out of work. I can remember Cath, somehow associating her with the boot

07:30 maker who mended their shoes for them for nothing. He was a bookmaker at the shop. People used to have shoes mended lots more in those days than they do now. My father used to mend my shoes. He had a shoe last and he put the shoes on it and spit on the leather to soften it and carve it around. Sometimes you put the school shoes back on again and they'd be that heavy you wouldn't know how you could lift your foot in it.

08:00 Everything was done for an economical gain. The Depression years there were lots of people around. You'd see people carrying things around in all sorts of unusual way, like sugarbags. People didn't have a lot of nice clothes. I remember Christmas time you'd often see, but that was again a custom, you

08:30 see men walking home with a WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK or a rooster in a sugarbag we called them ,it was a soft bag. People would buy bags of sugar in a hessian type finely woven bag; that was a sugarbag. They come with the WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK 's head out the top as they walked home. Again a lot of people too had their own gardens and their own poultry. We had poultry at home.

09:00 We always had our own eggs. Dad would kill a WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK or chicken for Christmas. They were saved for special occasions. I don't think we ever wanted in the way of food or anything like that. My husband talks about the Depression years quite a bit because he was 14 when his father died and there were 8 children

09:30 there. 7 boys and one girl. They had WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK s in the garden. His father was a teacher. One of a family of teachers, English people. Very anti-Catholic. His father married Cyril's mother who was strong Catholic. Again differences there over religion for many years.

10:00 I know in the Depression years Cyril speaks about his mother and having been a widowed lady too, the economics of the household were very, very difficult. She would put out two milk cans and try and help out two milkmen who were selling milk. They'd go to three butchers to spread

10:30 the family trade as it were. I remember people being in long queues outside different institutions to get ration tickets or food. We had an institute up the street with a library and a local hall.

11:00 There were often people there waiting to get financial or food relief. Where I lived we would have to walk about 4 blocks west up the street to what they call Rocky Point Road. There were big steam trams running then with huge engines. They would go to Kogarah

11:30 station. Going up round about passed the Catholic Church at Kogarah and around the St George hospital with the big curve. They would build up steam and always toot going around there. They'd go to Kogarah station and then when they came back they would go along the railway tracks, that's no longer there now. Then come out and back onto the road

12:00 and up the hill and down around Sans Souci in a loop. We walked to school, but on wet days we would be allowed to ride, we'd be given a penny. We'd walk so we could get the longest tram ride. We'd walk half the way to get on the tram and then go longer back. So we could have

12:30 the fun of enjoying this.

Tell me about the food vouchers. How did you apply for those?

The food? We didn't. My father was never out of work. Never out of work. I don't know the procedure that was

13:00 what one did. I have no recollection of that procedure at all, no, because we weren't involved. We were pretty fortunate. Dad worked of a Saturday night to make extra money. He worked on the Sunday papers. That's how we always had a lot of newspapers in our home because he would bring home a paper every day. We didn't have a wireless.

13:30 We didn't have a telephone. We had a car. That always looked good for Dad. Sunday we'd love the comics, Ginger Meggs and that sort of thing. He'd bring home The Truth, which was a newspaper of scandalous stories. We weren't supposed to look at it, but

14:00 we would see a bit around. Mum and Dad would read it and then discuss all the scandals in hushed tones. Usually about rather prominent people of course. That was in the days when divorce wasn't quite such a common procedure and particularly people in the public eye who

14:30 were seen here or there, all those sorts of things. It wasn't a very nice paper. It was all based on corruption and personal scandals. Not nice at all.

Did you read it at all?

Sometimes I tried to read a bit, but it was very much controlled in the family. Sometimes it would be left and forgotten and you'd see things.

15:00 I wouldn't say it was a practise of mine to read it at all. Not really.

During your school education, what did you and your girlfriends want to be in the future?

I think I wanted to be a dancer or an opera singer. I think I had that in me a little bit like my father. I can remember

15:30 my father had wonderful records. We had a wind up record thing at home, which my brother now has. It was in rosewood with a silk thing inside the speaker part. I've still got a lot of my father's records. He wasn't' a very well educated person, but he had this great love of music and he had some wonderful records.

16:00 Even now, like "Samson and Delilah" and "the Hallelujah Chorus" all sorts of things. Wonderful music, really good music. He would play them and I would dance around the lounge room. I always felt I could be a ballet dancer. In fact I danced almost up till the time I

16:30 got, I never learned to dance. I wanted to, but again that was one of those restrictive things that my mother had. I said I wanted to learn tap dancing and I remember her saying "that's for bold girls" it wasn't for me, bold girls. A lot of girls that did tap dancing were a bit different. I suppose I had conservative parents. I still danced around the lounge room at

17:00 home. I'd sing and go on a bit, close the door and have a lot of fun by myself. Had a lot of pleasure out of it.

Your father worked for the Sun. Did he talk in the late 1930s talk about what was going on in European politics?

17:30 No, I don't recall him talking about European politics, but he was a very strong Labour man here. He talked politics quite a lot at home. Again, I think I'm a bit like that too. I'm very interested in politics and possibly if, I don't know, sometimes

18:00 I wish I'd had a more extended education in my earlier life. But yes, I'm very interested in politics and he was locally, but I don't recall him having a great interest in European affairs. I remember him talking about Jack Lang and Roosevelt. Chamberlain in England

18:30 at the beginning of the war. I don't really. He used to go to bed early in his later years with a book. He became a great reader. He'd go to bed about half passed 7 of a night, 6 or 7 o'clock, He'd get up early and go up the backyard and tend to the garden and things like that.

What did he think of Chamberlain, Roosevelt and

I'm sorry, Michael. I couldn't tell you. I have no recollection.

19:00 Except, he was a very strong Labor man. He belonged to a very strong union, a printers' union I think it probably was. He would go to trade union meetings, but I don't really recall him giving out very much on European politics at all.

What did you think of Menzies and the Liberal party at the time?

I don't think he would have

19:30 liked Menzies very much at all. He was opposed to the code of ethics that Mr Menzies represented. There were two men in his family and one had an unfortunate accident off the Harbour Bridge. It was

20:00 considered suicide. They never really proved it. I was looking up some background down at the hereditary place down at Kiama and I asked them about this Alfred Stannard and they said on my grandmother's

20:30 certificate there they had the children, my father and his two sisters. I said, "There was another one." They said, "well, if he had an accident if would probably be listed in the coroner's register." So they looked up the coroner's records and they found that this fellow Alfred Stannard had an accident off the Sydney Harbour Bridge and there were no conclusive statements

21:00 about what really happened. Whether he was pushed or whether he jumped. In the family they seemed to think he jumped off the Harbour Bridge. It was one of those things, after it became, you don't talk about.

What year did your uncle die?

That was during the Harbour Bridge, it was what the bridge was under construction. I don't know, I could probably get that

21:30 if I went back to the records down at Kiama, but I haven't chosen to do that.

How did your father come with the news?

Again, I don't recall very much except he was distressed, because that fellow had a son who also worked in the newspaper business, the same name as my father. My father's name was Thomas and the

brother Alfred had a son Thomas. He was a journalist. This man's son

22:00 was a journalist with the Sun newspapers. He had a very early death actually, that fellow. I remember them being upset about it at the time. I don't recall Dad having long periods of grief after it or anything like that. He had two sisters, Nelly and Sarah. Sarah was married to a pastry cook who had a big

22:30 cake shop in Newtown just near Newtown Bridge. Uncle George. He had emphysema, asthma. He always seemed to be wheezing. I can remember thinking "how can he cook all these wonderful cakes and be like this?" That shop is still there, but it's not of course as it was now then. The other sister became a widow. She was a darling

23:00 lady. Auntie Sarah. When she had her grandchildren she used to put a little harness on them and tie them to the clothes line, which the clothesline in those days would go from one side of the fence to the other. It was wonderful 'cos the kids had all the scope in the world and they couldn't do any harm. They'd just play around. She was a wonderful dressmaker. She used to make costumes

23:30 for the Irish dances for, she had two daughters of her own and for other children too. You know those beautiful costumes? She overdosed in hospital in her later life. She became unable to sow. She was in her 90s. She was living with one of her daughters and felt she was a great burden. She was on

24:00 medication and she just took a whole load of medication. She survived, they took her to hospital. I remember her daughter Pat saying, they were really made of cast iron, strong people, she was a lovely auntie. My father's family was very warm, not so austere as my mother's family were. They were Catholic too.

24:30 But more warm. We loved to go and visit them. And my father's mother, when she'd come and stay with us she was always great fun. She was a lovely old lady. I've got a lovely picture of her. I don't know where it is now, though. Thick white hair. She used to say one word

25:00 instead of saying "flannelette" she used to say, "flannenette". I always remember being amused by it.

During the Depression years, what was your local Catholic Church doing to help people?

I couldn't say. The Catholic Church we went to was at Kogarah, it was the main church. When I first started school I went to

25:30 the public school at Sans Souci because there was no local Catholic school closer to our home. Then the Catholic Church built what they called the Catholic Church School there. My mother then took me away from the public school and sent me to the convent school, as did the mother of my close friend Cathleen, whom I see every three months. We went to the Catholic school there.

26:00 The nuns, three Sisters of St Joseph's they were called, would come down on the tram from the convent, which was in Kogarah. In those days the nuns used to wear long, black veils and a white, I've forgotten what they call that now, and the bib and they had long, black coats and they'd each carry a suitcase. You'd see these three nuns going, coats flowing. People were unkind about them, but they were really wonderful women.

26:30 Wonderful women. They did marvellous work. Marvellous work.

Such as?

Well, in teaching and they got nothing. We used to pay, 'cos there was no government money then for Catholic schools like there is now, we used to pay sixpence a week to the nuns, which was paltry even then.

27:00 They really struggled and they were very well motivated to a life of self-sacrifice and poverty to teach children. Primarily of course their aim was to teach religion. I learned English and maths and Irish history where I was given a fair slice of that. Not much more really in our formal education

27:30 then. We didn't do things like chemistry or botany, which my husband did. English, maths, history, Irish history and religion. I think that was basically the plan for most of us then up till 6th class. Then I went to a secondary school at Hurstville, which was another branch of religious order,

28:00 the Sisters of Charity, that also have St Vincent's at Potts Point. I went there to Hurstville. There I did a bit of Latin and a bit of French. Not much good at either of them. I just remember a few French verbs and no Latin at all. And history. I just did what they called the intermediate [certificate] there.

28:30 **War is coming. What is your local Catholic Church teaching the people in respect to the war?**

I don't recall ever being a really good listener at church. I think probably it wasn't a very good thing, but I don't recall that we were talked to very much about the war or, now we would be,

29:00 but I don't recall that we were then. I think maybe I didn't pay very much attention when I went to church there. As the children in our family got older my mother went to touch up down at the school. In those days the Catholic Church fought for children to be given free milk as they were in the state

29:30 schools. Stationery was another thing too that they ultimately started breaking through and getting a little bit of support in that area. The milk used to come in a small bottle and would be delivered. There was no refrigeration. That was to be consumed at 11 o'clock. Perhaps in the summer months it wasn't so pleasant to be drinking milk. A lot of the

30:00 women said, "we'll colour it, put some flavouring in it." I know my mother had a big row with them because the women wanted to sell it. See, she was a woman of very good principle in a lot of ways. She said, "you can't do that, it's given free to the children." The women were well motivated in another direction of making money for the nuns. But my mother would have none of it, so her sojourn

30:30 as a tuck shop helper wasn't very long at all. She left. All these things, you start to think about one thing and then you think about another. I can't remember ever being very well instructed or enlightened on anything much about the war or the impact that it might have on us.

31:00 I know when it first started that there were calls for people to learn, equip themselves with First Aid knowledge. There was the love public school across the park near our place, Ramsgate Public School. They held First Aid classes there. My sister, Eunice, and I would go over there. We learned to do First Aid.

31:30 It seems funny now, comical almost, but we had white bands around our head and little white aprons. Then as the war progressed we were rostered about one night a fortnight we would sleep there at the school in case there were air raids. We'd take a sandwich and some sort of drink, lemonade I suppose,

32:00 and we'd spend the night there. Just take a rug and a cushion and we'd just sleep on the floor and go home at breakfast time in the morning. There were never any raids, except the night the submarine came in the harbour. We were unaware of that until we read about it in the paper the next morning. The there was an exodus of people that lived in those areas, Vaucluse, Rose Bay,

32:30 Dover Heights, a great movement of people. People who were more affluent financially of course were able to move into those areas and purchase wonderful property. But there was a real exodus of people from these eastern suburbs area after the submarine venture. They have that in a museum in Canberra now of course as you know. It didn't affect us.

33:00 **The First Aid course. What were they teaching you?**

How to do bandages and dress wounds. I think if there was a broken leg you had to put a splint on, how you could make a splint out of different things and that sort of thing. My knowledge, I didn't practise it ever. So I can't

33:30 give a first hand detailed account of that at all.

You can't remember what they taught you of how to wrap a wound?

Yes, they taught you how to wrap a wound and how to deal with a finger and tie it up around here. Give it support and that sort of thing. You had to use a splint in a finger or that.

Can you talk be through a couple of those thing? If someone had damaged their finger how you'd

34:00 **wrap it up?**

Could I?

Talk me through what you were taught.

Not with any great detail, Michael, I'm sorry. I know we had to, bandages then also were not of the wonderful fabric that they're made of now. In fact we used to tear up sheets to make bandages. We would take them down there to the school and you'd have little strips for fingers and wider strips for a portion of a leg. They would teach you how to

34:30 strap an ankle, the crisscrossing procedure around there. Also a knee injury. They didn't have things like crepe bandages or even scores, not in the wartime, because those things weren't available.

What made you volunteer for the First Aid course?

I'm not quite sure. I suppose it was one of those things a lot of people did.

35:00 You just follow suite quite often without even perhaps knowing the reason why. I would have been about 17-18. You're not always conscious; you don't always have the right motive. You tend to do a lot what your group do with a lot of things. You follow. I don't think kids are like that now. I think

35:30 they're more objective themselves in what they do. I think probably just because I had a few other friends doing it.

When Menzies declared war, what was your father's views in respect to the war?

My father didn't go to war himself. He didn't when there was the First World War. My father had

36:00 a short leg. He always walked with a very pronounced gait. He used to say in a joking manner “because he got it in the war”. He didn’t get anything in the war at all. But Menzies: I can’t recall him being, I think he probably thought we were going into a disastrous time for everybody.

36:30 I don’t recall Dad giving out on any strong point of view about Mr Menzies. I know he didn’t like him, but that was because of the political bond that he had with the Labour movement. He would have opposed anything that Menzies did. He was regretful about the poor kids. I can remember him thinking about

37:00 two doors up there were two boys in the family. Keith Emmet, who was about 12 months older than me, he went to the war. He was in the air force. He also worked at Shell. He was killed very early on in the peace. Around the corner there were other boys whom we know and used to play with. All these people used to come to our place; we’d have a big bonfire, ‘cos we had all this land.

37:30 Keith Bardon, he was in the army and he went somewhere. I think in one of the African campaigns. He never came home again. I always think of those boys. Just ‘cos I knew them and I played with them. Not as adult men in uniform going off and never coming back. I remember Dad being very angry about those boys and their loss of life.

38:00 Politically I don’t think, as I said, he was a newspaperman and I think he used to probably get a lot of it at work and come home and not say so much about it. We weren’t a family that conversed generally around the dinner table on current affairs or anything like that. My brother, who was next to me, he joined the air force. Before that he worked at City Hatters. City Hatters

38:30 was a men’s mercer store in I think Castlereagh Street, just one off Margaret Street. They were then used to sell nice suits and hats. My brother, first of all he got a job there on a Saturday morning as a young fellow. Then they gave him a fulltime job. He’d be going in a very nice suit and a hat, men always wore hats. He joined the air force

39:00 and he was in the New Guinea area.

Did your mum and dad try and stop your brother?

I don’t think so, no. I don’t really recall. I remember now. There was a song called “You are my sunshine, my only sunshine”. I really don’t know how that would relate

39:30 to my brother, but she used get a bit weepy about this song, because I think he used to sing it, when he went away. In my photographs there I’ve got, we had an air raid shelter on our paddock. Because we had the land we could do that. My father and my brother and neighbours opposite they built this great big air raid shelter.

40:00 It would house about a dozen or 15 people. The neighbours opposite, they were two English families, they assisted my father in digging and contracting this. One of my photos I’ve got of my brother in shorts when he’s helping Dad build it and the other was when it was finished and he’s in his air force uniform standing with my father who had a suit on. I don’t

40:30 know whether he put the suit on for the photograph or to measure up against my brother in his uniform. I’ll show that to you later. We had a box of supplies in there: foodstuff, tinned goods and things like that. And seats.

Tape 3

00:48 **I want to start with your impressions of growing up near the beach and how people would behave on the beach.**

01:00 I’ve got lots of wonderful memories of the beach which we would walk to. About 15 metres or so down the road. The whole centre around Ramsgate Bridge now has changed too. We would go to the beach every weekend. Even in the wintertime our parents would let us go by ourselves if

01:30 They didn't have to mind us or anything like that in those days. We’d go down for a few hours, walk along the beach. We were always warned against the swimming. In those days there were no shark proof areas for bathing. So it was always a very cautious approach to going in the water and swim, but we would swim. I remember at the top of the Ramsgate centre there was a Shell service station and this lovely man,

02:00 Mr Sleet would walk passed our place. He would pick up my brother and myself and take us to the beach with him. He taught us to swim. My swimsuit in those days, now I look back, I don't know how we actually stayed in the water without going to the bottom because they were woollen. I remember a red woollen swimsuit that when it was wet it seemed to pull down between your,

02:30 always pulling it up here and pulling it up between one’s legs. That’s what we had. We would have play

clothes, which I think they were little cotton dresses. We used to wear all lot of pinafores over all our clothes to keep us clean. We'd have little cotton dresses and sandshoes. We didn't have

03:00 sandals. We always seemed to have some sort of soft shoes to go to the beach. My father would often come down. He'd take us prawning. It seems an unusual thing to do now, but we'd go down at dusk and he would have a big old fashioned lantern, which we'd swing on a wire frame. We had nets and we'd wade into the water and scoop up. Sometimes we'd get one or two prawns.

03:30 Not much more than that. It was just an activity. Lots of people did it. As far as sharks were concerned, I don't know. Maybe the lights, perhaps they were meant to keep the sharks at bay. I don't know. They called that beach in Ramsgate in those days Lady Robinson's Beach. It was not called Ramsgate Beach at all. I don't recall the history to Lady Robinson, why it was so

04:00 called. The very early photographs of my mother on the beach with me in her arms as a very small baby. She would have a full dress on, shoes and stockings, and a hat walking along the beach fully dressed. That's a long time ago. I'm 82 now. So I would have been, in this particular photograph I'm recalling

04:30 I would have been perhaps 6 months old. Those later years we had a lot of fun at the beach. I spent a lot of wonderful times there. There was a little tiny shop, a very small shop, Mrs Hunter. Of a weekend we'd get a penny curl there or a penny ice cream, for one penny.

05:00 Mrs Hunter, that was another thing, we used to buy a thing called swill candy, but there were no shops there for many, many years, just this tiny little shop almost on the beachfront. There were a family of brothers there called the Douglas brothers. 4 or 5 men. I guess when we were children they would have been about in their mid-20s or thereabout. They would fish.

05:30 They had these rowing boats. They would row out and from the back of the boat they would discharge this big net. Then they'd go right around. They'd trail it about 2 or 300 yards off the beach and then come in the other side and then when they would come back to shore again a group one end would start to pull in the net. This would take

06:00 some half hour or so for them to do that. Maybe more. It would be loaded with fish and they'd be hopping around through the net and it'd be catfish and stingrays and all sorts of sea life. Lots of seaweed sometimes. They would pick out the "tiny tiddlers" as they called them, and throw them out.

06:30 Then they would sell their bigger fish if people wanted to buy maybe just sixpence or a shilling, that was the currency at that time. Dad would sometimes buy the fish, but other times he would just pick up all the little tiddlers, the tiny fish, and he would take them home and we had quite a big backyard. He lit a big fire in the backyard and a huge big black oval

07:00 pot, and he would put all the fish into that. we'd gut them and put them all into this big cauldron with the heads on as well and he would boil them. Then he would strain them into a sheet of muslin and just bury all of that into the garden with the vegetables and we would have this lovely soup. He always called it

07:30 "cream of snapper soup". I don't know how many snapper actually went into it, but it was absolutely wonderful. A lively thick, my mother would thicken it with some corn flour or flour and chopped up parsley and milk. We'd have bowls of this. It was a lovely soup. I've tried to make it since on and off, but I could never do it as well as my father.

08:00 That was the beach life for us. This man, Mr Sleet, he took us and taught my brother and I to swim. Years later a New Zealand family came here by the name of Pemberton. They bought a property down near the beach and they built a big swimming pool, an offshore swimming pool there and

08:30 they called it the "Ramsgate Baths". First of all there was just one great, big pool of about maybe 50 meters in length. It became a great swimming centre there for the local people. Jackie Sanderson was one of the swimmers at that time. There was a tower they'd climb up and they would do high dives into this pool.

09:00 Those of us that couldn't dive there was a lower lever you'd just jump off into the pool. Then later they developed that and they build a big slippery dip on another pool and then they built a small pool for toddlers. These people from New Zealand were very enterprising. In the school holidays, every day, about midday, this man, Mr Pemberton, would come,

09:30 the manager, from his office with a big bag of pennies and ha'pennies. They were copper coins at that time. They would have a money scramble. They would throw the money into the water and children would dive in and try and scoop up some coins. It was a great find if you could get a penny or a ha'penny. In some cases some of the children, the more versatile swimmers got even more. The

10:00 development of that too then, this man started bringing in small animals. He had a small zoo there. Monkeys and birds. That attracted a lot of people. People used to come from all over Sydney to the Ramsgate Baths to see the zoo and to enjoy the swimming facilities. Every day those pools were let out through huge pipes. They would go out into the sea under

10:30 the road across the parkland there. They would be discharged out into the Botany Bay area again. I'm

not sure whether that was done on a daily or every second day, but if you were there when they were refilling, I don't know how they got the pressure, the engineering aspect of it, I don't know how they acquired the pressure for those big pipes to come back into the pools

11:00 and refill them, but when they would empty the pools the men would clean the walls and the bottom. There was sand around so there would often be a lot of sand that had to be removed. Those times they were very hygienic in the manner in which they cleaned those pools. To be there when they were refilling was really exciting ‘cos the water would come

11:30 through in a great rush. If you could manage to get yourself in under the force of that water you’d be swished right down to the other end of the pool. That was quite exciting and exhilarating. The kids used to fight to get into the line of this power of water coming into the pool. […] Just recalling that when I spoke

12:00 about my father making the soup in the backyard that he used to make crayons too in the backyard for the newspapers. Black, about 8 inches long. He had a heavy steel mould that made about 20 sticks of crayon, which was made from petroleum

12:30 wax, which he used to purchase from the Shell, I suppose it was some sort of centre, at Pyrmont. We would go there in the car to pick up this wax which he would buy a big bag, a sugarbag again, of big pieces of, I’m not sure of the term whether it was like a white wax, it was really thick pieces. He would bring that home

13:00 and break it up with a hammer and put it into one of these big boilers. Then he would add carbon black or something else and then that would be poured into this metal mould. It was a bout that high and about that wide and very, very heavy. Then that would set. I’m not sure the setting bit. I think it just set because it was wax and carbon black

13:30 powder. Then he would do that up into bundles. We’d help him put labels around it. We’d often do that of a night sitting around the dining table. He had a bit of green paper and you’d wind it around say 8 sticks of this. About the size of that little thing there. Then he got money for that from all the newspapers, because they used to mark the bundles of newspapers for country dispatch and

14:00 for the transportation on the trains. The outside of this would be marked in these big, black crayons, which my father supplied. That gave him an extra source of income. It wasn’t a registered company or anything as high profile as that. Dad would just take off perhaps a dozen of these bundles into his own office and maybe elsewhere. I’ve forgotten now. That was another source of income

14:30 for my father.

What were the dimensions of the woollen swimming costume?

Actually mine was, I didn’t have sleeves. I had wide shoulder straps and a cut out neckline here. It had a skirt all around back and front as well as the fitting part between one’s legs. It had this heavy skirt that

15:00 came down. It was almost to one’s knees. So when it was wet it was all heavy wool and it would drag everybody down. I never had one with sleeves. I think we’d gone from that era. I remember my mother had a swimming costume that had sleeves. She used to always wear, when she was doing housework, a cap, a little white lined

15:30 cap that had earpieces which were crocheted. They used to make house caps they called them. I remember her sisters also, when you’d be doing the dusting, ‘cos we didn’t have a vacuum [cleaner]. If you had carpets, we had a long hall runner and carpets, you’d take those out into the backyard and put them over the long clothesline and beat them and clean them and then put them back into the house.

16:00 So when one did the housework of any consequence, it wasn’t every day they did those things, but you’d wear a garment to protect your hair because we didn’t have hot water in the home either until when I got married. We had a chip heater, but not all that many years before I got married Mum used to boil the copper for

16:30 our bath. Dad would bring up buckets of water and put them in the bath. We’d all have to share the same bath: one after the other sort of thing. That happened every Saturday you’d have a bath. Or they let you have a basin of water and sponge yourself. […]

The swimming costume was actually like a skirt and it’d

17:00 **go down to the floor?**

No, just above one’s knees.

Was that the raciest costume on the beach?

I guess it was. I remember we were quite scandalous when the bikini started showing the form. I can't remember many of the

17:30 swimming costumes except I know some old photos of me down here at Cronulla I had, in fact I think

we made costumes. My sister was a very good dressmaker and she made some swimsuits. She had a white with a white spot; I had red with a white spot. Like a princess style that fitted and just straps over the shoulder. I think it was quite an innovation when what they called the “shirt costume” came

18:00 into being. Again, just straps over the shoulder and straight across the bust line, but elastic shirt, all over elastic. It could be like a seersucker material was quite popular. The shearing would be both down and across so you got little puckered up squares of about maybe an inch dimension all over. When you got into it, it stretched out for comfort.

18:30 They were quite good. They were like a cotton fabric.

How much later were they then the

From the woollen, some 10 years later. I can't remember very much what I wore in the interim period.

With the red one, how old would you have been then?

I’d have been about 20

19:00 About 19 or 20.

What were the men wearing to the beach?

They wore trunks. I can remember my Dad in a full piece costume, like a singlet type thing, again made of wool. Then I can also recall him being in just sorts from the waistline, no cutaways at all.

19:30 Coming down to about mid-thigh. I’ve got photographs of a neighbour who was a very well known footballer, on the beach shaping up. He’s just in straight boxer shorts. He was very much younger than my father. My Dad used to swim. Even though he had this bad leg he used to do a funny duck dive into the water. It was always a bit of a scream to watch him.

Did girls swim much?

20:00 Yes. My mother had a dog after she was married. They had a dog before I came along actually. They had a Kelpie before I was born. They used to go down the south coast. They had a little cocker spaniel. I don’t have the photographs. My sister has most of those. They had a cocker spaniel. We didn’t have any dogs much during my growing up

20:30 period until after I was married and then my mother had a dog after that when most of us had left home. I don’ recall dogs being on the beach very much at all. Perhaps I wasn’t interested. We’ve had dogs all our life until these recent years, but not when I was growing up.

Did looking after the dogs prevent girls from swimming?

No, I have no recollection of dogs swimming at all.

21:00 I do of my own dogs. We had a golden retriever, the same colour as the sand. He was always disappearing. My husband’s even been to court over him so many times. He’s diseased now. Because he loved the water. No, I have no recollection of those early days.

What about young women, did they swim?

Yes.

21:30 But not to the extent they do today. Women didn’t run or jog around the streets the way they do now. In fact, when I married my husband we lived at Cammeray and he used to train a couple of nights a week. He played football. I started running with him and I didn't have a pair of slacks. We didn’t have slacks. I had a pair of his old pants on

22:00 tied up around here, and a cap, because I had long hair like yours then. I pushed that up under my cap so that people wouldn’t know I was a girl. I used to run around the park with him. Cammeray, North Sydney park there. No.

Was it unusual for young women to be physical like that?

Well, it just wasn’t

22:30 done, but I don’t really know reasons why, because there were still sportswomen like Shirley Strickland in Perth. My husband can reel off a few names. He was always very keen on athletics. There were women participating in those. I suppose girls of my own age; I don’t recall having any friends that would go for a run. We’d play tennis.

23:00 But aside of that you couldn’t think of, just never occurred to people to join athletic clubs or go for a spring, or go for a long walk as you see them now.

Can you describe the experience of swimming with a woollen swimming costume?

Just that one didn’t swim so far. You couldn’t go

23:30 any distance because of the exertion of maintaining some sort of decency and trying to hold onto this weighty garment. Maybe my swimming costume wasn't as good as a one as it should have been, I don't know. In those days one acquired costumes from often hand me downs and that sort of thing. I don't know that mine came to me from a source like

24:00 that. To swim was a burdensome thing. You made very little progress. So it wasn't helpful.

What about sunbaking or lying on the beach? Was that common?

Yes, we did a bit of it. You'd just sit on the sand. You wouldn't, I think we did use, my mother used to put what they call coconut oil

24:30 on us so that we wouldn't burn. We used to sit in the sun and we'd go down there for a couple of hours. You'd have a swim, you'd have a walk. If there were friends you might play with a tennis ball on the beach and that sort of thing. I don't recall lying down and sunbaking for long hours on end the way women have done in those later years. I don't think they do it so much now.

25:00 My friend, whom I see often, she was a great one for lying in the sun. She's had lots of skin cancer problems in recent years particularly on her face. She's had a lot of surgery. That I believe was because she was very much an adorer of just lying there and getting as brown as possible.

Were there any concerns at that time about sun damage?

25:30 I don't think so, Claire [interviewer]. No. I don't recall any concerns being voiced at all in a public way, no.

What about other beaches. Did you go to Bondi or other popular beaches around?

Yes, not so much Bondi. Because we had a car and Dad was very generous with outings. We used to go to Balmoral quite a lot. We loved that

26:00 there. We used to go to Coogee perhaps even more than Balmoral. Manly. Not again so much Bondi, but Manly we went to. In those days where the ferry now comes in, and did then, there was a huge, there still is a shark proof area there, but it used to go from the wharf right across to the other side. They had a

26:30 boardwalk along there. They don't have that now. Speedboats used to go from the western side of that and take people for rough rides around the harbour. They built a huge slippery dip in the middle of this boardwalk and it was quite a long climb up a narrow ladder. I went up that once only. I remember when I got up

27:00 there the best way down was the slippery dip rather than the ladder. My mother and father were opposite on the beach. I went down that slippery dip and my mother ran into the water in all her clothes because she was so terrified of seeing me go down this thing. At the end of the dip was a drop of about quite a lot into the water. All was well, I came up. She

27:30 was just terrified. She ran into the water with her clothes on. I've never forgotten that. She caused a bit of a stir around everywhere.

Could your mother swim?

I don't think she swam, but she'd go into the water. People used to go into the water and just dip up and down and cool off physically. We used to go to Narrabeen quite a lot and camp. Dad had a tent. He would hire a boat down there and he would row.

28:00 It was always lovely to look into that water and hear the rowlocks. I love that sound even today. He would fish down there and we would go to Narrabeen and swim in the lakes and camp in a tent. I remember my Mum down there cooking for us. She was always cooking I suppose more than anything else. Coogee we always went on the north eastern headland there.

28:30 We swam at Coogee quite a lot.

What would you pack in the family picnic when you'd go to Coogee or Balmoral?

I think sandwiches mainly was always the fare. We used to have things like pork fits and Devon, which were much more palatable those days than they are today really. My mother would make things like brawn at home.

29:00 We'd often have brawn sandwiches. One thing she never ever bought though was a thing called Marmite or Vegemite. I used to swap my sandwiches at school often with girls that had Marmite or Vegemite sandwiches because I loved Vegemite. She never ever bought Vegemite. I love it to this day.

Why was she so opposed to Vegemite?

I've got no idea.

29:30 It was suck an easy thing to have. My husband can't stand it. He never had it at home. I love it. I just buy it for myself and have it on fresh bread and plenty of butter. Beautiful.

What are penny curls?

A curl is like a hard caramel

30:00 thing about 6 inches long, about a quarter of and inch deep and about a quarter of an inch wide. It was coated in chocolate. The other one they had like that was a nifty. I think they have nifties now, I'm not sure, but the nifty in the old days was a peppermint flavoured hard lolly again with dark chocolate over it. So you could have a penny nifty

30:30 or a penny curl or a penny ice cream.

What was the shop like?

Just a little board counter. Not even as big as this room. Mrs Hunter had red hair and the counter was very thick and it had lots of notches and things on it. She would have

31:00 big glass jars of what they called clinkers, which was a fizzy kind of sugary mix with chocolate over it, egg shaped. The other one would be hard boiled lollies. They were always on the counter there. When she'd get a penny ice cream it was just like a big bucket of ice, ice cream at the back of the counter, the other side. She had a scoop.

31:30 A penny ice cream, you know the scoops of today, well, it was just much smaller than that. It was a tiny cone about three inches long and almost not quite a dessertspoon of ice cream went onto the top of that. Sometimes we'd get one of those at home from the little shop nearby. Two German ladies, Miss Reinhards, had that shop. Mum, after we'd had a bath, she'd send up and get the penny ice creams. We'd sit on the gas box at home and have a

32:00 good lick of those ice creams. That was a bit of a treat on Saturdays.

What flavours ice cream did they have?

No flavours, plain ice cream, not even mint or vanilla. No flavours, no colour, nothing. Plain white ice cream. Peters were the predominant producers of those ice creams in those days. We just had an icebox at home where the iceman used to

32:30 come of a Saturday and he'd bring a chafe bag, which was a heavier kind of hessian bag. He'd bring in a big block of ice with huge tongs and deposit that in the top of the icebox. You'd have a butter cooler sometimes, which was like a plaster of Paris. A dish with a plaster of Paris hood. You put butter in that, you wet this plaster of Paris that would keep the butter more

33:00 firm and prevent it from going rancid or something like that. The iceman used to bring this every Saturday. That would gradually melt and it would go into a tray and you had to empty the tray of water out. When refrigeration came in my mother won in a raffle what they call a stalagmite gas refrigerator,

33:30 which was produced by the philanthropist Edward Hallstrom. That was absolutely awesome. We were so thrilled we could make iceblocks and pour milk and sugar and vanilla and make ice box and suck your own icebox instead of buying them from the shop; I can't remember ever buying an icebox from the shop. When we first got married we still only had an icebox. He was an Englishman

34:00 used to come of a Saturday morning. An old Yorkshire-man. He used to call me mummy before I was a mummy. I didn't like that one bit. He was a nice old man.

Did you have other things delivered to your house when you were still at home with your parents?

No, except the milkman always delivered in the early days, and the baker. The milkman would come twice a day.

34:30 The milkman came from Sans Souci, Tommy White Dairy. He would come twice a day and he had a big horse and cart and a big container at the back of the seat with fairly bright enamel, like a black with gold etchings on it, and two taps at the back. So there must have been two containers inside that box.

35:00 He would take out the milk can, or jug, and he would turn the tap on and fill it. Sometimes he would bring a dipper, fill that and bring it into the house. A man used to come around selling clothes props for clotheslines before the days of the hills hoist. Just on poles each end of our backyards,

35:30 just wire and you'd pop up the middle and the weight of the clothes with the huge clothes props they called them. It was a sapling from a tree with a forked end to put the wire in and lift it up. They would come round almost every week selling clothes props. Because often they used to break. It seemed to be fairly steady business for those people. The other person that delivered was the rabbit man used to come

36:00 around. We'd buy rabbit. We'd have rabbit about once a fortnight. Baked or fricasseed. Mum used to boil it in milk and white sauce and parsley.

What other kinds of meat would you eat?

We had lots of roast lamb, we would have lamb

36:30 neck chops. My mother would often just stew those with onion, parsley and milk and things like that. We'd have brains a lot. We have lamb's fry a lot. We had tripe occasionally, not so much. It wasn't so popular, but I can remember eating it and enjoying it.

37:00 I just loved brains. To this day, if I see brains on a menu, which is rare, David Jones up here at Miranda, until a few years back they used to serve crumbed brains with bacon and mash for a luncheon. My friend and I would always love it. Mum used to cook brains and make sandwiches. Make that into

37:30 a paste and we liked that. Lots of people wouldn't touch them. I think you call it offal don't you?

Did you have your own veggie garden?

We did, yes. Beans and tomatoes. Dad quite often when there'd be a lot of beans Dad would pick the beans and we'd have a bowl of beans for breakfast, which

38:00 seems a bit unusual, but I can remember having those freshly cooked beans with a bit dollop of butter on for breakfast and just loving it.

Did you have WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK s [fowls]?

We did. Killed them at Christmas time and Easter time. Today you can have chicken any day of the week, but they were more or less saved because they were egg producing. We wanted the eggs for cooking and things. Christmas

38:30 time was killing WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK time. We were always very sympathetic to the WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK s because Dad would take and axe and chop their heads off and the bodies would shudder for a while after the head had gone off. The amenities in our homes weren't what they are now. Dad would have these kerosene drums of hot water and

39:00 you'd dump the WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK into that. That would soften the feather flesh and then you could pluck out the feathers. We used to have to help with that. You put newspaper all over the kitchen table and there'd be feathers everywhere. It used to stick and get it in your nose. After that he'd clean the bird

39:30 and my mother used to make chicken soup our of what they call the giblets. Then dress the chicken. It was always a wonderful meal. We never enjoyed the preparation time of course. We didn't have to do it, I think we might have contributed to it in some way quite happily at times.

Tape 4

00:44 **You mentioned that your mum was more education minded that your dad. Why do you think that was the case?**

I don't really know

01:00 because I find that most difficult to answer accept that she was probably ambitious for us to do well which would be a normal thing for mothers but I know I almost begged to leave school the day I had a 14th birthday but there was not way she would be persuaded. And she I think my mother would like me to have had a full

01:30 business college education which I didn't I only had about a 6 month thing and then I was offered this job of just reading speed courses to the shorthand classes. And I suppose she though that was a good opportunity for me to, but I still started I still had to continue with typewriting and all those sort of things and a little bit of bookkeeping. We called it bookkeeping in those days

02:00 just balance sheets and profit and loss things. But I don't know why because her own family, they were very, my uncle Jack she was with the railway and I think Uncle Tom he was a bookkeeper in a firm somewhere. My mother's eldest sister married and

02:30 but there were no children, and another sister married, she married a very wealthy man who had property around Redfern, shops, he died and there were no children, but he left her a very wealthy woman. But none of them really had, they were not professional people, I don't know what they did, I know my youngest, my second

03:00 youngest, my mother's second youngest sister was a milliner and I think the youngest one just worked in a shoe factory. I don't recall what the three older girls actually did as far as, but there were not, they all spoke well, they had nice homes but they didn't, and they all learned to play music somehow or another, but I'm not

03:30 quite sure how they were given those opportunities either.

What kinds of opportunities your mother wanted you to have with your education?

I don't know but I think she was a little bit stuffy in some ways, I know I was saying to Michael, I wanted to learn tap dancing, and she said, "oh no you are not going to do those bold things,"

04:00 you know they had a very stiff, very conventional, very, they weren't a very, they were sort of a restrained family. I can't answer why she wanted, my brother became a dentist, but he only had the one brother, but he, after war he was given that opportunity through

04:30 post war reconstruction. And as was one of my husband's brothers, my husband's family were all nearly all teachers, his mother came from a property, she was the eldest of 11. And her brothers, five, were all farmers around the Riverina. Sheep and wheat people and four of her sisters all entered the convent, there was a strong religious course there, and

05:00 my husbands father's family were, four of them were teachers and one farmer all were teachers so the education side of, but that's quite divorced from my mothers family which you are trying to analyse so I really don't know why she, but she always liked nice things

05:30 my Dad had a reasonable job. He was more happy go lucky than her, he was interested in the theatre more than he was. I remember them going to, they would go to these newspaper company balls and I remember my mother having a beautiful dress. She used to sew

06:00 I think she aspired to having better things all her life, I don't know. I remember a lovely silver lame dress and pink rose here like the 1920s short skirt and silver shoes and I've got a lovely old photo, I don't know whether you are interested or not, Mum and Dad at Randwick races. Education wise I think she just wanted to do her best for each one of us

06:30 my brother became a dentist my sister, Eunice, she's a dress maker, very, very good dress maker who worked in St James arcade in the City for a very well known dress designer of those times called Zita Barry, who used to make clothes for Sydney's social groups at that time. The Bovril tea people and even Darby Monroe's wife's clothes for the races.

07:00 And my younger sister Mercia who is deceased now she worked at the Shell company as receptionist and typist. That's my immediate family.

So can you tell us about that 6 months at business college?

07:30 Well I started off at the domestic science school at Kogarah, which the domestic science schools in those, which were state schools, were designed to make women more proficient in what at then was their role in life which was a domestic life more than anything else, women got married, not many women returned to the workforce in those days

08:00 but they taught shorthand and typing a bookkeeping from about year, its all different now, from when you were about 12, 13, 14 and millinery, dressmaking, business studies and cookery and they had big classrooms there

08:30 you'd one day cookery a week, just learned to do simple things and then the headmistress from there. I wasn't really a legitimate student, my mother, because I'd done my intermediate at another school, and my mother asked the headmistress if I could do those courses there because I don't really think my parents could afford the business college fees at that time. So

09:00 that's where I went for the first 4 or 5 months, and Miss Bockney said that the Business College Centre, St George Business College centre would take me and I earned my own way for the remainder of my course by doing this speed, apparently I was able to read quite well, and I read the speed classes to the students of a night for two nights a week and they gave me the rest of my education there for the remaining

09:30 6 months of that year. And then that closed down but I had learned my proficiency in those subjects, I had a short hand speed and I had a typewriting skills and I had a little bit of bookkeeping and they offered me a position at the business college and I stoped business college which was located at Hurstville and so I went there and I was engaged in teaching typewriting

10:00 procedure and reading shorthand speed to the students. Apart from that I can't tell you much more about that procedure. But it was interesting I think the domestic science schools of those times they don't, I don't think they exist now, I'm not too sure, but that was the purpose of them.

Were there mainly girls there?

Yes.

What kinds of girls were they?

10:30 Oh just ordinary girls I don't recall I had any strong friendships there. I just ordinary, just I can't explain it really, I don't recall any particular friends so it's hard for me to pinpoint what sort of a person they may have been.

Did you have many strong friendships

11:00 **from around the area?**

Around the area?

Around the area or school?

Yes at school I had this friend that I actually went all my education, up to high school at Hurstville. I've known her since we were 5 years of age, she's 83 now and I'm 82 and we meet every three months. And there were other girls too locally that I used to walk to school with

11:30 Over the years people just seem to disappear from one's life. I'm not sure why but my friend that left school when she was 14 she went to work at [WD & HO] Wills' cigarette factory, where a lot of girls went to work they were wanting to go three because one got very good money from those, and they worked what they called piece work and that was at Raleigh Park

12:00 which is now a lovely big home centre. And I've had friends all the way along but they have sort of disappeared as different phases of my life. I had good friends at the Division of Input and Procurement [DIP], very good friends there for 4 or 5 years and went to weddings and they came to mine.

12:30 Life long friends there is really only this one person left now that I'm close to.

Would you say that Ramsgate was a wealthy area?

No not at all, not in those days and my own home where I lived as a child, my father built that and he lived there with his mother and when he married

13:00 my mother my grandma went to live with one of her daughters. But there was lots of land around and the houses were little fibro homes, it was not an affluent area at all, say like Strathfield or Ashfield even, where Strathfield particularly has lovely gracious homes, Burwood had beautiful homes, Ramsgate was never like that at all, in fact the whole area of Ramsgate, Sans Souci, Dolls Point, Sandringham was

13:30 just quite ordinary working class, small fibro homes. The odd brick home but mostly it was not an affluent area at all. No, it was very different today I can't tell you because the water around has attracted beautiful homes, you know.

Did girls that you knew,

14:00 **what did they want to do with their careers?**

I don't recall any particular career sort of, it was just to get a job any kind of job. There was very, I don't recall any friends that went onto further education like university, none of my friends, in fact university for girls was not quite the thing either

14:30 accept if one had some special ability they might have been fortunate enough to have been chosen from. I know a later friend in life, she is now deceased, but she went to St George High school and she was very bright and she was persuaded against parents' wishes to go

15:00 to university, which she did and she excelled there and became a high school teacher later. But that was St George Girls High School which is still a very good girls school was renowned as an excellent school like Sydney Girls High was it was on the same fame as those, but unless you were exceptional there didn't seem to be anybody to foster an interest in you to think

15:30 you should do this or do that, you know. So we just puddled along I guess for most of our, that early part of our lives and some of us were a little more fortunate than others. I think I was pretty fortunate from my time. And when I was offered the job at the Division of Input and Procurement, well that was a real awakening for me because I had just had the small job in with Mr Affriate in Baptist Street

16:00 and then the teaching job came after that and it was really a highlight, it was quite an exciting time for me.

How did you get that first job with Mr Affriate?

I got that through the business college, the policy of business people then would be if they wanted anybody for employment they would ring the business colleges and send out some girls. You wouldn't always get it, they might send

16:30 two or three girls in, they might send them from another source of training, and so that's how I got that. I was there for about 12 months. That was good for me to be in the city and to be, go to the T & G building on messages and meet all these funny old ladies coming in to have whiter brighter, better skin, you know, it was very good.

Can you tell me about

17:00 **how the interview process went in applying for the job?**

No, I really can't I would imagine it was nothing like it is now. We didn't' present anything like a CV, no you were just given a sheet of paper, a reference from the business college. But another interesting, when I was at the business college that also occurred to me, for me. There was

17:30 a Father Dunley who started up Boys town for homeless boys which sort of came probably inspired by the movie of that name, years back. But Father Dunley was the priest at Sutherland and apparently he had a couple of unfortunate boys and he got moving on this theme, I suppose he thought if they can do it in the movies

18:00 I can do it here. And he bought an old house in Sutherland and he put these boys into it and he had good influential friends, particularly in the racing world and they got behind him and started raising money, that's where they got the funds to buy the property. And then with the publicity of course some more children came, unwanted kids,

18:30 and then something happened about the house, I don't know what it was now. But hey were evicted I think on a council regulation or something and they set up tents at Loftus, up here in National Park and so these boys were camped there and Father Dunley himself stayed with them

19:00 and it was there, he rang from there, he rang St George Business College, Scott's Business College where I was teaching and he was a funny old Irishman and because I was a Catholic the girls said to me he wants someone to help of a weekend and could you do it. So I went out and I started to help, he wanted somebody, cause donations were coming in from various sources for their cause. And

19:30 I started going out there almost regularly of a weekend and I took my life long friend with me and a few other friends at different times. And we would go by train from I get the tram and then the train to Sutherland and then get the train only went every once in a while up to Loftus and Engadine and Heathcote in those days, we'd get out at Loftus and

20:00 walk to the camp and there I had a typewriter, an old Remington Rand and I would type up all his donations and give him some sort of office assistance to keep the records straight because he had to do that with public donations.

Did you have a tent as an office?

Yes

Can you describe the set up?

I'm trying to think if it was the tent first then the house, I think I t might have been the tent first now, and we went from there to the house

20:30 there was a lot of public fuss about it because it was a bit of a unusual principal to be harbouring children. And but that exists today, there is still Boys Town at Engadine and it's a very good school and they teach a lot of trades and things like that and it still harbours children who were forced out of home or had problems

21:00 and the, I think they are the Silesian Fathers and Brothers who run that school now. My daughter Frances was a school teacher at Bosco [St John Bosco College] at Engadine and they are aligned with the same religious order and teaching.

Did you get to know any of the boys?

A couple, Eric Abbott and another fellow who was Eric Miller, I've got photos of those, I don't know where they are I couldn't' find them for you now but we

21:30 used to run, and at Scott's Business College too they used to have socials and after I went out there we had a couple of socials, social dances at the RSL [Returned and Services League] at Hurstville to raise funds for that project. But I knew a few of the boys there, not very well. I was trying to recall some of the racing identities, I can't now for the moment. But they raised a lot of money

22:00 and they got on to building, had the beginnings of what is now quite a good and authentic school for children of wayward means, you know. But that was a very interesting time for me, a bit of fun and bit of diversion, so.

What kinds of trades were they teaching?

Oh electrical trades, plumbing, and cookery, and woodwork things like that.

22:30 **Even when there was just the tents set up?**

Oh no they didn't they couldn't get, they were just harbouring them there it was just like camp file stretchers and things like that. And I remember it rained for the first weekend I was in the house up there and my friends and I we, foodstuff, we didn't buy, people gave there might be farmers sent in boxes of eggs and some of the farmers might send in boxes of tomatoes and I remember we made

23:00 an egg and tomato thingy, looking back it probably wasn't very palatable but it was pouring rain and

some of us poured out this mixture of eggs and bread and tomatoes you know to feed these children. That was a long time ago, Claire.

How old were the boys?

14, 15, 16, yes.

And how old were you at the time?

Well that was when I was at the college

23:30 before I went to the DIP and then I ceased to go there, so I was probably about 20, no 20, 18, 19 20. I was 21 when I was at the DIP I remember that.

When you were talking about your first job, you mentioned the new plasmic wrinkle thing.

24:00 **Was that bogus or was it true?**

Well now I was always, I used to think it was, but it had an stringent content so that it did tighten the muscles but only temporarily sort of thing, you know it was stiff it was like a glue. But that man traded there for years with that. I was only with him

24:30 for about 12 months, and he was an old man I really don't know whether he carried on much after I left. I left there to go back to the business college job which was probably more money for me at that time.

You mentioned your parents were quite observant Catholics. What were their impressions of you working with a Jewish man?

Oh no concerns whatsoever, no talk, I think Mum thought it was pretty good

25:00 that I had a job where I could do some short hand and typing and I got 16 and four pence a week, that was my salary from him and that never changed from the 12 months I was there. I was just a general run around girl; do the typing do the messages and all that. It was growing up period, it was good for me.

What kind of clientele?

25:30 Mostly middle aged to older people and funny that I seem to recall them coming in in twos, I don't know why that would have been, but aged people, women, never men, no women.

What was the city like?

Well the city, this is before the division days when I matured a little bit more

26:00 I guess. Well Sydney was certainly different then, there were small buildings, Bathurst street was full of second hand or pawnshops. The buildings were all low except maybe that T & G which was one of the highest buildings at that time overlooking Hyde Park. Museum Station,

26:30 St James, that was before the city circle railway was built. I would go from Kogarah to Central, Museum and just get out at Museum and walk down to Bathurst Street. Liverpool and, Liverpool and Goulburn Streets I think bordered Anthony Hordern's wonderful old store, most wonderful old building which is now gone

27:00 and Mark Foys which is still there, and now legal offices and courts. But both of those stores had the most wonderful staircases within them and I can remember Anthony Hordern's had one at the back that came out onto Elizabeth street side of building and I

27:30 used to waltz down there and nobody would be around, I'd have myself on a bit, thinking I was going to a ball or something like that, you know and beautiful timber hand railing, lovely it was always a nice feeling to sort of waltz down there, I think there was something like green marble stairs. And Mark Foys had one the Elizabeth street level there, it was a centre staircase but it swayed out each side and

28:00 go up to the next floor. It was just fascinating, a beautiful, beautiful shop and that was before the supermarket principal and people looking around shopping and buying, everything was displayed and my mother used to go to Horderns or Foys, she was a great one for Mark Foys. And she would buy sheeting for beds, she wouldn't buy sheets,

28:30 she'd buy unbleached sheeting by the yard, which was always good quality but a bit harder, not so soft, but she would ring that home and seam the bottom and cut it off and make sheets, and then boil it up and it would make it a bit softer. But that's how she would buy sheeting and she was always buying another hat, she loved hats, she would often come home

29:00 with a new hat. She was a regular shopper at both Horderns and, Anthony Horderns and Foys, Mark Foys. In fact, the gates, the fence we have on our property here was made from the gates of the entrance to the Mark Foys original home in Sydney. And those iron gates which is what they were they

29:30 were all cast iron stood at the side of this house, my husband bought them and somebody, a fellow

delivered them here, they stood a the side of this house and propped it up for about nearly 40 years and we've only had that fence finished 3 years ago. We had a lot of trouble with council with the height but my husband didn't want to diminish the height of the gates. So that was, that came,

30:00 that's the Mark Foys home. Anthony Horderns, I used to love to go there with mother because they had a horse, a huge wooden horse. Great big, the size of a normal horse would be, and it was made of wood, of timber. In those days they used to have a big saddlery department because horses were still used a lot in

30:30 transportation and I used to love to see this horse, they would have a saddle on it and men would buy the saddles there and country gear. People used to come to the city to buy their jumpers and their boots in those days, No R. M. Williams then, he came later. But it was always fascinating to see this big horse there. I don't recall that we ever had lunch out or anything like that very much

31:00 but the city there was David Jones, that was there. And they had the 6th and 7th floor, the 6th floor I think it was, they had a cafeteria and when I worked there, even with Mr Affriates time I would sometimes go there and have my lunch. That was where I first tasted macaroni cheese where they used to serve it in a small little bowl, just one serve already baked in a little casserole dish.

31:30 And you would get that at the cafeteria you would go up and pay up and have a tray, that's what they called it then not a bistro it was a cafeteria. And I would go over to the window side and sit down there and I would look out over St Mary's and Hyde Park while I had my lunch. And in Castlereagh and Phillip, and what's Castlereagh? and Pitt, Pitt Street

32:00 there was Farmers on the corner of Market Street and Buckingham's, and Cursons and McCarthy's, they were all small but rather large department stores,, They have all gone now. They were all for women's wear mainly for women's wear. And up in Oxford Street too, there was a big Buckinghams there and Wynns

32:30 they were huge department stores. But they have all gone; Farmer's became Myers and Grace Bros, which is now what it is.

What were the differences between the department stores?

Well Anthony Horderns and Mark Foys were down the southern end of the city. They were very similar in what they sold to

33:00 all people I think probably Anthony Horderns was maybe one that, the saddlery department, I don't think you'd find that at Mark Foys, but you could buy furnishings there and a lounge suites and all, my mother's time that's where most of the people did most of their shopping. Mark Foys or the

33:30 other stores down in Pitt Street, they would also sell dresses and coats and hats, but they were smaller stores, McCarthy's, Buckinghams, Cursons, was lovely store. And they all had lovely display windows, women's wear primarily stockings, if you wanted a pair of stockings then they would put them down on a perspex, they would open the packet

34:00 slide them down on the perspex, length of the leg kind of thing and see if there were no flaws in it. And then they would wrap them up and sell them to you. And if you wore gloves, women wore gloves nearly all the time, but these smaller stores seemed to, they used to do a big trade in it, and handbags and glasses and scarves and things like that, underwear. But frocks too, but there just seemed to be a lot of choice

34:30 in those days. If you wanted a pair of gloves, again there were like a hand that they would put the glove on, or you would put your hand up like this and they would put the glove on and smooth all the fingers down, and if it suited you you'd by it and away you'd go. And I remember my Mum buying shirts at Anthony Horderns for Dad, and they would bring out boxes of shirts. You wouldn't just go and look through them like one does today

35:00 you'd say what you wanted and they would bring out maybe a dozen they'd open them all up and fold them and put them back again. And after you had made your choice, they would show you everything; it was very much a personal service.

Would you stand around to be served?

You'd have a high seat like a stool that usually a bentwood, I've got one downstairs, like a stool height, with a tiny little bentwood back and

35:30 they'd be fronting all the counters, you would sit down and be attended to. It was all very dignified and nice.

Where some department stores more exclusive or expensive than others?

Well probably, I think Cursons, David Jones was always regarded as a little bit more, Wynns in Oxford Street and Buckinghams, they were the less expensive things of that where families would go

36:00 to provide for children's wear but anything with a little bit of style about it, the shops in Pitt Street were probably more expensive there. There were shops, very exclusive little shops in a street called Rowe

Street, which ran beside the old hotel Australia which is now no longer there, and Ushers was another big hotel. But in Rowe street there were, there might be

36:30 a couple little, I think Peeps was a very exclusive men's wear store down there, and exclusive milliner and shoe maker, I don't know that Rowe Street is even still there now, I'm not sure.

What about the Strand Arcade?

Strand arcade was always there in my memory, yes, and always beautiful, but again its

37:00 the shops weren't what they are now. I think there might have been shoe shops and I think even chemist shops there might have been there. A milliners, millinery shops were a lot more around than, of course we are coming back to the hats now, but there was a period when almost disappeared, you know from the

37:30 ladies apparel area.

When you described the macaroni cheese, was that quite a rare thing for pasta and Italian food to be available?

I don't think so, it was just that my mother never cooked thing like pasta. And this for me

38:00 was a new thing and I don't suppose many families did cook pasta, but certainly macaroni cheese and sago and things like that, they were dishes that, sago, Mum used to cook sago pudding quite a lot and put sago in with stewed fruit. But I could never ever recall her cooking a pasta dish and the cheese, the combination of the cheese and the sauce I was probably introduced to it by somebody but I just raved

38:30 over it, you know, so that became a regular, almost a mission of mine when I would go there I could have macaroni cheese. And that floor of David Jones too they have the cafeteria one end and the southern end of that floor was a restaurant, a la carte restaurant and it was always very, very nice and I think I went there once only, but

39:00 that was patronised by more affluent people and it always had beautiful damask cloths on the table and in later years when I think of the DIP they had a entertainment centre there, at the stage and they used to have these water fountains, they called it the dancing waters which were coloured. And I think you've probably seen it elsewhere where the water's spurt

39:30 up at great heights and music plays and that became a form of entertainment there. But that was ballroom of David Jones and they used to have these big balls there. They have a lovely staircase there at the end of that floor, just as one gets out of the lift. I don not know whether it is still there or not. And there was a gallery level there, they used to have nice art gallery shows too, painting and things. But I remember going to, my friend made

40:00 her debut there. And they, the girls came down the stairway into the ballroom there, and I went with her parents for that.

Tape 5

00:32 **Back to the wartime experience.**

The end of the war?

The beginning. When was the first time you heard Australia was at war?

I can't say when I was first aware of it, but because my father was in the

01:00 newspaper business we had lots of newspapers. I think somewhere during the early time we did get a radio, a Mickey Mouse one, it was the first one. We had a big one in the corner with all kinds of, a great big box thing. I think it was a little bit frightening. It was an unknown quantity really to us.

01:30 I don't recall my parents saying a great deal about it except at the beginning of the war my brother was, he's 80 in February, as he was a little big younger than I was. Therefore perhaps not thinking about it at the onset of the war, but as it went on for nearly 5 years, he did get caught up in it and he goes

02:00 to join the air force. I think my change of employment, the place where I went to work, that had been established some 12 months before I went there. I don't' recall a lot of discussion at home except we probably got noticed about blacking out our homes and certain safeguards

02:30 that were necessary such as putting papered up windows, just newspaper, which was pretty unsightly. We had lace curtains that were glued to the windows. In the meantime we just carried on. I don't know that we ever thought that we'd have bombs flying around us or anything like that because we were such an isolated country.

03:00 We'd never had wars in this country. We still haven't had wars so to speak, in this country. I don't think there was a great impact on our everyday life except with the onset of rationing with foodstuffs and clothing. That was probably the most significant change in our life. We had to economise on the

03:30 quantities as well as costs of those things. Everybody in the family got a coupon book. Sugar, tea, milk I think still came to us fairly regularly without restriction. Certainly clothing. The other thing, there was a great deal of persuasion for people to knit scarves and balaclavas and socks

04:00 for the services. Navy blue or khaki or whatever. My husband, he was not then my husband, we were just acquaintances really, he was not quite 21 and he wanted to join the air force. He was in the police cadets. He wanted to join the air force,

04:30 gut his mother would not sign the official papers, 'cos she'd been left a widow. The four other boys were all in the army at that stage. He was the 5th son. Ultimately the other two boys were also drafted into the army services.

05:00 he was a bit keen on the air force and she would not sign because he was a breadwinner too at that stage. He was in the police cadets. That's what I met him through. He was doing secretarial, shorthand and typing was part of his cadet training. So he went into a munitions

05:30 factory called Julian Hansford somewhere in the Sydenham area. They made shells. See up there at the end that pointed cone? That was part of the wartime equipment that firm of engineers was employed for the war years to making. I think they call that the "Cone".

06:00 The very heavy thing. So he was in the army for a while, but then left, because he applied to join the air force, but they wouldn't accept him without his mother signing his papers. So then he had to protect himself by being in what they called a protected area of employment for somewhere about 12 months. Then

06:30 when he turned 21 he went into the air force. He just left and they could do that apparently. Then he was around for a little while at Temora, Mallala in South Australia, home and then he was away for 4 1/2 years. My own life at that stage, shortly after he left I think I then went to the division of procurement.

07:00 I was younger than he was by about 18 months, but I had my 21st birthday in that wartime department. There I was for the next 3 or 4 years. On the home front not a great deal changed except our First Aid instruction and some sort of an awareness there. Reading the newspapers.

07:30 I can remember reading a lot about General Douglas MacArthur, but then again that must have been towards to latter part of the war years because America didn't come into it until after Pearl Harbour. We used to read a lot about Winston Churchill and Mr Chamberlain. I can't recall any other significant names of those people. There were deals

08:00 going on with Mr Adolf Hitler and Chamberlain. Chamberlain I think, if I remember correctly, seemed to let down the side. Then Churchill was brought in to succeed him. Details and policies and that I don't recall.

What was in the coupon book and why did you get them?

Because of restricted supply of most goods.

08:30 Everybody had a coupon book. They were just small books of about 3 inches by 4-5 and every page was a number of coupons. A pair of stockings you'd have to pay three coupons, you had to pass them out. So it was a measure of control. It was shoes, almost everything.

09:00 **It didn't matter how much money you had?**

No. You just paid whatever; everybody had to part with coupons. There was a black market people were somehow getting extras from here and there, but everybody had a coupon book. So if there were families where there were numbers it was probably a little bit more beneficial because there were more

09:30 supplies able to come into those homes. They were bigger families; they all had their coupon book.

What do you know of the black market?

Not very much, but I know it existed. I used to read about it. People would say, "You can get that without coupons, but you have to pay." There was money involved where you could get things without coupons. Probably an excess of what things

10:00 were worth. It did exist yes.

What happened to the expensive items in the store, I presume you couldn't buy with coupons?

I can't remember whether say one bought a yard of material that was so many coupons at a certain price. If it was more expensive I don't recall that one had to pay more coupons

10:30 for a more expensive item. I think it was just the item itself that cost the coupon rather than the quality or the price that might have been applied to it.

Did money therefore become irrelevant?

Money? Yes, I suppose people would have had more money during the war years.

11:00 **Did you still use money on your day to day events?**

Yes, I had to buy my train ticket to the city and pay my bus fares and I used to make my own clothes and buy different things. There was a milliner in the city, sort of a wholesale house where people used to go and buy stores and gum

11:30 arabic and ribbons and make their own hats. A lot of that went on during the war. Maybe it was less coupon value to make one's own things than to buy a finished product. I can't recall the difference or the balance there. We never seemed to want, but I never had a lot of money.

12:00 I always seemed to be waiting for the next pay packet. In those days you were given a pay packet, a little envelope with money in it. It didn't go to the bank as it does now for most people by check. You were given a little pay packet with a statement of your tax and your overtime if you got overtime.

12:30 A lot of the men that worked in the high profile corporate jobs, they were also kind of in a different sort of industry for the duration of the war. I would think there were some, say in the Julian Hansford engineering factory too, from other areas where they would have had no connection with engineering in their

13:00 previous occupations, but there seemed to be a policy of trying to use talented, experienced people, mainly men. Women weren't given lots of opportunities there. That's over 50 years ago. 60 years ago nearly.

Did you hear stories of men being given white feathers for not being in the war?

People that had been?

13:30 Oh white feathers? Yes, I used to hear, but I knew nobody personally to whom that would have happened. There were lots of stories. One used to read about them in the paper. There were quite a lot of what they called 'conscientious objectors' too. People who didn't believe in the principle of war. I knew nobody personally whom that might have happened to, no.

14:00 **Did the war seem distant from you and your family when it started in Europe?**

Seem distant? Oh yes. I think we would have liked something to happen almost to feel it was real almost. It certainly did seem very distant. Other

14:30 than news papers and radio. There used to be the Fox Movietone News, but we didn't have television, so therefore that area of news and media information didn't come to you other than through newspapers or with the Fox Movietone News if you went to the movies on a Saturday. They would always prefix the film showing with a news segment from Fox Movietone

15:00 News. There you would see some of the things that were happening. Bombings and Elizabeth and George V, the Royal Family walking among the ruins and things like that.

Were you hearing news about Tobruk and other battles?

Yes.

What were you hearing?

That

15:30 El Alamein and Himmler, Goebbels and these people were a figure in the news segments. I can't recall the particular battles they were in, but they were very prominent names, those German generals. We did hear about the other Middle Eastern areas of combat and see pictures of them too.

Was there much propaganda that the

16:00 **government was trying to educate you with?**

There may have been, but I think I was probably too naïve or not understanding of it. I used to hear Dad talking a bit about things like that saying one didn't know what to believe or how much of it was propaganda that he would use. I don't think my interest was

16:30 half as strong as it should have been.

How did the war change for you when Japan entered it?

With Japan coming into the war that was a little bit more frightening, because all of a sudden Sydney was flooded with American personnel in their brown uniforms and lots of gold and all that sort of thing. Hundreds of them everywhere. They seemed to be all around

17:00 the city. In the shops and in places where one might go to have a sandwich. We didn't have cafes or coffee shops the way we do now. We would go into the city and the old David Jones was probably a pretty popular venue for people to go for light meals. The Hotel

17:30 Australia was a very social spot for more high profile people. Then there were night clubs in Martin Place. Prince's, Romano's, they were operated by a fellow called Jim Bendroht. He was an American, but he'd lived here for many years. He also started the Trocadero

18:00 which was a very famous dance hall on the side near the Regent Theatre near Town Hall. They've knocked the Regent down I think. There's a whole lot of theatres there now. It's a big movie centre in George Street. All of that was the Trocadero. It was a huge place.

18:30 A rather wonderful foyer which had a big round seat in the midst of which they always seemed to have flowers reaching up towards the ceiling. People would meet there. Wall to wall carpeting was just coming in too in those times. They had functions there. They used to have

19:00 dances. I think people could go there. They also ran a lot of balls, even debutante balls still seemed to go on in Australia and many of them were held there at the Trocadero, which were quite formal occasions. The leader of the orchestra there was a fellow, Frank Coughlan. I can remember him, a rather

19:30 tall think man with a rather sandy moustache. He had a big orchestra. Something like 50 instrumentalists in it. He was quite a fixture there at that centre for social occasions. The other prominent leader of music in Sydney at the time was Jim Davidson who used

20:00 to play, he had a wonderful orchestra. His orchestra was known as the Jim Davidson and the ABC Dance Band. They used to somehow connect it with the ABC. They used to play at concerts. There was still the Sydney Symphony Orchestra as distinct from the ABC Dance Band. Jim Davidson played at what they called

20:30 the Palais Royal which is opposite Sydney Boys High School in the Royal Park area, now taken over by Foxtel. That was the one on the corner of whatever that road is there, I don't know the name of it. It's the prominent road that takes you into the Foxtel area. They used it for the Royal Agricultural Society property.

21:00 There used to be wonderful dances there. I didn't go to those so much, but later they made an ice rink of it and I went there many times then. Another ice rink in Sydney was the Glacierium down near Railway Square. That was probably the most popular. A lot of early skating stars were born down at

21:30 the Glacierium. That's all gone now, too.

Sounds like a lot of money was spent developing these places.

During the war. The Glacierium was established, and certainly the Royal Agricultural Society buildings were established, but there were moved to keep people busy and entertained. The Glacierium was an ice rink long before the war,

22:00 not the other one. The night clubs in Martin Place, Romano's was an old established night club. I was only ever there about twice in my whole time. Prince's was set up by the man that built the Trocadero, this American Joseph Bendroht. There was another night club well established also pre-war

22:30 along Macquarie Street called Carl Thomas. That was actually over water at that time. They had a floor there where you could almost see the water sometimes as you were dancing. You'd see the water swishing. It was built on the, that's all on that bent along point, which is now all different.

So some of these places were built for the Americans when

23:00 **they came?**

No, they would have been built before the Americans came. The Americans certainly frequented those places. Carl Thomas and Romano's were well established before the war. Prince's was set up probably some time early in the war. I've forgotten, I wouldn't like to be quoted on dates because I'm sure to make a mistake.

How did the American men compare with the Australian

23:30 **men?**

I think young girls like myself were all a little bit captivated with this Hollywood image you'd almost call it of the beautiful uniforms. Certainly our military soldiers didn't come up in the same glossy image that the Americans presented.

24:00 I met a few. I remember we had a night at Carl Thomas one night with some girls from the office. We met some Americans there. One fellow I became friendly with and took him to my home. Then he wrote. My husband to be was away then. He was a friendly nice boy.

24:30 he wrote and then I didn't hear any more. Then I got a letter from the American authorities telling me he was deceased in Okinawa or somewhere. I was no family connection and probably the only reason I could ever explain that away was that he probably had a letter with my address he'd received, but for no other reason. It was just a passing

25:00 friendly acquaintance. Just 2 or 3 visits to my home and he was just gone. I didn't have a great deal of involvement with any American. The Americans that worked in our building, they had a full floor to themselves there they only came to the 6th floor for consultation with the director up there. I never had to work for them or anything like that. They were there because of the

25:30 lease lend agreement with the United States.

Share with me the custom of bringing a soldier home to meet your parents. Why would you bring the American home to meet your parents?

I don't know, but I think my mother was probably pretty hospitable in that way. I might have mentioned him.

26:00 I had no fear of taking anybody home. I always felt Mum and Dad were quite good like that. I had lots of friends come in and out of the home over the years. I probably said, "Would you like to come out home sometime?" If they were boys of nice solid family interests that was what they wanted really. I think he came twice to our place. That was all. For a meal and

26:30 he never stayed the night or anything like that.

Did many girls bring Americans to their home?

Yes, and lots of girls married Americans too. Some of them were quite fleeting marriages. None of my particular friends never seemed to get caught up with any permanent connection, no.

What stories did you hear of these fleeting

27:00 I think I read more about them rather than have first hand contact with them. In the paper in later years there were many brides that were left here stranded. They got married and they never came back again. Some did go and then things weren't they, I think we all looked at Americans because of movies at that stage of our young life. Australia was pretty

27:30 much away from all that, from London and Paris and all those cities. We were such a young country then. I think movies brought to us another concept, another kind of world. Lots of young people would have been very influenced by this image of going to America, going to Hollywood. I think we're still a bit the same in a way. I think at that stage

28:00 that all the men hovering around the city, a lot of people didn't like them at all. A lot of people didn't like them. I think that was probably a bit unfair. There's been good and bad everywhere; isn't there? Have to be choosy, have to try and select your friends.

Why didn't a lot of people like them?

I think that

28:30 a lot of Americans can be noisy people. I think there's a lot of showmanship about a lot of American people. I think people who are a little bit more reserved would sense that was the showmanship side coming to the surface and how deep were they underneath?

29:00 A lot of them were quite flashy, but I still think it was a good thing they came into the war as far as this country's concerned. I still think we have an allegiance to them, but I'm not sure that I go along with the current politics of this country in the subservience that the present government seems to have in that direction. I think Australia's grown up.

29:30 I think we can speak for ourselves these days.

How did the Australian men cope with their jealousy of the Americans?

I suppose there were somewhere there was a good deal of friction. I think that some girls at the division I know suddenly the friendships with the local boys were no more because they had a

30:00 passing interest in the American personnel. That was downstairs; they got to know a couple of them men from down there. Personally I didn't have any problems there at all.

You said their uniforms looked good. Was it army, navy air force?

They all seemed to have the same sort of, it was like a khaki

30:30 brown jacket with fawn pants. They all seemed to wear loads of medals and brass on their epaulettes. Some of the maybe underlings or whatever the less, they wore khaki, your colour pants there and forage caps with casual shirts, all the same colour uniform

31:00 with a forage cap. Maybe the others now I'm trying to recall were in the officer classification.

Were many events organised for the Americans that you were involved with?

No.

Balls and dances and things like that?

They organised, yes, they had,

31:30 in Elizabeth Street they had an Australian American Association club set up there principally for the Americans' convenience, but they called it Australian American Association. I went there a couple of times. I can't think what happened there. Things don't always have to happen; sometimes you just go and have a meal. We didn't go to bars or anything like that in those days.

32:00 My first drink was a Pimm's Number 1. I remember taking that with some feeling of apprehension wondering what it was gonna do to me. The girls didn't frequent the bars and hotels like they do now. In fact, in hotels, going back, women weren't allowed in certain places at all. It was strictly the domain of men. That's all changed

32:30 now too.

Did you come into contact with American money?

I don't recall that at all, sorry.

Were the Americans issued with coupons?

I think so. They had coupons here. They couldn't buy things without they had coupons. They were all issued with coupons. They were issued with everything, Americans.

33:00 So my husband tells me. Everything.

Your husband now, Cyril, was he "your man" when he went away to the war?

He was a very good friend. We hadn't talked of marriage then, but he wrote and I wrote. I think our affection became more intensified

33:30 during our letters. When he came back I felt I couldn't meet him. I don't suppose I wanted to intrude. His mother met him. Came from Melbourne to Sydney by train. He hadn't seen her for 4 1/2 years. He tells a lovely story about meeting her on Central Station. She'd aged considerably. She had a pretty hard life. Then

34:00 he came to see me one afternoon about two days later at my home. We took it from there.

During the war you were single and available?

Yes.

Did you meet any other interesting men?

Yes, I had a few friends. I remember going out with a very nice young Australian fellow who was in the air force. He came from Manly.

34:30 Just a few times. Then one of the men I worked with, Mel Timms, he died from a tumour in the brain, but he was just a really good friend. I could ask him to take me here and he could do the same. He used to come to my home, I used to go to his home. I think apart from the odd outing of a number of girls and boys together and locally,

35:00 there was a football club in the area where I lived. There were lots of boys, nearly all younger than me at that stage, but my Dad was the manager of the football team. All these things still continued to go on. We used to have lots of outings there. I'd go with…some of the boys would even

35:30 call for me, younger than I was, just all good friends. There was so many of us. A couple older. We'd go to a dance hall, the Pacific Hall, which used to be packed. Sometimes I'd go with girlfriends. The girls would sit around and the boys would all be a the back door and eyeing the girls, taking their pick. It wasn't a very nice way. I think they still do that. They just,

36:00 quite brazenly walked passed and then choose a girl. If you were left sitting there it was too bad. It happened to me a couple of times. They were really good nights with a good band. A lady, Mrs Sharky, used to play the piano and belt it out. It was good. Three Step, Jazz, Waltz, Foxtrot, Tippety Tap. Round a ring. Not like they dance now. All keep going round and round.

36:30 Probably found that really funny.

What training had you had in dancing up to that point?

I didn't have much except there was a dance school at Newtown and my close friend used to go there.

She learned to dance. I've forgotten the

37:00 name of it now. They had ballroom dancing classes there and Cathleen used to go of a Saturday afternoon, she and her sister. She taught me how to dance a lot. Then there were the Keating Dance, I've forgotten his Christian name. There was Keating Dance Studio too. That was another well known place to teach people how to dance.

37:30 I think I picked it up mainly, but my friend showed me a few things how to do things. My parents used to dance anyway. They used to go to balls. My father took me to one of his newspaper balls once. I think my mother wasn't well and they had this dress made to go with my father. It was my first big event of any kind of grandeur.

38:00 Getting a long dress. I had this blue lace frock made with 14 bows down the front of it. They were velvet. Even before the start I think I had all the velvet bows pinned on the front of it to see what it was gonna look like.

Did you practise dancing with your father at home?

Never. No.

38:30 I think a lot of people just picked up dancing really. Some men, there's a St George Leagues Club, I go there and meet with some friends whom I worked with later in life. They have lovely music there. Old records or whatever, tapes. They're elderly people there, perhaps not when they're 80, but mid-70s, it's

39:00 so nice to sit and watch the men and women dance. Some of the men are wonderful dancers. I enjoy that. We go and have dinner there and just sit and watch the older people dance. I don't dance now. I think I'd fall over if Cyril twirled me around the room.

During the war did you buy new dresses?

I made my own and

39:30 I can't recall ever buying an outer garment. My mother sowed. We were taught to do those things. I used to embroider doilies and tablecloths and things like that. I'm not sure now whether one paid more for a ready made garment or one that you bought some pieces to put it together with. They were all coupons, yes.

40:00 All coupons for a long, long time. Even while I was married in '47, the war was over in '45, and when I bought the material for my dress my sister gave me some of her coupons, I had some, and my mother, and the lass who provided the material for me, which was from Farmers, which later became Myers and then became Grace Brothers in the city, my

40:30 friend there, she was in the fabric department and she gave me some too and probably put a few yards extra on the dress material when she cut it off for me.

Tape 6

00:39 **In respect to the social scene, how did the Americans change things?**

You mean in the style of dancing

01:00 **And the music?**

Well they did have a different of movement and they tended more to hold you very close physically, and they just tended to just sort of move. Of course the jitterbug area also came into popularity somewhere around about that time and I don't

01:30 know that they were, you would see the odd couple get into a corner and swing it around like that but mostly the Americans were just movement people like not even as, not as energetic as the kids are today with their dancing. And it was just like shuffling around and not even doing any steps, just movement with the body moving with the beat of the music

02:00 you know rather than doing any highfalutin physical movements, they didn't do the jazz waltzes for instance like we would do them. That wasn't their scene at all.

And how did the Australian girls deal with being drawn closer?

I think probably a lot of them quite liked it, it was a bit different, the Australian boys were always young men, I think we were more reticent about that physical contact then

02:30 than what Americans were, but I don't' recall a lot of comment on that actually.

Any comments about the Americans?

Oh yes some girls found them good fun. There were two girls that I worked with at the division, one married an air force fellow and another one was very beautiful but she

03:00 enjoyed going here and going thee and she just seemed to be, I'd say she was quite happy to go along with a lot of Americans.

Did any girls that you knew get themselves into trouble? Pregnant?

No, not that I know, no.

03:30 This lass I speak of may have been headed in that direction but I think she may have, she was a very clued up young lady, and she used to talk about her Mum and Dad having separate holidays. They understood one another, Dad would go off and have his separate holiday and, so she was a product of a family that was somewhat different to my family, where we were more conservative and lived by the rules

04:00 so to speak.

I take it Negroes also would have come in? The American blacks?

Well they were there, I didn't really meet any of the American blacks but there were quite a lot of them in the American cervices and I don't recall any

04:30 I think maybe looking back there were some probably pretty strict regulations on contact with the staff in our building and communicating with staff on the lease lend floor, the American they had a whole floor in the building. And other than passing in the life I never really saw a great deal of communication between the American personnel and our staff, except at a higher level where they would go up to the

05:00 Directors office, but there didn't seem to be a lot of communication between the staff of the Input Procurement and the American personnel at all.

Can you tell me what your role was at the department?

Well my particular, first of all I was in what they called a typing pool there, which is about 20 girls

05:30 and you'd be assigned work from the different areas of the department. And just do that work or be called out to take notes here and there. But then if you were there after a period of time they probably they usually became assigned to a particular project officer and that was what happened to me and so I left that typing pool and first

06:00 of all I worked with a man on the same floor. I think he had something to do with the sugar committee, there were lots of control of sugar going out from Australia. His name was John Bunting and he was a very gentle nice man, he later became Sir John Bunting and he became Australia's trade commissioner in London. And

06:30 then he had another girl working for him and I went up to the 6th floor which was the top floor and I worked for Mr Kirk, he was the shipping priorities manager and he was in some sort of control of registration of British ships. And sugar exports whatever

07:00 the assignments, I've forgotten the word now, the, it's a naval term, but whenever there was a big movement going out with the any kind of product on it, these things were, Australia was pretty free across the pacific to the united states and also one of the functions of the department but not my particular department but one of my friends worked for a fellow, there was rent control also

07:30 and issue that became, it was an item under the responsibilities of input procurement controlling rents in the country. So and that was what I did and I just worked for him and took messages and typed things. And then

08:00 when the minister would come to town from Canberra, he was in the Senate, Senator Keen he would be sometimes very busy and his secretary Jimmy Dunevan would send up and get a couple of girls from Input and Procurement and I would often go down. Once they got to know you they would ask for you again, you know, even Mr Moore's secretary Lillian Right, she was a very efficient person, she would often go down and set up a whole thing and then she

08:30 call me to go down and I would work for a couple of days down there in the Customs House building in the corner in the Senators room there and that was always a bit more thrilling because lots of important people were coming and going all the time down there, you know. I can't recall the content of every little thin I typed out but and you'd work back down there until he was busy and he'd go back down to Canberra when

09:00 thing had settled down a bit. but lots of girls were called upon to fill gaps there when there was lot of pressure. And some of the personnel on that floor, they came from Melbourne at intervals and spend time there. A Mr Watha and a Mr Harrison, they all had different offices, Mr Woodrow

09:30 this fellow Bert Woodrow, he, if anybody was busy and somebody wasn't so busy well you'd have to pitch in and help, you know different areas so you really got to know quite a few other bosses other

than the man who you were specifically assigned for. But this fellow Bert Woodrow he was one of the fellows post war who towards the end of the war set up the BRW magazine, the Business Review Weekly magazine and

10:00 they all seemed to be pretty clever fellows, you know, fellows who in those days had university training and had bachelor of economics or arts or something like that, they were all very qualified people. And one of then Joe Murphy he was at University with my husbands second eldest brother, they were quite good friends so that was

10:30 a nice encounter for me too, bit I wasn't' married then, later when I married Cyril this fellow Joe Murphy was quite pleased about it when he heard about it. And Mr Skidmore he was from the Royal Agricultural Society. He was the secretary of that the secretary General or whatever, he was a man with this entrepreneurial flair of organization and doing things, that was his job for the RAS and

11:00 he's the one that organised the United Nations ball in 1944, just before the end of the war. But he was seconded there like many of these other people were because they had…I suppose they were experienced business men.

You talked about your work in the renting area. Is that putting a ceiling on rent?

11:30 **So rent couldn't keep going up?**

Yes there was control of rent. That wasn't' my department thought, but I know it was a function of the division, that was one of the things but I didn't work on that, no.

Do you know why they wanted to control rent?

Well I think there was very limited accommodation because there was no building going on during the war, very little of it and I think accommodation, as I said when I was married we had the opportunity

12:00 of a house and we dropped everything else to get possession of that home because people paid lots of money to get a key, to get a shelter and I think during he war there was fair bit of profiteering going on in that area where people had property and people were clambering, see

12:30 a lot of people, young people were still getting married and a lot of them lived in the home of one parent, one set of parents or the other until they found their way out. But that was quite a common thing, so when our opportunity came it was just a marvellous to think we could have a little house of our own, but he rent control was quite a big, it was a very strict discipline at the time

13:00 **In this particular role, how did you feel a apart of the war effort?**

Well I don't really know how to answer that except that I loved my time there because I felt I felt I'd moved up from being, I'd moved up to being

13:30 something more significant, more interest for me and I loved being called upon to do jobs. And it gave me a feeling of being wanted or self-importance almost, I really really liked that and if the director ever looked outside his door which he hardly ever did, but if he looked out and said,

14:00 "How are you, Miss Stannard?" he wouldn't use my first name then, I'd say, "Oh Mr Moore said hello to me today" he was a big figure head, and I think you know that I looked up to all these people so to be part of moving around in the midst of them all was just made me feel good I suppose

Given that Second World War opened u opportunities for women to work,

14:30 **how did that affect their confidence?**

I don't know, that's a long time ago, I cant remember my feelings, I know I used to walk from work there, these men, a lot of these men I worked with a had a great deal of admiration

15:00 for them and they were fine people, and they were, there was Mr Woodrow, Bob Dury, and there was another fellow, Arthur Fitzgerald, they would walk, at lunch time they would all go together those men, tall short, walk up through Hyde Park, go to lunch, I'm not sure now where they went to lunch, but I used to see them and I used to think they were wonderful fellows and they were, they

15:30 were indeed and then I'd walk up that same path and go to David Jones to have a sandwich or a macaroni cheese and look at the shops and then walk back to work. And then of a night when I left work I'd walk up through Hyde Park through Williams Street and I'd walk through St Mary's Cathedral, I'd climb up all those steps, I'd walk down the aisle of the cathedral, I'd walk out the side door

16:00 and go to St James station and go home. And sometimes I know, maybe I'd be troubled, I'm not sure now, but quite often I would just sit in that back of that big cathedral and not think about anything. And to this day I like to do that, any church, the other day I went to St Vincent's I walked from the Cross to St Vincent's and there is that lovely old church there at Kings Cross, I think its St James

16:30 very, very old, I think its Anglican. It harbours all kind of people and I'd never been there and I thought I am going in here today, a wonderful stain glass windows I just walked up the alter, turned around and walked back and out, lovely just beautiful. But one of those men AC Fitzgerald his father worked with

my father at the same newspapers. Arthur Fitzgerald is older than I am. He's about 84 now

17:00 he's on the board of St Vincent's hospital he had been now for years. After the war he went to Caltex, became quite big time, he's also on the board of the National Gallery, he's also on the board of the AJC, you name it he's everywhere. I haven't seen him for years, his daughter; he has a daughter a doctor at St Vincent's, a specialist

17:30 when we were growing up he used to have parties at his home and I used to go there and we used to play all sorts of silly games in those days.

Your mum encouraged you to stay at school. Were you glad you did that?

Oh absolutely, and my life now with that of my friend

18:00 she's a wonderful girl, but her life, and yet she's reared three brilliant kids herself, but I know if she had had those small opportunities which did come my way, that she would have had a different, she's so quiet she can't believe the kind of life that I've led or that I continue to lead cause I've got a big family with all my grandchildren and life is very full, its really wonderful. We keep

18:30 gong its just tremendous, and cause she had only got 3 grandchildren, I've got 12 it makes a bit of a difference. But I know it was my education, which is the point that you are trying to establish, which was not an extended education by any means, it was very, very small time, intermediate and then a business course, it doesn't get you very far today but it did get me

19:00 it opened a few doors from me. And fortunately I seemed to have had just a little bit of good luck along the way with each of these opportunities.

Your particular work. What was the link with Melbourne?

Well they had an input a division down there too, it was part of the customs and there might be some consignment of desiccated coconut or

19:30 something that was going to be on a ship to Melbourne and coming through there. Al those things were sort of taped or accounted for, small things, spices, all sorts of things. A lot of the work was marked secret, I wouldn't tell you now because that's all in the past, but a lot of it at the time was either secret or different classification

20:00 that you couldn't speak about and I perhaps in retrospect a lot of it was overemphasised a the time because there was this war thing there and I don't; think a lot of people quite knew the boundaries of how far you could go so everybody was extra cautious about things that perhaps didn't really matter.

You mentioned earlier

20:30 **that one day a week you would have to stay after work for a machine?**

A teleprinter

Why was Melbourne sending information up via the teleprinter?

Well the communications were open on the teleprinter machine it was like a computer of today almost. From 8 o'clock until 11 o'clock at night and they would close down Melbourne and

21:00 Adelaide, but there was great deal of communication between Melbourne and Sydney all day long. There were two permanent teleprinter operators during the day and then of a night there were two, one was mainly to keep the other company on the job until the later hour, but probably only one operator was really needed of a night but you'd be doing other things as well as operating the machine, you know you just operated it like a typewriter. But they, it was a

21:30 constant flow of messages back and forwards all the time, all the time, night and day, until it shut down at night which was 11 o'clock. Then I'd walk across the park, mind you at that hour, which I wouldn't do today, and get the train home and get out of the train at Kogarah and get the steam tram, or trolley bus had taken over then. And then I'd walk down 5 streets to my home.

22:00 **Would you share a few examples of what they were sending up through the teleprinter?**

Well you might, I put down Kirk to TB Marr, the time, date, contents, shipping assignment certain number, departure SS and then there would be a code for the ship number, confirm on arrival, maybe something like that

22:30 I've got a few teleprinter pictures there but they are just really personal messages, they weren't they're not work messages.

So the teleprinter was connected to phone line?

Yes, like you'd type it, I'd be typing it, or the girls would be typing the message in Sydney it would be coming through in bits and pieces and

23:00 sometimes it would stop while maybe they've had an interrupt and after a while it would resume, but eventually you'd get a typed thing on a role of paper that just kept coming through, you'd have to change the roll of paper when it ran out sort of thing for the incoming, also for the outgoing. But it just came through on a print message like, I don't know anything about computers for instance so I can't make any comparison, but it always intrigued me

23:30 that one could be communicating in this verbal way on a piece of paper in Melbourne, and they could respond, sometimes there would be conversations. We'd even when we weren't busy we'd be having a chat about something, did you see something or other, something or other and you'd get a response immediately. I think phone calls then were quite expensive more so than they would have been today, but with machinery that was what

24:00 they used and a lot of the stuff was for the director too, that was why it was on the floor, it was next to his office. If it came specifically for him we would just go straight through with it and he worked late of a night most nights. He then became the first boss of Coca Cola which was just getting off on the trade its on today, he was the Australian boss, I've got a piece of paper that says he's just left the job going to be Coca Cola manager, I cut that out of the paper.

24:30 So they were interesting people and then after that when it started to break up with h cessation of the war, they no longer required all these people some of them were shunted back into their own respective areas of work, Commonwealth or government departments, there was aircraft production, which was out

25:00 at Mascot. Mr Collins was the boss out there and I don't know what they did out there, but I went out there for about 9 months and worked for him and then I was sent back into the division because the Commonwealth government were setting up the Australian National Airlines commission was established to create an

25:30 Australian airline. We had Ansett at that time but they wanted to set up a national airline, see there were no planes then, or just a few. Qantas existed and Ansett did but for instance all the personnel coming home from he war zones were coming home by ship and my husband had to wait 6, 8 months before he could come home

26:00 after the war. So there were no airplanes in the same commercial routes that they have today and so they set up this commission Mr Wathan and Mr Walter Harrison were the two principal people involved in that, they continued to operate at intervals on the floor where I was, I went back to work for them

26:30 for a little while and then TAA became the airline, Trans Australian Airlines. And then somehow I got myself a job over a t TAA in Philips Street, then Cyril came home somewhere around about that time. I was only there for 9 months then I got married, but the airline kicked off and I remember

27:00 going to see a Miss Summerville, Helene Summerville, she was the lady who was going to train the air hostesses, and I thought well I'd like to do this, she said I was too small. I've shrunken considerable in my old age because I've got a spinal problem; I was 5 foot 7 1/2 then. And I remember the acting manager from Sydney said to me, "why would you want to do that?" he didn't view air hostesses as being very significant people

27:30 he just thought they were going to do a bit of washing up and serve a few sandwiches you know. But anyway that didn't come about and so TAA was born and its first offices were in Philips Street Sydney and then Mr McSwain who was from Brisbane, he was only acting, he went back to Brisbane and they sent in a Mr Borthwick. He

28:00 was an ex army colonel pugnacious man, ruddy cheeks, big moustache and he actually brought a little girl with him who had worked for him in the army and but he didn't replace me, he let me carry on but he also gave her a lot of work. And then I left and got married and it didn't occur to me until I'd left that I could have just taken leave

28:30 and come back to work because when one got married then one went off into another world of marriage and its consequences and I remember when I was just about 4 months pregnant or I had just discovered, or about that time, I said to my mother, "I think I would like to go back to work again," because girls were doing this

29:00 just beginning to return to work, and my mother was scandalised you know, she said, "Can't your husband afford to keep you," you know he couldn't afford very much at all. Anyway I didn't go back to work because I was then pregnant with my first child, and there I stayed having one child after another for a long time. Then I went back to work later, but that's another story, its well past wartime.

29:30 **When you were working in the customs area during the war, do you know what Australia was importing and exporting at that time?**

No not specifically, no I can't remember, I know sugar was one, there was big area of sugar under the control and electrical equipment was one thing,

30:00 desiccated coconut, I don't know why that crops up but it was a product that was coming in from overseas. All sort of small things like that. And shipping, shipping movements of vessels that were due

in and due out, that sort of thing.

the teleprinter, what things went wrong with it?

Well there were things that went wrong

30:30 whether they were electrical or not I don't remember or can't remember I never ever thought about it but there were often delays because the machine would be out of order and men used to come in from a place that was called Telegen. Telegen people used to come around and disinfect our phone in the office, have you ever heard of them?

31:00 Telegen, I think it was Telegen and the girls used to wear full on blouses and brown skirts and brown felt hats. And they would come in and they would pick up the handsets, the phone piece and they would brush it clean with some sort of a tissue things and then they would use a cream that looked like Vaseline but it wouldn't have been as greasy, or as thick as that

31:30 but some kind of a disinfectant they were all done about once a week, they would come in and do all these telephones for Telegen company

Why did they do that?

I don't know, I suppose, its not done today, and lots of people didn't have phone sin home now, offices but on, there would have been 50 or more phones on one floor

32:00 we didn't have a phone at home but these were professional offices. there would have been 50 phones at least on one of the floors there, and they'd come in and do all these phones every week, and of course probably quite a profitable business, but I think the mechanic used to come in from Telegen to fix the teleprinters or whatever had to be done to them, but they did break down.

32:30 **When a service personnel died over seas, how was the family notified in Australia?**

Well usually by a personnel letter. Mrs Bowden when her son was killed she just a received a notice which was hand delivered to her from one of the government offices I suppose the defence department to tell her that her son had, was missing initially

33:00 and presumed dead, because of anti aircraft certain space of time between the missing period and the notification of the time to her and that, some cases later I know they sent his, he had a dog tag they used to call them, a metal their service number on and that, and she got one of those much later after the presumption of his death. This and few other effects

33:30 **Was the local parish priest involved in any way?**

No I don't recall any of that sort of interest, I don't recall any at all, there may have been and perhaps it just went out of my head. But no, I don't recall any, one would think there would have been, I know there certainly was

34:00 in England because I've read stories and heard some of those people a lot of the war time films will go back and show you those chaplains and Vicars that were involved but I don't recall that much being made here of. And yet the RSL today, they are very fervent in their acclamation of lost servicemen and their contribution to

34:30 towards their countries safety and that sort of thing but I don't recall, I don't think, I don't know, maybe we weren't as connected to the priests in a social way that perhaps we should have been. I think a lot of other religions, I think the ministers get to know their people very well. I think the Catholic Church has changed now, when you go out for a mass

35:00 the church, the priest will be there and he will chat to you if you wish. They know some people better than they know others, but once upon a time they used to go out the back of the alter and you wouldn't see them after, there was no social connections with the clergy, perhaps the way it should have bee. I think these things in England are more, more friendly

35:30 somehow because of the type of, villages where there is a little parish church and everybody knows everybody, I think Sydney is too sort of spread out or something like that, I don't know .

So when your American friend died overseas, how did you receive the letter and how did you feel?

Well I felt really sad,

36:00 really said, I probably shed just a few tears, I didn't know him all that well, but he was very nice young man, and as I said he'd been to my home. But I got a letter to say, I remember my mother saying she was quite astonished that they would have notified me, I was just a passing acquaintance as it were and the only reason that we could ever think of was that he had a letter with my address and they just presume, assume to do that. They might have assumes other things I don't know

36:30 but there was no real connection between us. It was just a passing friendship the night you know.

So were you writing to other service men besides him and Cyril?

No, no I didn't, I'd write to my husband to be and air letters and some of his letters came back and many of them had things scratched out of them you know, they used to photostat a lot of air letters in those days and you'd just get a little

37:00 tiny copy of a letter that had been photostatted, you wouldn't get the original letter. They had these little airmail envelopes, you know very, very fragile paper and but often you would just get a photostat. I don't have any of them now.

What was Cyril sharing with you about the war?

Well mostly you know where, he flew Lancasters, he had a crew, he'd mention his crew

37:30 he had an English crew, all English and they've all gone now. One was here a couple of years back but he'd just talk about where they had been, and sometimes he'd say I can't tell you anymore, of course because he knew what he could write about and what he couldn't write about. And I don't know whether you

38:00 want to hear these things or not but when he was going across to American, he'd trained here and then he went to Canada and on the ship he became very ill, contracted Scarlet fever and somebody else did too. And so when he got to American he was immediately hospitalised and the time he spend there was 6 months and they wanted to ship him home because he'd been left with an irregular heart beat

38:30 which he still has and but he didn't want to go home so he had to go home via England as it happened. And when he got to England they were desperately short of pilots and he didn't really want to come home he thought, well, so he stayed and they assured him he would be okay sort of thing and then he was assigned to a Lancaster, he was in what they called

39:00 Bomber Command and he had a full English crew and he was there then for nearly 4 years, 4 and a half years but the time he came home. And so he did fly again and survived it all and came home. He was going to England with this latest thing with the Prime Minister but his doctor had d stroke and he had to find a new doctor, local doctor, the doctor got his history and he said, no he couldn't pass him

39:30 So that was that, he didn't meet the medical, and again, about two weeks after that he had a terrific nose bleed that doesn't sound too significant but it turned out it was to 10 and a half hours he bled. They had to take him to hospital and he had a week in hospital so perhaps it was

40:00 fortuitous he didn't go, that would have been before they took off but it certainly would have clinched his non appearance in the group going, so that's that.

Tape 7

00:55 **Your mother wouldn't let you join the**

01:00 **VADS. Why did you want to join it?**

Because I had three other local girlfriends who joined this local organisation, which meant they went to Ingleburn, Holsworthy camps and the Concorde hospital, which was for soldiers returning from the war. They were coming in all the time from New Guinea and places like that.

01:30 I think I was captivated by the uniform. They had like a nice uniform. Military looking, khaki jackets and skirts and hats. When they worked in the hospital they wore blue with white aprons and red crosses. Two sisters went off. These were girls I used to go cycling with. A group of us uses to go for bicycle rides miles all over Sydney.

02:00 They joined up and I said to my mother that I'd like to do that, and she wouldn't let me. At one stage I wanted to be a nurse, which was the same sort of thing. She said no. I just did as I was told. I think that's why I became a bit, I won't say rebellious, I was a bit different. I felt I probably resented this control. At

02:30 21-22 I couldn't do what I wanted to do. She liked to feel me close at home, close, and secure. Going to work every day and coming home. She was good, but there was that possessiveness.

What work were VADS doing and why were you drawn do it?

I don't know much about it because I never got into it.

03:00 They would live in the hospitals or the camps and just be called upon to provide services in the medical area. At Concorde I know they worked in wards and places like the trained nurses, 'cos again lots of things stopped during the war. The girls were moving into this sort of thing where they were doing a bit of military work along with hospital work.

03:30 I didn't see a great deal of those girls after they were sent to go to different places. It broke up our early friendship. I saw them later in life once or twice, but things were never the same. There was no resentment, people just move on, they do different things. They eventually got married in

04:00 different area. One girl I know the man she married, the other one I didn't. Two men I knew, the other two I didn't That doesn't' matter much.

You did a lot of cycling. Where id you go?

We'd go from Ramsgate. There's a snapshot somewhere of a lot of people on bicycles in front of my home. We'd go to the

04:30 National Park for the day. Take our own lunch, have a picnic. Sometimes you might make a fire and cook a sausage on the fire. Groups of girls and boys would go that way from Ramsgate. It was a good long ride. I had a girl's bike. The first bicycle we had my father bought, we called it a racing bike. It was a man's bike.

05:00 He'd let us have rides on it. When it came to my ride I went from Ramsgate to Randwick, my mother's sister out there. Moorefield races were on, I can remember getting there, My aunt's name was Bertha and she said, "does your mother know you're here?" This is long before I'd grown up. She said, "Then get on home right now." I got into terrible trouble. That's an aside from this. We did go

05:30 bicycle riding in lots of places. A friend of ours that had a dairy down there were Darrel Lea's big chocolate factory is, that was a dairy. The same group of people, the dairy man, he was much older than us, an unmarried fellow, his sister was a friend of mine, we used to have parties and go hay riding all around the dairy on this big

06:00 flat truck. I suppose we had ourselves on a bit, but one had to be entertained. We just did things. Alf would load up these big bales of hay and we'd sit there. He'd have a horse and he'd whip it around. We'd go around all the paddocks. The same group would go riding. He had to close down the dairy there and Darrel Lea bought that and it became a big chocolate factory.

06:30 He went out to Liverpool to Hoxton Park. Thereafter we would ride from here to Hoxton Park on our bicycles, have lunch, come back. A long trip, but we'd do it in a day.

So the bicycle allowed a new freedom for you?

That was wonderful. It was like riding a bike. It was, my parents never objected to it. In fact, they were

07:00 always happy about those things. I don't wanna give the wrong impression about my parents at all, because they were very good parents. Those bicycle trips were quite a regular thing. Maybe once a month we'd have a day out on our bike. There weren't a lot of cars around. You had to do things in a different way. Go by train here or there. To have a bicycle was a good thing. It was a big thing.

07:30 **Did you go out to the mountains and things like that?**

To the mountains? Not on bicycles though. We used to go to the mountains. My close friends and I would go to the mountains and to Terrigal was another place, for holidays. We'd go to Katoomba on the train and we would quite often stay

08:00 at a place called the Sans Souci, a small bed and breakfast type. There were lots of cottages that would accommodate half a dozen people. You'd have bed and breakfast kind of thing. We'd go for a weekend up there and go for walks down around the Three Sisters and Echo Point. Of a Saturday night we'd go to a big hall up there, which is still there

08:30 as of about 12 months ago. That was called Holmsdale, H-O-L-M-S-D-A-L-E. That was like a dance centre. Girls and boys who had weekends in the mountains would congregate there much the same as they did at the local hall. Lots of bands would play. There'd be 10, 12, 15, 20 musicians in the orchestra. Big orchestras. We'd have a great night there

09:00 and then we'd come home on the train. When we'd go to Terrigal, I had a couple of annual holidays up there, again, 3 or 4 girlfriends, my sister too. There was a guesthouse there called Karawaba. That was a big, long guest house with a big veranda. They used to dance on the veranda. It was up on the hill at Terrigal. We'd go on the skilling of a night and have prawn parties. People

09:30 would buy bags of prawns and go up there. We didn't drink. We didn't take beer or anything. We had lemonade or a soft drink, but boys never took their drink along like they do these days. That was always wonderful to go there. There were tennis courts there. We'd have a lovely holiday and go to the beach. It was a lovely place to go.

What was Terrigal like? Was it built up like today?

10:00 It was much more village like than it is now. There were mainly small guesthouses like the one which I just mentioned. There was no Holiday Inn, no big complexes like that. The shops were merely places where one would buy provisions or ice creams or things like that. There were no fashion houses there or

10:30 souvenir shops. Things like that didn't figure at all in those places then. It was a holiday place with small cottages and the bigger type of home were the guest houses. The beach was much as the actual beach. The roads were just tracks apart form the main road along the beach. We'd get a bus from Gosford station

11:00 out to there.

Did you hire or own houses out there?

We only ever went to the one place which was this Karawaba guesthouse. You would have to book in there somehow or other. I don't recall whether I ever wrote and did the booking. We'd go up there and just pay. We'd share rooms. Might be 4 girls in a room.

11:30 **Who were the boys that came with you? How did you know them?**

We'd just meet fellows there. Just casual acquaintances. I can remember once at Terrigal being a bit concerned because there were a couple of older men there. Apart from the big guest-

12:00 house there, there were small cabins too, smaller residences. These fellows, they'd come across for the dance and then they'd go off. I know they used to have things like rum and milk of a night. Whether they would have other drink along with that I don't know, but they would always come across and get milk to have rum and milk drinks. I remember being a bit weary.

12:30 They didn't trouble us at all, but it was a bit unusual to have slightly older men around a place like that because it was essentially a young persons' domain.

We you chaperoned?

No. I went with girls there from the DIP later on. I went with girls from home, my sister. My mother never seemed to be concerned

13:00 about me doing those things.

You sang during the war. What was your musical involvement?

I like to sing. I had a few lessons and the girls across the park, the Rodgers girls played the piano, cello and violin.

13:30 They weren't neighbours. In fact they used to take a houseboat down sometimes on the Hawkesbury and I used to go with them as a friend. The girl that played the piano was the eldest, Stacey. It was her idea that we form a group, which we did. We used to sing at the Anzac

14:00 Hut in Hyde Park and at Garrawarra hospital and at Ingleburn and Holsworthy, I've forgotten, one of those. I think I said this one; I went to the jail once. We didn't get paid. There was nothing like that involved at all. I suppose people at the time would have said it was a war effort, but I don't ever recall that being stressed.

14:30 It was an outlet, a thing to do. It was good fun. They were three nice girls, nice family. Their family were very much involved in the Masonic movement, the father and the mother. They used to invite me to the Masonic nights where one had to wear a long, white dress. This is a long way away from the Catholic

15:00 institute that I'd been instructed in a Catholic home. But Mum never seemed to mind me going 'cos they were nice people. I'd go along with them and they always welcomed me. I think women danced with women at a lot of those as I recall. So that was the musical. That was good fun. I loved that. I loved singing things.

15:30 That event with ballroom I mentioned today, I remember I sang there once with the big orchestra. Somebody put me up, I wasn't on the program, but I remember singing a wonderful song called "One Kiss". Beautiful. I don't think I was too shy at that stage in my life.

In the group, what songs did you sing?

16:00 There were wartime songs like "Blue Orchid", "A Wing and a Prayer", "Time Goes By" even, "White Cliffs of Dover", "Rambling Rose" I think was one, I can't recall

16:30 them all now.

Did you rehearse these tings?

Yes, we used to have a practise over at the Rogers' home. I'd just walk across the park and we'd have a bit of a singsong there. It was good for them, it was good for me, and I loved the music.

Were you a good band?

I don't think we would have won any gongs as they say today, but we had a few

17:00 invitations, I'd rather use that word that "offers", just to could we present 'cos something was on. Stacey was the one that organised appearances. We wore a white blouse and we had a red skirt and

white shoes. Red, what we called a dandle skirt; it was a full gathered skirt. She was a good little organiser, but we were not big-time.

17:30 No way. I don't think anybody would have given us anything. That's how we filled in a few gaps along the way for a few of the more professional types. I don't think there were many professional types doing those things in those days.

How did singing in the prison come about?

18:00 I remember being terrified of that. I couldn't wait to get out of there, because there seemed to be balconies around where all these men were staring over. That was out at Long Bay jail. They were in a hall. I think we were a bit concerned about our general wellbeing there. There were other people there. It was a concert which was organised by another group, not by Stacey. It was organised by

18:30 another group. We were just invited to be a contributory item on the program. We went out there by bus from the city somewhere. We had to go in there. The girls would carry their instruments, except the piano. They were a nice family. It's good to have friends like that when you're growing up. Their brother did dentistry with my brother later on, post-war.

What year did you

19:00 **sing in the prison?**

I'd say somewhere about '43, '42. About 1942. […]

You met Cyril when you were working.

19:30 **Can you share the full story of how you met and what happened there?**

He was at that stage a cadet in the police force. They chose cadets in those days according to their height. I hope I do all right. He was about 6 foot 1 or 2 then. He's diminished in height now. As part of their training they had to

20:00 do shorthand and typewriting. He was a student at the business college, a night student, where I used to read shorthand to him. That's where I first met him. I knew one of his brothers before that through the dances I used to go to at Kogarah. And so I got to know Cyril there. On and off we became friends very slowly and gradually.

20:30 **I've heard war marriages were common. What was your opinion of those things?**

I had two friends who were married

21:00 during that time. Both those weddings their husbands were here either on leave and they were married in uniform. They're still living both those couples. They've been proven to be very strong unions. But I think a lot of them, mainly from hearsay rather than from personal experience,

21:30 I think a lot of them were just too brief a courtship and not enough foundation before marriage. We went into marriage those days somewhat more deeply perhaps than a lot of people do today. Not because it's the legally binding thing, but I think we probably looked at it more as a lifetime

22:00 commitment and I don't think people rushed into marriage all that quickly, but because of the circumstances, men being on leave. Where friendships had been going for a long time they probably felt that this was what they wanted to do. So a lot of them were good, but a number of them I've heard of, not known personally, were not so good.

22:30 **What was the line between young women and men? Were there sexual relationships? How would affection be expressed?**

No, but I know that there were a few people who were more prepared to talk about these things more openly, but

23:00 no, my own deep personal and close friends, of which I had a number there, no, I would say we didn't. Life wasn't free like it is today. I'd say the sexual connection was what really happened after the marriage rather than leading up to and then deciding whether it was gonna

23:30 be for you or it wasn't. Today it seems as though most people try out their friendships and relationships and then they make their decisions. You can't be judgemental on people, I think they make their own decisions, but that wasn't our way at that time. I think I probably speak fairly accurately for lots of my own age group in that regard.

24:00 **In terms of meeting the right husband, was it a mature decision on your behalf to wait until the war was finished, or were there men you may have considered as husbands along the line there?**

As far as a sexual relation?

Not even sexual, just someone that you thought might be an ideal husband.

24:30 I would say that my own connection, my relationship, my friendship with my husband to be hadn't reached that stage where I don't think we would have considered marriage at all before he went away. He was 22-23. When he came back 5 years later he was a different person. Me, the same. Our friendship was not that strong. It was strong enough

25:00 that we communicated. I'd say he had other friends away and I certainly went out with a few young men. I didn't have a long, one fellow I was going out with a few months, but it never developed. He was also in the air force.

25:30 I've just lost my train of thought for the moment.

It wasn't like when you met Cyril you thought he would be someone that you

No. But I will say that during the course of other friendships I often thought about him and wondered whether, if I'd pursued my friendship with certain people, he was a bit like an image there that I

26:00 wasn't' sure he was there even though I was having a friendship with other people. We had a pretty innocent, pure life in those days. I remember one friendship I think I could have married another man, but Cyril was there in the background. I thought, "What will I tell him if ever I did go?"

26:30 It was a guilty feeling that I might have been, but not betraying him because we didn't have any strong, I had no right to be saying that. He was just somebody I liked very, very much. When he came home that was right the way I felt about him. He was home about 10 months or so before we got married. We were making plans and then a house came our way so we hastened our arrangements to

27:00 be able to accommodate that.

Describe what kind of man Cyril was when he returned from the war.

He was very pleasing to look at. After all those years in England he had a slightly English accent, which I found rather fascinating. He seemed to have acquired a

27:30 certain amount of, no, I don't like the word "mature", but aplomb of something. He just seemed to know his way around very well. He moved with assurance, I felt safe with him. He had lots of things to talk about. I remember one of our first nights out we went to the city, probably to see a movie, but we had dinner at a Carl's restaurant. Carl's restaurants

28:00 were quite a place to go. They were all over Sydney actually, but they were a very nice type of restaurant. They always had a tablecloth, even during the war. I can remember sitting down one night and it was a table for four people. There were Cyril and I here and another couple there with restricted space. He thought

28:30 that was rather dreadful because we didn't just have a table for two. We wanted to talk and he felt this was quite intrusive. I remember he spoke to the people and it was all they could do for us. I don't think one booked in to restaurants then. It was just pot luck wherever one might go. I remember he said, "in London even, with the war, one wanted a table for two you could get a table for two wherever."

29:00 It was Carl's restaurants. They were very nice restaurants and you'd have a nice meal there and coffee. They had those lovely balloon shaped percolators which were quite dense even now. When one poured the coffee they'd give you a little jug of cream and you pour the cream over the back of the spoon so it would settle on the top and you'd drink

29:30 your coffee through. Everybody used to do it. See people pouring their coffee, just become a bit of a thing, you know. They were very famous for their caramel ice cream cake, which is a cake with Carl's caramel sauce was very famous. Just beautiful. That was another reason people went there. Cyril was very self-assured when he came back. He didn't know what he was going to do for a while.

30:00 Then he got a job with EMI, the record people. So he left the air force. As soon as he'd left the air force he was a bit sorry because he felt he could have stayed in and gone commercial flying. Because this job came up he took that rather hurriedly. When he went to get back in he couldn't get back in because his health record with the

30:30 scarlet fever had left him with this, had he stayed he might have been able to carry on because he'd proven himself, his flying ability for the 4 years. So he stayed there for a little while and ultimately he joined the Shell company where he was for 35 years. He's maintained friendships with air force people. His

31:00 group meets every month or so. Not many of them left of course. He's 83. He had to wait till he was 21 to join, so those that are younger than Cyril would have only just come, and remaining from the Second World War, would have only just come in at the finish of the war really.

Was Cyril able to talk to you about the

31:30 **experiences he had during the war?**

Yes, he does sometimes. Not so much these days. He has and does. Sometimes he get s bit emotional about that, but about two years ago his 1st [flight] engineer died and that was the last of his group. He was quite upset about that.

32:00 This fellow's son visits us here. He's a science teacher in Japan with a French wife. They come every year. They come to Australia, they love Australia. They come and we have a visit from this man and his French wife and their beautiful daughters who are very bilingual in French and Japanese and English. He's a son. All the others have gone.

32:30 He has two friends. There's one, oh no, Jacko, he's living. He's a doctor somewhere in Kent. We haven't heard from him. We didn't hear last Christmas. He thinks he may have died because he had a cancer problem with his nose and mouth, which wouldn't be very pleasant to deal with. We've tried to contact

33:00 a daughter there by correspondence to old addresses, but we haven't had any luck. He has another friend who was not in his crew, an Irishman. He came from the north of Ireland. They were in hospital together in Canada. His name was Paddy Uprichard. His name's hex-something. He was the 8th child

33:30 so they gave him a Latin tag. Over the football period here they were ringing up one another about games. This fellow has a brother who is a minister in the Anglican Church in Melbourne, Ireland. At the end of the war his brother, who's the minister in Belfast, he said, "if you come home there's no shades of grey

34:00 here" because of the religious conflict. He said, "You either have to be black or white." So Cyril's friend stayed in England. He stayed in the air force and he became air force attaché to Cambodia and Hong Kong. Now he's retired and he lives in Lincoln and they communicate. He was not in my husband's crew. He was just a friend.

34:30 They were in hospital together in the beginning in Canada. They had a fire in their plane once and he tells me about the different things that were said. They got back to British Aerospace all right. Often in flying, he was in Bomber Command, they would have lots of aircraft flak and stuff on

35:00 the plane that would damage plane. He was fortunate he always managed to get back home.

Your other friends that married ex-servicemen, did their husbands talk to them about their experiences during the war?

I really don't know. In one case they were both in the army, but one of my friends, I was bridesmaid for her, she lives in Port Macquarie now, and her

35:30 husband has been more or less an invalid since the war. He was in the New Guinea area and was for days on some island without food or water and crawled upon beaches and jungle until he found a base. He's been a very ill man, but he's still alive and he's about 85. He's a very thin man, but he's always in hospital for something or other. His name

36:00 was Alan Stewart. He used to talk to her a lot about it and still does. Cyril, sometimes I think that he ought to talk more, but I just think they go through so much sometimes. He was a bit fortunate post-war. When the war finished he was outside Buckingham Palace. He's got the most wonderful pictures of Buckingham Palace and people

36:30 climbing all over the place there on the night of VE [Victory in Europe] Day. My thoughts have gone again. When the war finished that was what? August? I'm not sure now of the month. They couldn't send all the personnel home at the one time because they didn't have the ships to do that. They all came home

37:00 by ship. So one of his friends, squadron leader Bruce Miles, he was assigned to a place called New Quay in the south of England on the Cornwall side. They took over a big hotel there. They used to send the air force personnel down there in groups at a time. They had to keep them entertained, they had to keep them looked after for 6, 7 or 8 months until they could get them all transported home to Australia.

37:30 Cyril was appointed down there with Bruce Miles and they organised there the very, very first surf carnival ever held in Britain. About 5 years ago my husband and this fellow got an invitation from the British surf lifesaving association to return to Tolcarne at Newquay to celebrate the 50th anniversary

38:00 of the formation of the United Kingdom Surf Lifesaving Association. So this fellow and Cyril went back for those celebrations. They organised a surf carnival there with all sorts of equipment. They didn't have proper equipment, but there's some wonderful pictures we had there of those events taking place.

Was Cyril always a surfer?

Yes, he belonged to the surf club down here.

38:30 I used to sit on the beach every day and watch him row. He was in the boat crew. They didn't have rubber duckies then, they just had the great, big surfboats. He was in that crew, one of those crews. Just about 12 months ago we went to a memorial service down here at the North Cronulla Beach. Cyril's still alive, but one other fellow died from that crew.

39:00 He had gone north to live, but he wanted to be buried, his ashes, off the beach at Cronulla. So they had a lovely service and the surfboat took the ashes out and all the oars stood up straight. It was lovely. Just down here.

What about surfboards?

No. I said the oars. That's a part of the ceremony to put the oars up.

39:30 There were always surfboards around, but not like there are now, no. They didn't have groups on the beach, like setting out surfboard area and all this sort of thing.

Did Cyril ride surfboards?

No, I don't think I've ever seen him on a surfboard, no.

What was the attitude towards that kind of activity?

Surfboards? I don't think I've ever thought very much about it. There were just the odd

40:00 people that had a surfboard. They weren't around in abundance the way they are now. Certainly not these little, polythene ones. There was nothing around like that at all.

Did a certain type of people ride surf boards?

I really couldn't answer that because they were just not around. You might see the odd surf ski, a bigger one, which was just like a board and a person would row with the paddles. They didn't do surfboard

40:30 riding on the waves the boys now stand on boards and that. That came later.

Tape 8

00:48 **Back to your singing lessons, what kind of singing were you learning and what was that like?**

01:00 To this day I can remember the scales that I was introduced to. I went to this lady in Bathurst Street. Her name was Gladys Verona. She was a very petite, white-haired lady. I can see her now, quite vividly as she was. She had very thick, snow-white

01:30 hair in a bun and dark clothes. She was lovely. We did the scales. She would play the piano and how one would throw one's voice to the forward "mi-mi-mi-mi-mah" and "mi-aaaaaah" all to open your lungs. I can remember all those scales quite well. I enjoyed

02:00 it. I think I couldn't afford to keep going longer. That was in my very first days at the division of input procurement. I would walk from the building I worked out across Hyde Park to Bathurst Street and take these lessons. It was nice. Later on in life, I don't know how far one goes talking about

02:30 these things, but I joined the Gilbert and Sullivan Society in Grafton when we lived there. We did the Gilbert and Sullivan shows and we'd go on tour down to Yamba and Maclean, Coffs Harbour on the bus, all singing. It was great fun. It was good for me.

Did Cyril join as well?

No, but he'd come to the shows and bring the children. He always had to mind them when I was on tour.

03:00 Just another experience.

What was the type of singing you were learning?

With Gilbert and Sullivan?

No, when you were learning with Miss Verona.

Yes, I think I did a thing called 'el baccio' and a couple of songs. There were a lot of popular semi-

03:30 classical things that were popular in those times. I can't recall the title now, might even have the music there somewhere. Not very well known pieces, they were more like study pieces that you'd be learning to sing because of the type of voice you had or the scale that you could sing to. I remember being quite infatuated with Diana Durban who was a singer, a

04:00 popular movie star singer. She had a lovely voice. "Last Rose of Summer" some of those old Irish songs and melodies, they were lovely. I used to try to sing those. A few of Diana Durban's songs that everybody wanted to sing, anybody that was the same age as Diana Durban wanted to be like her with bows in their hair and all that sort of thing. It was a nice experience. When I lived

04:30 with my family in Grafton I joined the Gilbert and Sullivan and had a few more lessons there with the conductor of that Gilbert and Sullivan group. He was the organist at the Anglican Cathedral there. His

wife had a lovely mezzo soprano voice and he was a good teacher. Then he died and lots of things fell flat, but it went on for a few years before that came about.

05:00 You just never know what's gonna happen. That was good fun for me too. Gave me a personal interest away from my family. Cyril was pretty good. He used to travel of course with the Shell Company. He'd be in Dorrigo or Coffs Harbour or Nymboida or Copmanhurst. He'd be away often all the week. Somehow I managed to get to rehearsal and look after the children. I had my fifth child

05:30 there, then I had another one when I came back to Sydney. One in Bega, two in Sydney, two in Grafton, another one back in Sydney.

You mentioned the war tunes you'd be able to perform with the band. Would you be able to give us a rendition of one or two of your favourite songs?

I couldn't do that now. I can't sing.

06:00 I go to church now and everybody sings and I go high and I think "oh, that's dreadful" and I go low. My voice seems to have become a little gravely as I've got older. I don't think I speak all that clearly. I really can't sing now. I even try sometimes in the car when I'm by myself and nobody can hear me. It's just not there now anymore. I play the piano, but for my own amusement.

06:30 I couldn't sing, no.

Not at all?

No, I'm sorry. I would very much like to be able to say, "I would love to oblige" but I couldn't do it, no.

You performed for the troops on different occasions.

Yes.

07:00 **How was the band received by the troops?**

I think reasonably well. I won't say we were ever stars. We were just four girls, pretty innocent young girls. We weren't glamour girls. We didn't get dressed like performers do today. I think people had organised things in the Q Store hut and for the camp tours and were just happy

07:30 to have anybody that could do anything in a small way. We were very small, really. The girls, Viv was quite a good violinist. She would sometimes play a solo. I think we were probably just clapped and respected, but I don't think anybody fell over us. I don't think anybody thought we were new stars. Nothing like that at all.

08:00 **So there weren't any acting up by the troops treating the young women in a nasty way?**

No.

In terms of the Japanese submarine in Sydney Harbour, describe what that was like and where you were at the time and how you found out.

We didn't hear a thing. I was at the Ramsgate primary school

08:30 with this little organisation of women that were doing First Aid courses. We knew nothing of the submarine coming in until the following morning and news got around that this had happened. The papers were full of it for a few days. The Japanese. People were quite scared and frightened because nothing like this had ever really happened in Australia before.

09:00 We never had any air raids, and this was an invasion. It came right into Sydney Harbour. It was only what they call a Japanese midget submarine, but that is in Canberra now. Midget though it might have been it's still a horrific looking little weapon, machine, ship. We were so far away from all activity. The closest would be

09:30 New Guinea. There the troops went through and both land and air force regiments went through terrible times in New Guinea. The New Guinea people were wonderful the way they just helped. That was the closest area. I suppose had the Japanese conquered that part of the world they might have come on

10:00 here. You yourself must have seen stories of the, with the wonderful movie with Deborah Kerr and Robert Mitchum called "Heaven Knows, Mr Allison". It was filmed in the New Guinea area there. I've been to New Guinea. My daughter Francis lived there for 8 years. We've been to the top of the Kokoda Trail and seen

10:30 the denseness of the scrub and the area of the mountains that those troops waded through day and night, and squashy, very wet conditions. So I really can't tell you any more about the Japanese sub. It was the first impact that we could have some damage here. It

11:00 created a bit of an apprehension. We didn't know where we were going to go from here. That was it. There was nothing else. There was Darwin of course. I'd forgotten about that. There was a slight

invasion of Darwin, but it didn't come to anything.

What were the feelings about the Japanese by the Australians at that stage?

I think there was great animosity. Particularly locally, some of the local families that I

11:30 knew because the two boys whom, we used to play with, one slightly older than myself and one younger, they all lived in the one block around the corner, and they were both in New Guinea. With all the stories of the atrocities came filtering through in the newspapers and there was great resentment towards the Japanese people. It's a decade that I think we have to forget. I've been

12:00 to Japan. My husband was granted an Australia Japan Foundation Scholarship about 20 years ago. He went to Japan for a whole month. I went with him. He was looking at age care facilities there. We went to Kyoto, Tokyo, and Hiroshima. We saw the devastation.

12:30 We saw photographs of a lot of. We went to the Hiroshima hospital where there's still people there, maimed during the bomb dropping of that dreadful thing. My husband had an interpreter. He worked with doctors there who took him here. He had a wonderful month. We found the Japanese people fantastic. I think one has to put a lot of those things behind.

13:00 I know it must be extremely hard for people like that minister Tom Uren who was, and somebody else, that fellow, a well known military man that died. They were prisoners of war in the Japanese camps. We've heard these stories. We've heard them first hand from people. Jim McClelland was another. He was a former minister.

13:30 The things they write about, it must be very hard for them to forget and more importantly; for them to forgive. Because the atrocity. […] Just getting back to that I think that, and

14:00 when we were in Hawaii, that's another place. I don't want to be saying where I've been and all that, but there's a big memorial there. That's where Pearl Harbour is. We saw that ship under the water there. Close by where we lived there's this big museum. When we were there it was just amazing to see the Japanese people, this is about 10 years back, going thought the

14:30 war museum there and looking at the atrocities that were perpetrated by their own people. There are all these photographs. You wander what they must think. But time's moved on. I think everybody must try and put it all behind them. Japan has certainly tried to bury their past I think. I don't know that they've made these apologies they keep talking about, but they said they would never again be

15:00 an aggressor in a military field. Hopefully that's going to be the way.

You married when you were 27. Was that a usual age considering the war period?

No, I was a little bit older than my friends. My friend,

15:30 she was 60 years married this year, I'm 56 years married, so I was about 4 years behind most of my friends. But he was in England. I think I was waiting for him really, to come home. He's a good man.

What were some of the positive things about marrying a bit later? What did that period

16:00 **help you in any way, if it did?**

I don't know. I think I've been, when my children came along I was an older mother than some of, but then I wasn't as old a mother as what mothers are today, because girls are marrying later now. I remember feeling

16:30 happy that I was getting married. My boss at input procurement, his wife used to come in there. She'd say, "what's a nice girl like you still doing here? Why don't you get married?" Because I didn't have a boyfriend I was wanting to marry anyway. Women used to say those things to one quite a lot. "Why aren't you married?" or "you should be married." Because everybody was getting married at 22, 23 sort of thing. There I was

17:00 seemingly on the shelf for a while. I don't think it bothered me a great deal I lived at home as most of us did until we got married. So I don't have any regrets about it. I've had 6 children and they're all getting old now too. My youngest is 42. He's not young either.

How would you sum up the war

17:30 **for you?**

I suppose I could say that it gave me new opportunities to develop as a person because I was fortunate to be placed in a job that,

18:00 I felt I was a contributor to the world, or to the community I should say, at that stage. Had the war not been so for me, I probably would have stayed in my business college environment for a much linger period. It's hard to say. I think the war gave me, even though we were not

18:30 attacked as a country, I think that it gave me an opportunity to meet some much more high profile people in business. It probably helped develop me as a person. I like to think it did anyway, I don't know. I was jolly glad when it was all over. I don’t

19:00 think Australia really, I don’t think any of us in Australia at that time had any conception of what it would have been like to be in England, from what I’ve heard. Only England, not America. America came into the war, but London with the bombs raining down on the city on homes, people dying, people walking out in blackouts, people struggling for food,

19:30 children being shipped out to Australia or to country areas in England away from the cities so they could be protected and cared for. We didn’t have any of that. We can only, we’ve heard about it. I think Australia was pretty lucky. But there were a lot of young men killed. I’m a little, not resentful, but

20:00 when a lot of ceremonies take place it seems as though there’s always a predominance of army personnel who, the Middle East battles, The Battle of Long Tan and places like that, they have their celebrations every so often. They all go back to visit these sites. I was very happy that my husband seemed to have had this opportunity to go back to London.

20:30 He’d been there since of course, independently. But to be at that memorial service in London, for him, would have been an absolutely wonderful thing after all the years there. I don’t think that Australian airmen, there were thousands of them killed, something like 5-6,000. I don’t ever feel they get due recognition

21:00 for their services. It was a war of the air the last war, there’s no doubt about it. Even when it comes to the Middle East and the bombings that were going, it was still the air force. And the ground troops had to do their bit. I sometimes feel that people don’t realise what the airmen, ‘cos this is me, I’ve got an allegiance there.

21:30 For me, personally, when my husband came home we got married and we started a family and that’s what I’ve been doing ever since. Trying to keep up with their world, my world as long as I can. Perhaps it was a good thing for me, personally, I don't know, that’s a silly thing to say, perhaps, but

22:00 I won’t forget it. You don’t forget a period of your life where you have restrictions on what you do, where you go, blackouts. The impact here was nothing like other people had in places like mainland England. Just different.

If you had something that you would want to say to the future generations, would you be able to

22:30 **take that opportunity now? Could you say something about war to future generations?**

Well, recently our own country’s been involved in the war in Iraq, which is in the Middle East where there’s always a lot of conflict. I don’t think, perhaps one shouldn’t get too political on this, that war

23:00 ever really solves anything. I think the heartache, I don’t think that human lives should be taken and just abused and destroyed like that. Hundreds and hundreds of young men, both in Germany, in France, England, Australia and America, I think war, and what is war for? It’s really all for

23:30 some, the powers that be that instigate those things, it’s for position, for power of some sort. Oil maybe? One questions with all this current conflict where all the arms, the guns, the tanks, who makes them? You never hear too much about that. They’re made by America, England have them. Who are the arms manufacturers? I don’t think they should be making

24:00 thinks like this. Then there’s the space missiles and things like that. In the end, so far the Iraq War hasn’t really resolved anything much at all in my view. I don’t think they should have gone to war without the full cooperation of the United Nations. I think people have to have organisations like the United Nations.

24:30 People have to talk about things. There’s got to be some friendship, some cohesion and some thought for the common good of the ordinary citizen of the world. I don’t know.

Is there anything you’d like to add to your interview today?

No, but perhaps I’d like

25:00 you to look at a couple of those photos before you go because I think they might be interesting to your project. I’d like to say that I’ve been delighted to be part of it. It was an unexpected pleasure and result from just a stab in the dark phone call. If I’ve been of any help in any way maybe just talking about Sydney as it was during those times, well

25:30 that makes me very happy.

Thank you very much.

My pleasure.

INTERVIEW ENDS