Australians at War Film Archive

Frederick Williams (Fred) - Transcript of interview

Date of interview: 3rd February 2004

http://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/1510

Tape 1

00:30 **Okay Fred we'll make a start today, can you tell us about your life?**

Yes, well I was born in 1922, 28th of August and I put, later I put my age up to nineteen, being born in 1919, that's how it appears on my records, until I finished up changing it later at a later date towards the

01:00 end of my service. We were born in Depression years and we never starved but we had no money, we were all broke in the Great Depression. With our spending money, we got twenty-five dollars a week, twenty-five pound for one fortnight, for one week and the following week you got ration tickets to buy rations with. Because the fathers used to go and spend the twenty-five bob they got the one

01:30 week and go into the pub and have a booze up on it. And of course the family suffered through that. And we lived through that Depression with a lot of ill feelings, relying on other people's handouts and handovers and clothes like that, at City Hall every year, every week in Ipswich I was born. And every week the city council would hand out, you'd go

02:00 to the courthouse and pick up clothes and unwanted goods from other people who were more affable in money. So we had, we grew up as kids, very similar to ones we've got today, bits of larrikins some of us. And I had two friends, Mervin Bool and Max Paggy, they were two great guys, so they used to call us the

02:30 Huckleberry Finns [fictional character] of the river. We, on the Bremer river, we used to spend most of our time on the Bremer River fishing, swimming and getting into everybody's way and they used to, they called us Huckleberry Finn and his friends. I was Huckleberry Finn. And we found one bloke one day, an old German fellow, he was climbing, he climbed up a big willow tree on the other edge of the bank and sawed the branch off. He was on the branch and he sawed it off

03:00 and he drowned. He came down off the tree and crashed into the river. And we went home and told our parents that we saw old Mr Boytle drown himself and Mum give me a clout across the ear for telling lies and all that sort of thing. Anyway, it come out then that the police found him, they dragged, was rattling away the following day and they found his body on the bottom of the Bremer River on the other side were we'd told them where it was. And we had a few questions to answer with the police and the police wanted to know why

03:30 we didn't let them know earlier. I told them my mother didn't want me to get mixed up in it. And another day we saw another character an Englishman, he was an English boy he was, about fifteen years of age. He drowned trying to swim the river at the bottom of our house. He tried to swim the river and he got out of his depth and went down, George Storey his name was, they were British migrants. And that's about the most dastardly things we ever saw in those days.

04:00 But we were always in the wrong, telling lies and things like this, you know. Well, we were accused of telling lies. The police, the old inspector there, was the sergeant of police at the time, Inspector Heard, he became Inspector Heard. He had a motorbike with a sidecar, there were no cars about, the police used to get round in motorbikes with side cars. And he used to come

04:30 and give me a clout across the ear occasionally and ring up, go and speak to my father and tell him I was misbehaving. I rode a pushbike through the fence in Ipswich, and finished up through a plate glass window in Galby's, a bike shop in Ipswich. We'd been mucking around and the bike got away on me, I went straight through the window, finished up in the display case. He come and give me a kick up the backside and took me home and

05:00 pop give me a good old belting when I got home. It was, they were fun days. Times were bad but it was always fun, you could always make fun no matter where you were. And as I got older I decided I wanted to be a soldier. My Dad had been a soldier but I don't know what his, I've got his regulations and things that he had but, and he was in the 1st Battalion in 1st AIF [Australian Imperial Forces] in France. But he

05:30 wasn't the best instigator, every time they got the chance, every time they'd go up the line, he'd go

through and go and have a few beers or something, in Stabinae in Paris or something. And get got honourably discharged but I don't know how from what information I can read in his writings and his official history. And, I just thought I wanted to join the army, that's twelve or thirteen. And

06:00 I went to the, Oakville, or Ipswich is where the, they were recruiting for officer material to go to Duntroon and be taught as, become officers. I went up and saw the Warrant Officer there and told him I wanted to be a soldier. He said "What sort of a soldier?", "Oh, an officer", so he said "Why do you want to be an officer?', so I said "Well, I like that" it was the Spanish Civil War was on, and they had the Scarlet Pimpernel of Spain, he

06:30 flew a little single winged plane. And he used to drop grenades and things out of it onto the Abyssinians and then to fly across there and used to drop them and there used to be a broadcast on the radio, there was no television. And we had a crystal set, liked to hear all the news on that. And then Lawrence of Arabia, Lieutenant Lawrence, he was my favourite and I followed his footsteps, I wanted to do whatever Lawrence did. So, that's why, what made me decide, my mother decided

07:00 she saw in the papers I wanted to become an officer. So she said, I can, fourteen you can become an officer, you can become an officer cadet at Duntroon and come out at eighteen as a fully-fledged Lieutenant. Anyway, I went to, they sent me to Brisbane Street, Ipswich to fill the papers in, then they started asking me questions, would I be prepared to spend twelve hundred pounds per year on

07:30 social activities in Duntroon. I said "No", I thought "I haven't got, take me twenty years to make twelve hundred pounds", I said "I get about twelve shillings a week". And anyway, he said "Oh", he said, "No, you wouldn't be suitable to be an officer", I said "Why", "You've got to be keen on socialising", I said "You join the army to kill people" it was always on my mind that Lawrence was doing this sort thing in the East. And anyway,

08:00 they knocked me back, so I said "That's it, I'm not going to join the army. I'll join the army but not as an officer. Be an officer and a gentleman, I don't want to be part of". So that was it. I got no more information from them, sent the papers back and I was told back that I'd be unsuitable material for officers, I didn't have the social background and all sort of nonsense. And later on in years, as I said, I enlisted in the Australian AIF.

08:30 I found out that they were hopeless, the officers they were sending out to us from Duntroon. They were just like boys reading out of a book and telling you how do this and how to do that. We had to teach them how to do it as young soldiers, that's the way we went on and lived with me all my life I never wanted to be an officer. They made me up once and I resigned the same day, I didn't want to have any part of it. I was forced to become a Warrant Officer.

It's interesting Fred, because it's like the

09:00 **class system, isn't it?**

Yes, that's what annoyed me. And the, there was a fellow who lived next door to us in Ipswich, his father owned the wool mill up there, East Ipswich Woollen Mill, the Crib family. And he got in to become a, he ended up becoming a full-fledged Colonel over the years. And he was absolutely hopeless, he didn't know how to fire a rifle, didn't know how to handle a rifle. Of course he enlisted and fell into a nice

09:30 cushy position, never went overseas or anything, just sort of sat in an officer's booth in Victoria Barracks and he was there until he retired. And went up the rank and became a, well, sort of an Ipswich hero. And this is what upset a lot of us in the day. Like I was in the same situation and a different class distinction. And I had, we had, I can't

10:00 say we had any fun, times were bad, I had a horse and pop said to me, he said, "You'll have to save up to buy a horse if you want a horse", there were no cars about and my mode of transport was going to become a horse or a pushbike. So I decided on the horse, the horse was thirty shillings. I bought it at the sale yards, a horse called Bess. And I bought this horse, it took me six months to save up the thirty bob, to be quite frank. And I bought this horse at the sale

10:30 and then it took another to years to buy a saddle which cost about four pound. And finished up, eventually I finished up getting the saddle and bridles and everything else, I rode around in the paddocks with a halter, for a long time with a rope halter. Bare back and getting thrown off and pop would go and pick me up a couple of times when I nearly got killed. And anyhow it was always, that was the way we lived. And I always remember Bess, she was the first horse and the first gift I bought myself, you know.

11:00 And I worked to get it. But today that wouldn't be worth a packet of cigarettes. So things were cheap, you could go to the bakehouse and buy a loaf of bread for four pence. And if you had to, you wouldn't go to the bakehouse until you had four pence a loaf. A bottle of soft drink would cost you about a penny. Lemonade or Schweppes and all that were a penny up to three pence, that was the top price. Six pence to go to the movies, that's five

11:30 cents to go to the movies. And all, that's the way the prices have changed but the prices haven't changed in comparison to the way the governments spend our money and is still spending it, and not giving any of it back to the rightful owners, I don't think.But, as the years went on we, I, we didn't have, I didn't have

12:00 nothing to do with girls, my friends, my two mates, we were a bit wild and we had a lot of fun. Max and I, if he, whatever happened to my best mate Max Pegg, whatever happened to him would happen to me. His mother was a broad Scotch woman, his father was a submariner in the First World War and got his stomach almost blown out and he was a cot case, he was a very bad tempered little fellow. And

12:30 Max and I, Max would get sick. He'd say "Mum, I feel sick", Mum would rush him up to the hospital, local hospital and Doctor Trumpey would say to him "You look a bit sick", somebody would put a thermometer in his mouth, say "Yeah about four degrees up so we'll put you in hospital for the night". So I'd get sick and then we'd both end up in hospital in beds, beds opposite each other. This particular night we went, we decided we'd go to, Max was sick, he had a sore throat and he was coughing and he had a very sore throat, he couldn't

13:00 swallow. So I said to Mum, "I feel the same way". So she took us both up to hospital, we finished up in hospital and the doctor, Doctor Trumpey says "A tonsillectomy is needed". So he took both our tonsils out and our adenoids. But next morning Max was discharged from the hospital, he was okay but I was kept there for eleven days altogether, kept on bleeding, my tonsils kept on bleeding and bleeding and I was there for eleven days decided it was not such a good idea being friends with

13:30 Max. That's the way we carried on. And went on like that until, well, till I joined the army and (UNCLEAR) in fact and Max was too short. They used to call us the long and the short, I was about five foot nine, six foot or something, be coming on towards six foot. And Max was about four foot two, that's, he's still alive and he's still about the same. He's twelve months older than I am. But I had to

14:00 always get the blame for things he'd done. If he'd done something wrong his mother would blame me because I was the biggest and get into trouble at school. I'd get the blame because I was the biggest, I should be looking after this bloke, he's twelve months older than I am. But this all sorts of funny tricks, get up to tricks at school and try and get out of school. One day we sat on the school all day, on the chimney, had a big, oh, downstairs chimney it was at the state school. And it's a big box like

14:30 building where they used to put the coal under the school, and they hadn't, it was summer time so we decided to hide in there for the day. We got in there, come out like a pair of aborigines. I got a flogging, the teacher gave me a belting when I got home because, so we decided next time we wouldn't go to school. We'd tell the folks we were going to school, pack our bags and hop on the ferry and go across the river on the ferry to school. And old bloke Charlie Rate used to row us across with a big punt, used to cost us threepence

15:00 a week to ferry us back and forwards across the river to school. So Mum would pack us sandwiches and Max's mother had packed him sandwiches of course we packed our fishing gear in our bags without their knowledge and we decided we'd get across the river and go along the bank a bit and have the day fishing instead of going up the hill to school. We did that and of course, we went home and Mum said "How did school go today?", I said "Oh good Mum". Anyway, old Charlie Rate, she was talking to him, he said "Those two boys,

15:30 they'll get themselves into trouble sooner or later", he said "I saw them sitting on the river bank fishing all day". So she came straight home and got stuck into both of us. And those are the things that, you know, kid things, today they'd be probably doing something more desperate. But we thought we were in desperation times then when we were doing the wrong thing but. We went to a funeral one day, one of our mates got, he died, he was a Boy Scout, and,

16:00 Slippy Neddleton, he dropped dead at a Scout camp. And he wasn't a friend of ours actually, he was in the same classes at school so we said we'd go to his funeral. And Mum said "Okay", and she dressed us up to get to us, about to go to the funeral and Max, his mother had done the same thing. We went down River Road to the, Ipswich and up to the cemetery, we didn't go near the cemetery, we had a great old time walking around the shops and spending a penny

16:30 here and a penny there. And when I got home that night Mum said "How did the funeral go?", I said "Good", I said "But do you know the funny thing? They buried the coffin too". She said "Of course they buried the coffin", she said, and she believed that we went to the funeral and that came up a little bit later too. So that was weeks later we got another belt across the ear from telling lies. But, no, that's about it as far as. And we had, some of the girls,

17:00 Dorothy Gatfield, she was across the river from us and we used to always sing out to each other across the river and yap, you know, puppy love type of thing. And I said "I'm not interested in girls", but anyway, she finished up marrying the Mayor of Southport. But she was a bit of a hard case and we used to have a lot of fun yapping across the river, but that was the wealthy side of the river, we were on the poorer side of the river. So her Mum

17:30 would say, "Stop talking to those poor people on the other side of the river", and we would say, Mum would say to me, "Stop talking to those silver tails on the other side", and it was on for young and old. And we used to know this friend at school, we went out with each other but it took my, took the other white tails and we had a good time. But that's about as far as I can go with that.

That's okay. Did Max enlist with you?

No, he couldn't, he was too short. They

18:00 had to be four foot five to get in, Max was about four foot three I think. And he's still the same height now, even today, but he got, he married eventually and settled down. But I saw him about six or eight weeks ago, it was my brother-in-law's funeral in Ipswich and he was, they were neighbours and good friends, we sort of lived together more or less at each other's house. Like my granddaughter, she lives across the road more than she lives here, and, the kids are across here, she lives

18:30 over here more than she lives at our place. So, but that's the way we lived and I enjoyed it. But I had the urge to join the army, as I said and I got a bit uptight about the fact that I was being belittled and I thought that being in the neighbourhood you're not going to, being an officer and a gentleman would upset me and I couldn't make out, and I still can't make out why an officer has to be

19:00 a gentleman. Because you're never a gentleman and once you're in the officer's ranks, that's where you stay, you've got no friends, the friends that, the people higher than you as an officer, he's always on your back for not doing the right thing. The people below you hate you because you're giving orders, you know, and that's the way it goes. So we, I formed an opinion which I stuck to and I reckon that Lawrence was, he was perhaps the greatest Lieutenant and

19:30 he finished up as a Major I believe, but he was a terrific outfit. But he wouldn't take orders either, if he was given orders he'd do the opposite and they always, he was always better because the officers under him were all graduates from the, Sandown and different places in England where they have the big military schools for officers, he was an officer of the ranks. And he was one of the best. As a matter of fact he did more for the

20:00 Arabs than any other person in the history of the Arabic nations. And we served later in places like, he was overseas where he was over there. And I enjoyed the company of people that knew him, you know, still do. Anybody can talk to him or sit down with and talk about Lawrence or sit down with a book and discuss different things he did and the way he did them and how he did them without getting into arguments about why he didn't

20:30 do that, and I'll say "Yes he did", and explain why he did it. And eventually I joined up anyway and I went to Brisbane and Mum said to me "Where are you going?", I said "Oh, I'm just going down to Brisbane", she said "What for?", "I'll look for work", she said "Oh yes" and gave a shrug of her shoulders and said "Okay". So away I went and anyway, I hopped on a train and

21:00 it used take an hour and twenty minutes to get to Brisbane in those days, the old WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK , you could walk faster than the train could run. And we'd get down to, got to Brisbane and went out to Kelvin Grove, the enlisting people, and walked in and asked the, said "I want to enlist". And he threw me a heap of paper and said "Fill this in and sign them", he said "and bring it back to me", this Sergeant. And I did that and he said "How old are you son?", I said "18",

21:30 he said, "Oh yes, okay" so he took it and said "You don't look like you're eighteen to me", and I said "Well you just take the paper and I'll fill them in", he said "I'm the Sergeant around here, not you," he said "Just shut your mouth and do what I tell you". So I filled in the form and "Now," he said "sit there and wait and call for you again and as you're a part of the army now and you'll take orders of what I say". So I sat in the chair and after a while they took me into the medical

22:00 and went through the medical all right. The doctor said, he said "You're not eighteen son", I said "That's what it says on my papers,", he said "Birth certificate", I said "No, I'm eighteen, I don't have to have a birth certificate", and you didn't have to have parent's consent or anything else. So he said "Okay", so he was going to take my word for it and he took it and I got through and finished up going to Brisbane General Hospital on the bus with the rest of the crew as they went through. We had x-rays there and

22:30 we had doctors, three doctors there prove that we were classified as A one students or A one recruits. And by about three o'clock in the afternoon we were in, sworn in and everything else and taken out to Fraser's Paddock. And when we got out there this Warrant Officer's there screaming at us, an ex-World War digger, he's yelling at us, telling us who he was and really bluffing everybody and he said "Any questions?", and I

23:00 said "Yes, sir" and put my hand up and he said "Don't call me sir, call me Sar Major". I said "Okay Sar Major", so I put my hand down and he said "What's your problem son?", I said "What time are we leaving to go home?", and he said "Home", he said "you are home, what's the matter with you? Stupid or something". I said "We're home?", he said "Yeah, you're home now", he said "You're home now until we shift to somewhere else in the event and you finish up fighting some silly idiot overseas". So I thought "Well, how will we let our parents know where we are?",

23:30 he said "That's your problem", he said "Tomorrow maybe you can send a wire [telegram]," that's it, send a wire, you couldn't, there was no phones in Ipswich, one or two phones and we never had one. So we went on and then and I said "Oh I won't bother ringing up, I won't bother let them know" and they finished up getting the police and everything else searching for me and I was a missing person for a while and Mum was worried that I wasn't coming home. And

24:00 then, I've got an aunt in Crows Nest, my mother's sister lives in Crows Nest, not now, she died recently, she said "You send your letters through me and I'll pass them on to Dia", Mum's name was Dia. And I was doing that and we were, had done that for several weeks and then, see Mum and her didn't speak tor me moons afterwards she found out that I'd, that we had a scheme going between us to let her know

where I was.

24:30 And I was, all the time in Enoggera, training our butts off with rifles and, didn't even have rifles to start, they give us pick handles as rifles. We used to go through the action of rifle drill with pick handles. Had no gear, at the time there was nothing there and what we did get was all stuff from the First World War.

Excuse me for a second, but can I ask you, why didn't you just write directly to your mother and father?

Because

25:00 they didn't want to, I thought it might be picked up and taken overseas in the and they'd have told me I was underage and they'd have brought me home, ship me straight back home again. I didn't want them to know where I was because pop couldn't have cared less, he said "Well, it's no good stopping him", Mum said I couldn't join the army she said "Because you'll get yourself killed", I said, Dad said "Well, look let him go", he said "he can join the navy at thirteen, he can put his name in and join the navy at thirteen as a deck hand".

25:30 And Mum, whether she got tricked or not, but it took quite a few weeks. And she tried to get me home when I got wounded in a place called Giarabub in the Middle East later on and got shot in the leg and she, Mum tried to get me bought out and she said "He's underage, get him out". And she wrote to me, we were corresponding and she knew where I was of course then, but they discharged

26:00 I'm sorry, and I was a QX7482 when I was first enlistment and they put me out because they said I was unfit for service and I didn't pass my fit for service. I did fifty-six days, I think I did. Normally discharge us from there anyway. And the reason they were (UNCLEAR) because they suspected I was underage. So I went out and I went back to work and then, that's when Mum done her lolly because I'd done the wrong thing by her. The second time,

26:30 I, she knew I was going in the second time because I told her, I said "I'm going and if you don't let me in I'll go and join the navy." I said "That's worse", like I said "In the army, if I get hit I can walk home", I said "join the navy, it's a long way to swim", I said "I can't swim". So, and she said, oh, and pop said "Let him go". So away, and I had two sisters, Edna and Joan, the two girls and myself. And everything I'd do was, I was older, I was the eldest and every thing I would do

27:00 I'd get the blame for, they'd do wrong, I'd get the blame for it. Edna's fallen down the stairs and she fell down the stairs and cut her head open on a piece of tin and "Who done that?", she said "Oh, Fred done that". And she was, we're good mates still but everything I did, Edna was this high and I was, you know, about four or five years older but everything, I was supposed to look after them. Put her on a pushbike and showed her how to use a pushbike and,

27:30 but she always knew everything my sister, the elder sister, she said "I know exactly what I'm doing". I said "I'll put you on the pushbike, now, we're going down the hill", I said "So you know where your footbrake is?", she said "Yes, there", and she puts her foot on the footbrake. So let her go and away she went straight into a barbwire fence. She had to get seventeen stitches up the inside of her leg. She went straight through the fence. And I got the blame for pushing her through the fence. So, I always seemed to be the bloke that always got the blame so

28:00 we put up with it and we're all good mates but she just lost her husband a couple of weeks ago or a couple of months ago and my younger sister, she lost her husband about four or five years ago. He was a warden at the asylum at Goodna and he was chief warder or head nurse or something at Goodna and he of course had some trouble or something. He wasn't army, he never joined the army

28:30 but he just collapsed one day and died he, a heart attack or something. So they're both widows, we still, I ring them every couple of days and say hello. My sisters, when you start talking to them on the phone they keep on going all day. Faint when I see the phone bill sometimes.

When you, sorry, but when you joined up that would've been the start of World War II, is that correct?

That was, dead right, yes.

So when,

29:00 **where were you when you heard that the war was declared?**

In the movie theatre in Booval. The three of us, three mates we were in the movie theatre in Booval, I can't remember the name of it now but, you know Booval is up near Ipswich. And we were in there and it come through that the war was, they'd, the Germans had invaded Poland and

29:30 was Chamberlain saying "We are now at, from this day we are at war". So we just thought, "Well, they're at war, we're going to be at war too", so we left the movie theatre and went straight up to the drill hall in Ipswich and the old RSM [Regimental Sergeant Major] up there, old Jimmy Reid, he was in bed sleeping, it was about nine o'clock at night. And hammered on his door and he sung out "I don't know who it is, but you better have a bloody good excuse", and he'd

30:00 woken up and (UNCLEAR). So the three of us, we're standing outside his door and "What's the matter?", I said "We want to join up", "What do you mean you want to join up?", "I want to join the army", I said "We're at war with the Germans", "Oh no, we're at war with the bloody Germans". So fair enough so he said "Now, go down to my office, down to my quarters, and smart, and quick", he said "otherwise you'll be the first casualties". So we left and of course of course we hopped in our

30:30 various modes of transport, tried the old WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK , the old train down to Brisbane and went to Kelvin Grove and re-enlisted again, that was my second time round. I come up with QX12598 this time, that was my new regimental number. They passed me through and I didn't make any excuses to why I was discharged the first time, I just said "I wasn't even in the army the first time, really". They just took me in, the doc said to me, he said, "Oh, you look pretty fit son", I said "I'm fit", he said,

31:00 I'd been boxing, we were also boxing and carrying on and doing all sort of nonsense. And he said "You look fit", and I said "I'm fit sir". And he said "I'm not too much worried. You've got two eyes, that's all we need now, only two eyes so you can see, if you can see", he said "you're in". And anyway, we had to go back through the board again, three doctors and they passed me A one so I went in again. And it was six weeks this next time training at

31:30 Gaythorne, on the rifle ranges learning to fire rifles, doing guard duty, all this sort of nonsense. Then they put us in the train and sent us to Ingleburn and then we were there about a fortnight, they give us a week's, seven days leave, pre-embarkation leave. Got us home, we got home, I was home about four days and the military police picked me up and took me back to Sydney. They said "They're in a hurry for you blokes.

32:00 So all you people on leave they need back to Sydney quick smart" so they put us in trucks and that and took us to the station Roma Street at South Brisbane put us on the train back to Ingleburn. Got down there and everybody's packing their gear up and we got packed up and they told us, we asked everybody where we were going and they said "Hush, hush, dead secret". Everyone seemed to know where we were going except us all the time. And they said "Well we'll send you to, you're going out

32:30 to Woolloomooloo this afternoon and be boarding ships", "Well that's what we want to know, where are we going?", "Going to Woolloomooloo to board ships". A Duntroon officer's telling us this, this is what made me crack again about Duntroon. And they said "The, Eagle Cape was outside, the Germans and Italians, they want to know this sort of stuff, that's why you've got to be silent. Close the lips" and things like this. So I said "Okay".

33:00 We get to Woolloomooloo, it's dark, went there in trucks. We had big numbers on the front of our caps, in our hat bands, number seventeen, number eleven, number ten. That was the way we were on board the ship. And also was your name was on a roll book. I was number five, I think, and number five was Williams, Frederick, that's how it come on, that's on the roll book so I'm on board and we were on board the

33:30 Aquitania. There was the Aquitania, the Mauritania, the New Amsterdam and the Queen Mary, they were the four ships. They were all Cunard Blue Star Lines and we had a ship the Black Prince, it was from New Zealand, a New Zealand destroyer, it was going to be our escort where we were going. And we were still asking where we were going and they said "There's a war on, you know that", and

34:00 we said "Yeah, the wars are over the place. The Italians are fighting and the Germans are fighting in Europe everywhere", we wanted to know where we were going. They said "You're not going to be told, sealed orders, the captain will let you know, the captain of the ship will let you know when you're about two days out". So we went on board anyway, and we were still happy about being soldiers, you know, big time soldiers, all kids most of us, none of us were over eighteen. And we looking out over the side of the ship, and then they started

34:30 playing, the band started playing "Aloha we", "Maori Farewell" and all those sort of things. And of course it started to hit us that where are we, are we in for, you know, I was on deck, I finished up nearly howling in the end, I thought "Oh, I don't know whether I want to go, I don't know whether I should go," I thought "No, to heck with it, I'm off, we're going somewhere and see where we end up, we'll find out". So we put up and as the ship had, we loaded it and moved out from the wharf and

35:00 dropped the anchor again and the other three ships would come in and get their loads on. And away we went in convoy and went across to Perth. And from Perth into the Indian Ocean and I thought "Indian Ocean, we're going toward the Middle East". I thought we were going to England, to be quite frank. And because I'd been studying up about the different areas and conflicts anyway, we got to a place called Trincomalee just outside Colombo,

35:30 took us about eight or nine days to get there and we went ashore, we were there about six hours. And then the other three ships took off and left us, left our ship behind, the Aquitania and nobody told us still where we were going or what, we knew we were heading in the right direction, we didn't know where we were going to finish up. And then our skipper come on board and he said, or he was on board, he come to us and called a parade and he said

36:00 all of us on the Aquitania were going to Bombay. We were going to offload at Bombay and go inland to a place called Poona. I said "Yeah, we're going to Poona and we've got to quell riots", the Indians were rioting and we had to go to quell riots and the unstable times in India. And we'd be camped with the

Ghurkhas [Regiment of Nepalese fighting under British Army], the Ghurkhas were the real savage soldiers. We landed in Bombay, were given a day to walk around the town and

36:30 enjoy ourselves and they said “You’ve got to be back here at three o’clock”. We walked around Bombay, all over Bombay, Grant Road, all different streets, got into trouble with the snake charmers sitting there with their baskets and king cobras coming out of the baskets and they’re playing the pipes and we hadn’t seen any of this stuff in our life, you know. Anyway, one of my mates he decided he’d let one of these cobras go. He turned the basket upside down and the cobra was left on the footpath. And

37:00 the military police came down, we got bloody on shore about fifteen military police, Pommy military police swarming all over us and made us go back to our units. And we didn’t go back, we went back and they took us back and as soon as they turned their back we were gone again, we had the day till three o’clock, that was the RO [?] orders. So at three o’clock we got back there and they took us, put us on trains and we went up great mountain areas,

37:30 took us all day, all night to get up there to Poona, Poona racecourse and they camped us on that. And the Ghurkhas, our barracks were up the hill about a hundred yards away. So that was a good thing and we thought “What about all these people rioting?”, we never saw any of these rioting people, we saw one burial, saw them burying a character in Bombay, and had him on a big slab. No coffin, just

38:00 had the body on a slab and two, the six, six pall bearers, a marble slab, there was one bloke there, one bloke there like in pairs carrying in on their shoulder. This bloke’s gone and got his head lying over the side of the slab, I thought “He doesn’t look like he’s even dead”, you know, I hadn’t seen a dead body before. Oh, in the younger days and saw Boytle, the bloke we saw drowned, we saw his body. And

38:30 this bloke, they put him in a hole in the wall, this big brick wall, big slab of concrete wall, and they put the body in this concrete hole and they set fire to it. And they put a concrete, you know, the next day they put a concrete lid over there. We followed this thing around, and they, we couldn’t be out of the convoy, we got in following these people around, once we were in there, all these mourners, we got stuck in and they wouldn’t let us out.

39:00 Because we were following the coffin, they thought we were someone else or something I think, I don’t know, but they kept us, we had to stay there until the whole thing, till the ceremony was finished and everything else so we got out of that. And then we went to the Willing Club was a British officer’s club and we were, the three of us, myself, Louie Donnelly and Tommy Ginney. We walked down to the Willing Club and we said “We’ll have, go and have a few drinks of good old Pommy beer, see what it tastes like”.

39:30 So we got down there, they wouldn’t let us in. Anyway, we were outside this wire netting fence looking in and two women playing tennis there and one’s whacking it across the to the next one and they’re going backwards and forwards having a good old set. And Tommy Ginney, he was a top tennis player, Queensland champion as a matter of fact, singles champ. And he said to me, he says “I’ll have a go at this mob”. And he sang out to her, “Excuse me madam”,

40:00 this woman stopped, a real pucker English woman she was, she said “My name’s Taylor, Mrs Taylor, my husband’s Lieutenant Colonel Roger Taylor” and Tom says “I wanted to ask you a question, I didn’t want to know your life’s history”, you know, and she says “Where do you come from?” she snarled more or less at him and Tom said “We come from Australia”, she said “They’re not Austrian clothes you’ve got on there, they’re different, Austria’s a cold place”, he said “Australia”. She

40:30 said “Don’t you know anything?”, and he said, he said talking to her “Don’t you know anything, madam, Australia, call it down under, we’re part of the British empire”. And she said “With those stupid hats on?” she went to the hats, turned them to the side, and she couldn’t make, he had, he said “What do you want to know?”, he said “I want to know what you’re playing there”. She, “We’re playing tennis”, she didn’t know Tom was a tennis player and she said to him “You know

41:00 something about that? Tennis”, he said “Yes”, “That’s a racquet”, she said showed him her racquet, “That’s a tennis racquet, that’s the ball, you strike it backwards and forwards”, we’d been watching it. And Tom said “You reckon we could have a shot at it?” and she said “Yeah”, reluctantly “Yes”, so she opened this big wire gate and let us in. And see there were two women there, two younger women, they were her daughters and her partner’s daughter were playing just previously. “You have a go with them and they’re younger than we are

41:30 and they’ll put you two in your place”. So I didn’t have a go but Bluey Donnelly and, my other mate, and Tom decided they, took a racquet each. And the first one Tom hit, he hit it and it finished up about fifteen acres away, went over the top of the top wire fence. And she stood there shaking her head, anyway, so I got into it then, he went and got another ball and he got into it. He cleaned them out sort of thing and she went crook at us because we told her lies, we didn’t know how to play the game. I didn’t know how to play tennis

42:00 but the other two did. And that’s, that went on and on

Tape 2

00:30 **Okay Fred, right again. We just played tennis?**

Yeah well then, we, a funny thing happened to us in India, that we were in a big marquee, we were camped in a big marquee. We had to erect them ourselves and we also had big canvas tents. And the cooks would cook your meal for you and they'd have, serve them out on these EP [EPIP –English Patent, Indian Product], what they called EP tables. And they

01:00 thing and we'd go through, get and egg or a bit of bacon and that perhaps or a bit of water buffalo, whatever they cooked in India at the time, it was, food, it was terrible food. And they had what they called sacred hawks - and they are sacred hawks, they had the, big eagle type things. And as you'd walk out with your tucker to go and have a feed, you'd go to your mess tent to eat your meals, you'd walk out and by the time you got to your tent

01:30 all your stuff's gone. These hawks coming out of the sky in thousands and talons would grab your food and away they'd go. So we finished up getting these, well they were condoms. And they, we'd blow them up with a pump, these truck pumps and make it like a big balloon. And we'd tie the steak to the end of that and the next thing you'd see a, they'd get it in their talon, food in the hawk's talon and they'd grab and this great balloon, dragging this big balloon along and they used to get them down.

02:00 And the Indians got really cranky about it because they were sacred to the Indians. They used to, they pray and worship the cows and the hawks. That's and cows got beads on it, cow's got a ring of beads round it's neck, it's very sacred. And that was, that was really, we were only there for a short time, we were only there for about three weeks, four weeks or something in India. And working and drilling and we were

02:30 supposed to be stopping arguments and troubles between the tribes and nothing was happening. And when our clothes got dirty, you weren't allowed to wash your own clothes because you couldn't be the same as the Indians were. They were our servants and we had to treat them as such and we couldn't dare, wouldn't dare wash a handkerchief or a pair of shorts or something like that. They had to come and do a Dhobi wallah, they used to call them. And they'd come and they'd take your clothes and they'd take them down to the creek. And I had a pair of

03:00 beautiful, I had my army clothes, even though they were pretty rough stuff they issued us with, I used to have them seams and everything else, beautiful, they were well looked after. And I was always classified as being well dressed in the army. I'm standing watching these characters sitting on the bank, they've got a big rock and punching the hell out of the legs of my trousers. And I went up and abused heck out of her, I said "What do you think you're doing?", it's a woman, and "What do you think you're doing with my clothes?" "Me washing, me washing",

03:30 I said "You'll put big holes in the trousers with the great big rock you're hitting them with", "They number one, they number one". Anyway they came back they were pressed, they were pressed with the right starch and everything else. They were terrific when she bought them back. And I thought you wouldn't get many wears out of them after they belt the hell out of them with these rocks. That's the way they go, the photos was in the, in that album there. And we went really crook at them, anyway, that was about the main fact that had happened

04:00 during our stay in India. And for no purpose at all they wanted us in the Middle East all of a sudden. And nobody told us where we were going, it's the same old procedure, secrecy. Put us back on this old junky train and back we go to Bombay and off load at Bombay. We hopped on another ship, it was the Joanne Dewitt, I think it was called. It was a Dutch troop ship. And we got on board that and I can't remember the name of the escort but that doesn't

04:30 matter. Next thing we're on our way to Suez Canal and we were there for several days before we got in the Suez of course. We get in the Suez and go to Port Tewfik, the Egypt side of Port Said and got off the train, into Port Tewfik, Kantara it was. And had our meal there, another junk meal, getting used to all this rubbish they were throwing at us. Some of it,

05:00 oh, the most shocking stuff. I don't know how the Arabs lived on it, it might have been camel, I don't know if it was camel, it was supposed to be steaks. Anyway, we got stuck into it and after a while you got used to it. And they took us across the canal, put us on the train again and then on into Palestine, into a place called Dimra, that was our first training camp.

What was it like Fred to be in the country, or in the surrounding country, that Lawrence [Lawrence of Arabia, British solider famous for befriending the Arabs during World War I] had been in?

05:30 Oh it was, well, I was always looking forward, just to the left of Mecca where the, Sea of, we were almost in Mecca when you get out Port Tewfik. And to me it was just a great thrill because I walked on, in the same footsteps as he walked in. Always in my mind, as strange as it might be, since seven years of age, and it's something that, it's funny how something clicks that you're going to be following that person's,

06:00 a particular person's footsteps. Doesn't matter if it's a nurse or a doctor, or who it its, you're going to be the same. And I admired him but I admired him because of his straight forwardness, perhaps, because he was against authority as authority stands. Signing papers and things like that, and these things as long as he's doing it his way and that's the way it will go and that's the way I did most of my work in

later years in career and things like that, I did what I wanted

06:30 to do the way I wanted to do it. I'd be told how it's got to be done but I'd be going up in the ranks a bit then and I'd say "Well yes sir, yes sir, no sir, three bags full sir" and then I'd go out on patrol and have a fighter, a night fighter, might be lay out patrol, might be an ambush patrol or a fighting patrol and I'd do it the way I knew how to do it. And all my guys that I had under me, they were told what they were, what I was going to do and we always got away with it. And we're still here

07:00 to tell the story so, others didn't make it because they wouldn't, they listened to strict orders. I don't orders mean a thing in the services as long as you've got it up here [brain] and a bit of initiative and a bit of self enlightenment the way you do things. It was a, it's an experience that, it's hard to, my wife, my family can't understand. I can,

07:30 after about twenty-five years in the services sort of become a serviceman. And I can't relate with other people who haven't been in the services or anything like that. I can't, I listen to them and talk to them, like sister-in-laws and brother-in-laws and that, I can't converse with them because they have never been in the services. And they've got things on their own mind where they're lighthearted things,

08:00 they do and they way they do, a beaut fish off Tangalooma or somewhere last week, shot a kangaroo out in the sticks somewhere at Wallgett or something but sort of doesn't relate and the comradeship in the services or something, you live for each other. So my mate against me is no good for me in the company. He's got to be, we've got to be on the same

08:30 plane all the time. I've got to be doing what I want to do, you'll follow me or you'll give me advice on something I might be wrong in and we'll, that's why we're going to survive. And you survive that way all through life. And you can't do that outside. It, you get orders out here are different and orders, now people at work, they want to do things their way. Well if it's the boss, you've got to do it because that's what he wants. If it fails, you get the blame for doing it wrong anyway

09:00 so that's the way I think you'll live, that's the way you build your life around.

Had you made some good mates by the time you got to your training camp in Palestine?

Oh yes, oh yes. We were all, it had drilled in us from day one that that guy standing next to you and that guy that side of you, they're your lifeline. And they're your friends and you stay friends. But you never have two, you want to have two brothers in the same platoon or the same company.

09:30 I wouldn't have that. It couldn't be relevant to anybody else in society because if he got into trouble and you got wounded, you could hold the whole thing up trying to, you're his brother I'm going to look after him. And he breaks the line and the whole thing becomes a shemozzle. It's not allowable, it's not permissible. And it's a good idea too because we had two, Brugemans their name was.

10:00 Lionel Brugeman and I can't remember his brother's name now, but they were both killed on the Ioribaiwa Ridge in Owen Stanleys [Ranges]. We were all together going up this, into the Owen Stanleys and he was, they fired a burst of a burp gun at us and one Brugeman brother went down. He went down and he was badly wounded, he was laying on this stomach and his brother pulled back, Clarry his brother's name was, he pulled back to

10:30 grab him and see if he was alright. Well it broke our concentration on what we were doing in the rest of the section and we lost another guy, Jeff Usher, he only got married about three days before he went to New Guinea and he, it was about a fortnight before he was married, I suppose before he was killed. He said to me, he told me this would be the day, he told me in the morning, he had a feeling "I'm not going to make it", he says and he hadn't been hit, he was walking up this

11:00 mountain and the mountain gun hit us and these burp guns started screaming at us. You couldn't see any Japs or anything around the place, you never saw them, always hiding up trees somewhere firing at you. And we'd have saved Jeff's life as well as probably his brother's life if he had not broken out. His brother could've rolled down the hill and stayed there. He wasn't critically wounded actually, he got another slug when his brother stopped to pick him up.

11:30 If he'd let him go, rolled him off down the hill and then look after himself. We were at, there was nobody behind us, we'd beaten the enemy behind us, they were up in front of us, firing this way. And if he'd have done the right thing we'd have saved at least two lives that particular day. And it's the way it's meant to be but you get to think the same as each other. Like, as I said, Jeff said to me "Today's my day". He knew he was going to go

12:00 today, and it was only about an hour later that he was killed. But you sort of, well, you're living with a bloke day by day and you don't, you're not, you think "Oh, I've got to get out of this place", but you don't, if somebody said "You can go out and go on leave", you wouldn't go. You know, you're with your mates and you're going to stay here till the last bloke comes out.

Sorry Fred, I interrupted you. Could you,

12:30 **I'll take you back to Palestine, can you tell us about the training camp and continue your story?**

Yeah, the training camp at, the first training camp was at Dimra. A place in Palestine, oh, Barbara was the first place, a place called Barbara. And we were there for about a week and we went from Barbara to, at this stage I was in what they call the 1st ACML and D, that was the 1st Australian Corp Mobile Laundry and Decontamination Unit, they were expecting gas

13:00 attacks. And we had to be trained gas experts to, if a gas attack came on, we had to be able to make it become inert and things like that. We used to have special courses and we used to do that. And that was what our job was but then it was very mundane and there was no gas anyway so I said "What are we here for?". So we transferred, oh, a couple of my mates and myself, we decided we'd transfer to the infantry battalion, by which I stayed right throughout my army career.

13:30 We came into infantry, I asked my CO [Commanding Officer] if I could apply for transfer, yes, I was, as a matter of fact, I was acting Corporal at the time. And I asked him if I could transfer, he said "You're trained in gas decontamination", I said "Yeah, but there's no gas", so he said "Righto, it's up to you." he said, "If you want you want to, I'll sign the application". And

14:00 the next thing I know I was eight weeks at Barbara, from there at Barbara to Dimra in the 2/9th Battalion. It was 18 AITB, they were called, 18th Australian Infantry Training Battalion, it was a reinforcement depot so that if somebody got killed at Tobruk and they were short of one man, they'd pop in from our training depot. We trained there, oh, I would say walking miles in the stupid desert and up to your knees in

14:30 sand. And you'd go out and the landscape you'd start to attack in, you'd go out and all of a sudden, you'd go out about five or six mile and walking and sick and tired of the whole thing and walk back and you'd see all these mounds of dirt. A sort of blizzard would come through, like a sand storm had come through while you were, after you'd past and there were all these sand dunes everywhere. And I used to ride a motorbike, I was doing Don R [Despatch Rider] work for them too

15:00 and you'd go and, I'd go along that road here, nice and flat, on the way back you couldn't find your way back, mounds of sand dunes would be all over the place. And in some cases, they had a plough, like a snowplough kind of thing and push the sand away and find the bitumen, if there was any bitumen there. But that was an every day occurrence. At night time and you could go to the, your loos were parked all over the

15:30 place, the latrines were parked at all different places and you had to have a line, a white line, a white tape would go from where your bed was to the first latrine and star pickets in. That's the way you went, you always had your hand on this thing. A snowstorm, a sand storm could come in and instant and you couldn't find your way back to your tent or where your cot was, where your bed was. Your bed was a sleeping bag, but you'd never find your way home

16:00 again type of thing. And it was almost daily, you'd get a storm just about every day. You know, a sand storm and desert fleas and desert sand flies and they used to play hell with us. They used to, your arms and that are full of ulcers and that from the sand flies. The fleas would drive you crazy at night and you'd had, you'd dig yourself

16:30 a bunker to go into, like a, as your room, dig it in the sand, you'd go to breakfast and come back and find your bedroom's half full of sand, you'd have to dig it out again. But it'd just fall and collapse behind itself all the time. But we used to get, in a couple of places, plenty of water, salt water, like in the sea. Used to get buckets of water and throw it on the sand to keep the sand wet. But about twenty minutes it's dry again and it all starts

17:00 crumbling in again so that was the way you lived for a couple of years. But certain areas it was good, you had good solid ground under you. Tobruk was alright, Giarabub was pretty sandy, Benghazi was good, we did raids and everything else there. A pretty sandy little sand too. But Hellfire [Halfaya] Pass, that was all sand. So you

17:30 had most of your time lifting sand and you'd have your patrol in the sand. And that was the biggest part, when you went out on a fighting patrol or a patrol of some sort, was to get out and find your way home again. You always had your prismatic compass, that was your most vital bit of equipment. If you didn't find that you'd be, you could be, you finished up in Germany before you even knew where you were going. But you'd put the thumb on the ring of the prismatic compass and take a reading and take it back with you so you'd go out on that reading

18:00 and come back on the back reading and you'd find you way back to the spot within inches of where you started off. But in the excitement of patrols, fighting patrols and things like that, you'd go out and you'd have a fight and you're pretty jumpy, you're pretty jittery and the, I don't car who he is, nobody's not scared. You get scared, I've been so scared I thought "What am I doing here? I wish to God I was home". But I've never

18:30 had no fear, no fear, but I don't know if I can, there's two different things between fear and being scared. Like this idiot over in America at the moment, Bush, he's making people scared and feared. He's the, the sooner they get rid of him the better the whole world will be, he's caused all this trouble we've got now. And he's going out the same way and if you let fear beat you, you've lost the

19:00 game, you've lost the plot altogether. But you know, it's things like that in there, but that's the way I feel

about it.

No, it's really good to hear actually. So how did you beat fear in the field?

Well, the way I beat fear in the field, I got wounded, shot in the leg there. It's almost faded out now. I bought, I had, you've got gaiters on

19:30 like those khaki gaiters and we were fighting the Italians at the time, the Black Shirts. And they had us under a bit of a bad moment one stage there and they were firing pretty heavily on us and I had an olive tree in front of me, that's all I had as cover and it was about, oh, a foot through. This part of me was covered, that part of me there, this part was out. And anyway,

20:00 I felt this little sting like a, oh, like somebody hit me with a stick in the side of the leg and "What the hell was that?". I thought it was a fly or a bee or something, and looked down and everything felt "Looks alright there". And anyway, then I started to feel, oh, sticky stuff in my boot. And thought "Christ I've been hit" and I started to panic. That was the first time I've ever been hit with a bullet of any sort,

20:30 no, oh God, I felt, I'll be home, they'll put me out and put me out and throw me back to Australia, home, you know. Anyway, I took my gaiter off and my boot and I had a couple mates, they were around me, you're by yourself, the whole section was there. Took my boot off and looked and it's full of blood. "God, I'm bleeding, what's happened there?" and looked through my gaiter and there's little holes, bullet holes. And I thought "If that's all that

21:00 happens when you get wounded, I don't give a damn any more", you know, and once they, any fear I ever had was gone with that particular shot. It just felt like it was, you don't feel a thing. When I lost this, I didn't even know it'd gone. See the holes though that arm there, that's a burst of machine gun. That arm I came to get, have the arm amputated and it got amputated above the elbow and I said "No, you're not taking that off". And

21:30 that was in Tokyo, the doctor in Tokyo, an American surgeon, "You're not taking my arm off mate", and he said "I'm the boss here, you're not the boss here, I'm the boss", he said "I'll take it off", I said "No you're not". So I stood up and started putting my clothes on, was going to walk out of the joint, and he put me on a, he said "I'm putting you on a charge sheet, you're under arrest". So I said "You're not taking my arm off", he said "Well it'll either be done here or done be back in your own Toorad [?] hospital", the British hospital in

22:00 Toorad [Kure?], southern Japan, southern Honshu. I said "Well you won't be taking it off", I got down to Honshu and the doctor there, he was the better, easy to talk to. He said "We might be able to get it saved, it'll mean you have to go back to the mainland of Australia to get it done though". So he sent me back home and got all that. But it used to cramp up, used to cramp up all the time. I was doing something, all of a sudden the nerves in that area there with the

22:30 skin graft and rebuilt, that part of the arm was rebuilt and the nerves, it would feel, and that's how I lost my hand. I was training National Servicemen at a later date and I was, we were doing quick decision exercises, was making up explosives and the next day, for exercises the next day out at Greenbank and I had this, a dummy grenade made up. And it was a CU primer,

23:00 and I had a detonator in it and everything else. And I was showing this character how it works and I said, "Light a cigarette", and he lit a cigarette, put the tip of the cigarette on it and it started to, the fuse started to burn. And I said "See, it's burning now, get rid of it, you've got five seconds to get rid of it". Anyway, when I went to throw it my arms were cramped on it. Next thing, away went the lot. And it didn't take the lot, my thumb was still hanging and the tip of

23:30 my finger was still hanging and the next thing I was in Greenslopes [Repatriation Hospital]. And that's how that went off. But the paper account of it there, it reads entirely different. They've me down as being eighteen times. I was wounded fifteen or sixteen times I suppose in that period and they're not even, most of them are wounded remaining on duty, you know, been nicks and things like that. Or I've got a plate

24:00 in my skull that was from a grenade. Had my head up and it took half the top of my head away and there's a platinum plate there. And a couple of, bits here and there.

You were leaving bits of yourself all over the world, weren't you?

It's all fun. Oh well.

And after that first wounding in the leg, none of it worried you.

No, didn't worry me ever since. And I've taught all, I've

24:30 trained a lot of recruits, and I've told them "Never worry about getting hit, because only three things can happen. The first one, you get wounded, you don't feel it and you put a bandage round it and go back on duty. The second one you can get killed, don't worry you because you're not around to think about it. And third one, it's a good one, it takes you home", I said "it's you get wounded bad enough that you can't soldier on any more, they'll send you back home to your mother and

25:00 family or your wife and family. If you think on that line then nothing can go wrong". And a lot of them

believe that's right too, I always believed it. The first time you is always the worst. Once you get hit once, I don't care where you're hit, I've got hit there, I've got one in the hip and one in the stomach and I've never felt one of them. And the one in the hip I gave my wife and my kids and myself

25:30 went to New Zealand recently, oh, a couple of years ago. And I got to the airport, they wouldn't let me into the airport. It comes up on the machine when you go to the, like go to Eagle Farm. And we almost missed the plane. They took, made me go in, strip-searched and everything else. And he said "Have you got", I've got a docket now which is from repat [repatriation board –now the Department of Veterans Affairs] which says I have metallic substances in my stomach, you know,

26:00 and things like that.

And has, the metal in your stomach, is that bits of shrapnel or is that?

No, bullets.

It's still a bullet.

But they wouldn't take it out. The same time as this was done, it was on the 5th of November 1950. And I, at a place called Pakchon and I get the, in the stomach it was too far in and they say it was safer to leave it there because it would,

26:30 eventually it will probably evaporate or die out. But to take it out, they could ruin some of the nerves in the stomach and they asked me "Did I want it out?", and I said, "No leave it there" and I was quite happy to have it there, it's an old friend. So that's where it is. It's a bit of a problem when you go overseas or something like that. Or decide to go for a holiday somewhere and you'll be on a plane for some stupid distance they got through you,

27:00 we went to get my son-in-law, my brother-in-law off the plane a couple of months ago. Only went into the visiting area to the thing, and they stopped me, wouldn't let be go through because of my stomach. I never had my card with me either. So had to stay out with, stay down the front of the place and my wife went and picked him up. But

Fred, can you tell us about,

27:30 **I guess, the Bardia campaign for you, and what your involvement in that was?**

In Bardia, very little because we were at Dimra and I was, as I said, I was a reinforcement and in those days, that ACMO [?] in there went to Dimra would become, you'd be plucked out of the group to go. If they had a guy got enough experience they'll go but they thought I was too young to go but I wasn't, I was in Bardia,

28:00 and Buna, Hellfire Pass, but only on short trips. Like might go up there for two patrols, might do, might do a standing patrol, a fighting patrol or a lay out patrol and you'd be bussed back down to where you started out, back to Dimra again and back to Alexandria and back to Dimra.

So this is life as a reinforcement.

Yeah well, see that was the worst, if you were a battalion original you got it well but I,

28:30 to me, as I said before, the Middle East was a game to me. It was a, wasn't a joke but, it was, a lot of people were dying around me, but we were sort of second class citizens as far as the battalions were concerned because we weren't original members. Same as, I left them to go to the Middle, to go to Syria, up into, the Lebanese, the seas of Lebanon and places like that. The same thing happened there, we went

29:00 there as reinforcements from 2/9th Battalion to build up their strength at Syria because they were fighting against Vichy French [French who sympathised with their German occupiers] and we went up there, Beirut, Haifa, Tripoli, we finished up in Tripoli, Merdjayoun, and that's where Cutler got his VC [Victoria Cross], at Fort Khiam actually he got his VC. But a mate of mine was with him when he got, lost his leg but

29:30 he was, a terrific bloke that Ray [Arthur Roden] Cutler, he was a man of, he was a Sergeant, he was a soldier, I man a soldier. He went, finished up doing Duntroon eventually but he was a soldier of the old school, come up through the ranks. And he'd do anything, he wouldn't tell you to do a job and he'd sit back having a cup of coffee in his tent. He'd

30:00 be, he'd go out and do the job, find and do the job first, he might take you along as a companion type of thing. But that was the type of guy he was. And he bought these artillery fire, he was an artillery officer. He bought the fire down on himself to win the position, which he won and he cost, saved us a lot of lives. And he was a man you always admired, I admired him as a civilian, I admired him all his, right through his career as a matter of fact.

30:30 He was one of the guys, one of the men. If you saluted him he'd say, "Put your hand away".

How did you first get to know him over in the Middle East, was that where you first met him?

Well he, yeah, the first time I met Ray was in the Middle East was in that Port Khiam. We were in the same, 2/46th Battalion, we were fighting in the same area, they were our support artillery. And he was, Sep Thompson, that was his signaller,

31:00 to bring in the fire on the various, whatever order he gave, he'd bring the fire down on that order. And Ray would stay there and wait to see that it landed okay and he got out again. But Sep used to, I used to, we were mates and we were good mates and then I got to know Ray sort of thing. And he used to say "If it gets too rough here, we'll get out", you know, but he had a, we were infantry and he was artillery, you've got to have your

31:30 infantry and you've got to have the artillery back up. So that, you meet them all, you meet all the fire control officers and you know them all by their first names and you usually call them by their first names until you're on, out of action or on parade or something like that and you start shaking, bringing your hand up and saluting and carrying on. But he, with me, he won the VC and was as well won as ever won by anybody. But

32:00 Sep should've got, Sep Thompson, he should've got a decoration too but he wasn't interested. He wouldn't accept it, he was put up for one but they wouldn't give it to him. That was his tale and he was, and then we lost lots of, he said once, Ray Cutler said there was one thing he was taught when he was with us. Ray was with Colonel Marden who was our OC [Officer Commanding] fellow, he was later

32:30 a Colonel, he was captain. And he said "If we get here, if we stay in this", we were behind a big brick wall and he says "If it gets too rough in here, we'll have to leave" because the Vichy were coming up the hill in tanks and they were firing these seventy-five millimetre shells at us. And Aub Read, his batman [officer's servant] said "If it gets any tougher" he said "we're not going to move, we'll be staying here", he said "We'll be planted here".

33:00 Anyway, no sooner he got the words out of his mouth, I see Ray Cutler go up to him, he decided he'd attack across into a gully and as he ducked into the gully this tank comes straight through the wall and knocks the wall down. And they got out in time but it was one of those things that.

So what was your first action, the first time you got into battle and got shot at?

Was Yarrabah. Yarrabah in

33:30 Egypt and, well Egypt was our first, was our main course. It was from Bardia, Benghazi, down the Hellfire Pass, Buna, not Buna, what's the name now, starts with B.

34:00 Anyway, it was all on the coastline from Fort Capuzzo at, right in Italy coming right around, they tried to control the whole lot. We didn't fight any Germans to start off with; I had nothing to do with Germans at all, mainly Italians. But they were, didn't want to fight either because, one little instance, one of the guys decided he had to get up and go to the toilet, to go to the loo at night. And he went out,

34:30 he come back and he had sixty, fifty blokes with him. Went out by himself, five or ten minutes before and he come back with sixty blokes, he didn't know, he was in the right, they were all Italians.

So he came back with sixty prisoners?

Yeah. They all through their rifles and put their hands in the air and followed him back in.

And he was just going to the toilet.

Yeah, he went to relieve himself and he finished up with, we had a hell of a job trying to place them into

35:00 the right place. And the old Waterhen that got sunk at Tobruk, that was a British warship. And with all the cargo on board was salvageable so we had, we were sent to salvage the cargo on this jetty, a big long jetty. And while we were salvaging the cargo the Zeroes, not the Zeroes [Japanese fighters], the Stukas [German Junkers dive bombers] were flying in. They were coming in and they had the

35:30 jetty as a target and they zoomed down but they were terrible shots and they didn't hit us. But I had a tin of bully beef or big box of bully beef, I got on my shoulders and I just hurled, I threw it in the sea and jumped in the sea after it. But you could see these bullets coming along the wharf towards you, think "I'm not going to get stuck in front of one of those".

Just a question on that though. I mean, if you're standing on a wharf or even a road, and you've seen a Stuka come

36:00 **down and you can see the line of**

You see the line of bullets, exactly, you jump to the side.

So you can actually get out of the way of the?

You get a ricochet occasionally but that's the way, I didn't used to mind the Stukas because they'd come and you could see the tail gunner, the tail gunners are the blokes firing at you. And the Stuka finishes it's dive before he takes it, as he takes it back up again like that, the tail gunners, he's peppering you. And you can follow his line, once you scope that line you keep out of that line. If he, if the plane

36:30 decides turn round and come again, you've got this game of cat and mouse. It happens all the time. But that's a bit fun, that's good fun that, in a lot of ways. Scares the hell out of you for the time it's happening, that's all. But it's nothing to be scared but to show fear is to my way of thinking is cowardice, you know. You let people convince you that that's going to be dangerous area you're going into there, if you show fear of that and you won't go

37:00 into it, that's a kind of cowardice.

Tape 3

00:30 **Fred, sorry, I just wanted to clarify where it was in the Middle East that you got shot in the leg?**

Girabub, G I R A B U B. [Giarabub] It's before Bardia.

Now you went in Tobruk by land, is that correct?

Yeah, yeah.

So that was, you were put on a Jeep, were you and taken?

No, this was by, went by train to Alexandria, from Alexandria you go across by truck,

01:00 across to Tobruk itself to the placements in Tobruk. It's the harbour is, Tobruk is a big harbour in the Mediterranean, it's based on the harbour. That's where they Waterhen was sunk coming into unload gear. And they sunk it and they were actually also a supply ship to us as well as doing navy and destroyer duties. And they got sunk,

01:30 there was two ships sunk at the same time, I can't think of the name of the other one. But the Waterhen was the name of the one I was interested in. That was when I was on lays, and you, and every time you'd go down there, the Stukas were always coming out of the sun. The Germans would come out of the sun and you can't see them until they're almost on top of you. And they're coming down, they come down awful low, come about thirty foot above your head and start peppering you with machine guns as they go away, as they

02:00 bank again and turn away that rear gunner is peppering you with the machine guns. The patrolling and stuff, it was very little I had to do with patrolling or anything like that in that particular area, oh, a few fighting patrols, a few lay out patrols in terms like an ambush patrol. But they're fairly insignificant because you've

02:30 got sand either side of you and you can see the, somebody can see the Germans. As a matter of fact, Christmas Day, I think it was Christmas Day, they even called the war off for a while. I wasn't actually there when that happened but I was being treated for what they called scabies, I got a dose of scabies I caught in the desert from rats and mice and things. And I was hospitalised. They called, according to all our records,

03:00 they called the war off for a day this Christmas Day and they were swapping, both sides were swapping postcards and cigarettes and drinks and everything else. They had a great old time and they let them go until a certain time and they called it off as under a, Rommel [Erwin Rommel, German Field Marshall] was in the desert then. The 2/9th Battalion was our Battalion. 9th Division was the other Division. They came in later, they were the real rats of Tobruk.

03:30 9th Division they had the T type patch, colour patch on their shoulders. They were Australian Divisioners, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th. 8th Division were of course in Malaya, they were prisoners of war. And 6th and 7th, I remember 6th, I was a member of 6th and I was a member of 7th Division. They kept on transferring me, it suited my travelling habits, I liked to go and have a look around. But we went

04:00 from 2/9th, we asked for, well, I was back in Dimra at the time again back at the AITB. At reinforcements you're only called out when they want you and you have your little squabble and you come back in to what they call ex-lists. You're ex-Tobruk or ex-Bardia or ex-Germany or something, like you've been up there but you've come back, they don't want you anymore because they can't feed you,

04:30 they've got to have, like whoever's on the ground they keep the numbers they need to win a certain operation. And there's always a way you look at it and you come back to your camp and as you come back to Dimra you're on ex-lists. And then as they, you can be detached to Greece, you can be detached to Crete, you can be detached to anywhere for a short period of time. And then

05:00 when you come back nobody wants you anyway, sort of, as I said before to Chris [interviewer], you're, if you're a reinforcement you're not an original. You're like a piece of new furniture that's not as good as the original piece you had. And they use you to suit themselves and you're sent back to a depot for further training or later date things or there might be a skirmish started up in a different

05:30 area altogether, you're sent to that. A reinforcement does as much work probably as, more work than

others but you do it in smaller, you might only be there for a day. A battle only lasts a short time. Sometimes, and this is the siege, well the siege of Tobruk, which I wasn't a part of the siege of Tobruk, that was more 9th Division at the siege of Tobruk. But they were there, and the siege there, from the time the siege starts to the time it finishes might be twelve months,

06:00 might be eighteen months. The 2/9th Battalion, 9th Division was caught like that, they were the Rats of Tobruk, they came back to help us in the Pacific later. Because we had to, we got pulled out to go back, come back to the Pacific. [Winston] Churchill [British Prime Minister] didn't want to let us go, he wanted to keep us in the Middle East. Our Prime Minister [John Curtin], he wanted us to come back here, he virtually insisted we come back to Australia and fight in New Guinea was

06:30 more important. But Churchill said "They can take Australia if they want" he said, "We can take it back later". That was his medium, that was what he believed in. So that's what happened but Curtin said "No, they might (UNCLEAR), they're coming back home". So they put us in a boat and brought us home and 6th Division stayed on for a while, 7th Division, we all came home and 6th Division, well some of them stayed

07:00 up there, some of them stayed, went, stayed over in Greece, some of them stayed in Crete but it sort of continued on in a manner that you've got to, you've got to appreciate it from the situation reports. You can't you have to have a report in front of you to know where they were at any given time. But as a battalion, you know where every man is. There's only a thousand and eighty in a battalion and you know

07:30 every bloke and where everybody is stationed at any one time. You may be detached but.

So do you think you transferred quite a lot during the Second World War, during your service days because you wanted conflict?

No I don't, no, I think I wanted a variation. See you had, in a country in the Middle East particularly, later in

08:00 the Pacific it was a different type of thing, it was jungle but in the Middle East you had sort of Monte Carlo conditions in Syria and you had the Arabic desert conditions in the other part. I wanted to how those, how you, how it was consistently changing. They had five climates. Now in the desert in the middle of the day, whether it's winter, summer

08:30 or whatever, you swelter, you sweat, you go dry because you can't lose any more water. You can't make any more perspiration. It goes on and on and on right through the day, right through from daylight, you get your dust storms during the day and right up until dusk and it sort of settles down. And degrees up to one hundred and twenty in the old scale of heat. As soon as the sun

09:00 sets you put an overcoat on. You freeze at nighttime in the desert, the sands of the desert grow cold and they, so you nearly freeze at night. We had a bloke, his name was Keene, K double E N E, and we used to call him Mustard because of Keene's Mustard. His name was, oh, I can't think of his first name, but I always knew him as Mustard. Mustard Keene. He was a bit of a larrikin and a bit of a hard case but

09:30 he was a little bit weird on top, he was a little bit bomb happy. And he, I shared a bunker with him for a while. And we got in this bunker and I couldn't say he used to snore like crazy and I'd try to get a bit of a kip, bit of sleep and Mustard's over the other side, from about here to that wall away and he's snoring his head off. And this particular day he said "I'm sick of these flies, these sand flies

10:00 and mosquitoes" I said, "I'll tell you what to do, Mustard", I said "There's a big" not a bowser, but "there's a big petrol depot over there behind the fence" a big mesh wire fence and these big forty-four gallon drums, thousands them. I said "Roll one of them over", I said "and pump some petrol out of them, put it in a sprayer and go through your, through our hoochie [tent], just blow the place out". That's not a bad idea", he says "that'll kill them won't it", I said "Yeah, that'll rid of the fleas", and I said "temporarily anyway. And it'll give us something to do". So Mustard goes,

10:30 he was on this night, I was down on the wharf, on the jetty, doing my job on the, off the Waterhen. Anyway, hear this great boom, and look up and Mustard's racing out of the, coming out of the hoochie. What he'd done, he'd sprayed the place out and sat on the end of his bed and lit a smoke. Boom, up went the lot. Well they finished up, he lost all his lower region he lost one of his testicles and

11:00 that and it's just stupid things like this. Bloody stupid, what do they call that out of the sky, they tried to shoot a Stuka out. He had a, had this Bois anti-tank rifle, a Bois anti-tank rifle it's a monstrous thing, it carries a shell this big, it's a point five five shell. He couldn't,

11:30 you can't carry it, it's on a bipod like that, and it's about six foot long, it's got a great big rubber cushion behind it and he said "I'll get these Stukas next time they come in". He put a sandbag out and he's behind it watching this Stuka come in and he's got a point five five slug in the rifle, pulls the trigger and it kicked him about forty feet away. You've got to have a certain position and a certain hold on those, you've got to be leaning

12:00 into them and he was, and this thing went boom and the gun sort of rebounded, come back and kicked him about forty feet in the opposite direction. And that was the same bloke, must be, he got, jeez he got into some troubles. But he never got the plane of course, the plane would've been five mile away before he pulled the trigger.

Did he survive the war?

He survived the war, yeah, but his mate, another mate, there was three of us,

12:30 his mate was Fraser, Birdie Fraser, he was younger than I was. Bernie is, he used to make bird noises. We used to call him Birdie. He got killed in Crete but he was fourteen. And he was a Tasmanian, he was, at his fifteenth birthday, his fifteenth birthday, that's right, in that area. And he got, he used to make a noise like a kookaburra

13:00 or a canary or anything you wanted. Just name the bird, he'd make the bird noise and that's why we called him Birdie Fraser. And he got a bit too careless and got himself killed. He was, he used to follow Mustard, whatever Mustard used to do, he'd do the same thing. I don't know, being a boy he thought Mustard was a bit of a hero to him. Mustard, as far as I was concerned, was a bit of a nitwit but I was saddled with him in my bunker.

13:30 **Can you tell us about the patrols that you did in Tobruk?**

Well, the Tobruk patrols were very light. It was only from my line here to there, would be a hundred, hundred and fifty feet, that's as far as you were spaced apart. You'd do many lay out patrols and, well, most of the patrols that we did were patrols that were coming, defeating their patrols, the Italian patrols. We didn't

14:00 need to worry about our, patrolling our areas, we were well concealed and well hidden from our point of view. We were there first, we maintained the area. We were patrols. At a later date in 9th Division, they did heavy patrolling because when Rommel came in with his Phantom Division, and it was all, patrols were very, were all the tanks and things like that and then they patrolled in tanks and armoured cars.

14:30 But there were some naval ones but not any that I've never had any great deal to do with in the, not much in the Middle East at all in fact. Patrols was not one of our fortes, because we had mainly, in Syria we did some patrols, of course, you've got the, you're always doing mainly look out patrols and things like that in different areas. There might be a pillbox

15:00 and we'd have to go and live in this pillbox for a couple of weeks and watch from that with field glasses because you're watching across different stretches of water and stuff like that looking for boats coming in and stuff like that and finding a way to eliminate or destroy them. But no, I never did a great deal of patrolling in, New Guinea was our, was all patrols. Never did anything else but patrols. Keep yourself alive

15:30 over there. The war in the Middle East was a joke in comparison to the Pacific.

Were the Germans respected by the Australians?

Yes, my word they were. Not the Germans as a whole but when Erwin von Rommel come in with his Panzers at least, he respected us and we respected him. He was the greatest field marshal of the German army as far as I was concerned. And he was forced to kill himself eventually. But, he died,

16:00 it was no accident the way he died. He decided, and the vehicle, he was told to kill himself and he did. Somebody did it for him apparently but he fell foul of [Adolph] Hitler [German Chancellor]. Hitler wasn't one of his best mates in the finish. And he wouldn't, he told his men not to fire (UNCLEAR) people British, Australian, New Zealand, whatever, Greek, whoever they were, if he

16:30 saw anybody, he said "If I see anybody fire shoot wilfully at somebody, he's unarmed or he looks like he's incapable of firing back, I'll have him shot". He would've had his own people shot, he was an honourable soldier, he was a very good soldier too. And he never done anything wrong by anybody in the British army, Rommel. And a

17:00 lot of people, even Montgomery General Bernard Montgomery [commander of the 8th Army] and Alexander, all those, they were the generals, they all appreciated and they spoke to him on phones and things like that. They had conversations, they knew what they were, each one of them knew what they were doing. But they were trying to win a battle but they, when the going got tough they were as rough as they could get but when you got out of battle again, they'd converse over the phones and things like that, field phones, field wires.

17:30 But he was one that was a great loss to the German Army and a very great loss to the cause of all wars. He was a fair man, that's the way I see a man should be. He had the idea that you were a target, my sentiments exactly, that thing that I'm going out there is a target you don't look at it as an individual, looking at it that's just a target. Could be inert, could be still and your job's

18:00 to hit it so, or it hits you so that's the way you do it.

What about the Italians Fred?

Oh, they didn't want any part of the war really. They were, as many as sometimes two hundred and fifty would give themselves up. Walk up, put their hands on their head, throw their rifles down and walk up to you and the first thing is, and the first thing they'd do is put their hand in their pocket and, "Bambino, this is bambino, my little bambino" and there's be a photo of a little daughter or

18:30 something, pull it out of their pocket. That was a great habit of the Italians was showing the little bambinos or his wife. And they always carried the photos and they put them back in their pocket. But they were governed by [Benito] Mussolini and Mussolini was a, he was a mongrel and a friend of Hitler's, a Hitler mate, he was a, may have been a friend to him and it went on and on and on and eventually he got

19:00 his just desserts, they burned him in Milan in the square. But that's one of those things that you can't describe. It's really the individual that start the wars, those blokes that were up there that start the war to tell us what to do and they know nothing about it, they were, well, Mussolini and Hitler did they had their own sort, oh, thoughts of

19:30 being world conquerors, you know, they wanted the whole world to themselves. But the poor people that must've suffered, excuse me a moment.

Fred, you transferred from Tobruk into the 25th Battalion, 25 Battalion.

Yeah. Oh, from Dimra, yeah, from the reinforcements depot in Dimra, that's the depot. We were, as I said we were reinforcements in the 2/9th

20:00 Battalion, we were 18th Brigade reinforcement depot in Dimra. We always went back to Dimra, back to Palestine after you come out of a skirmish and you had to be transferred from there to the next unit. And they were short of people in Syria. They were, they had difficulty, had a bit of a bad time when, there again we were not in the thick of the things all the time because we,

20:30 they were already in it, the battle was already on when we transferred. Three of us, there was myself, Tommy Ginney and Lou Donnelly, we three decided to transfer. We were on call, they asked us if we wanted a transfer the second time round, we said "Yes" and "Where do you want to go?", I said "I want to go, stay with infantry" and "You can go to the 2/25th Battalion or the 2/33rd Battalion". I said "The 2/25th will do me", they were all Queenslanders, so that's how we finished up there.

21:00 And they were in the middle of Merdjayoun, that was the, in the, what do you call it, in the, oh, the olive orchards, fighting there and the big fight that was in the cemetery in Merdjayoun and that was where Cutler got his VC, just out of there, Fort Khiam. Well, that's

21:30 was only a six weeks war, actually only six weeks of war the whole time it was there with the exception of on of our, we lost a platoon, they got taken prisoner. It was three platoon that was taken prisoner, they even finished up at a place called Innilip up on the Turkish border and they had about six weeks before, they were just about ready to go to ship them back to Germany and the Vichy French decided to call it quits and let them all go. And we finished

22:00 up in the Legoult Barracks in Tripoli in Syria and then from there we went to the Finnish, in Finland they started, the Germans started to get stuck into Finland and they wanted people to learn to ski. So I thought "I'll have a go at this". So on my application for transfer "I want to ski" and they said, skipper said, Bob Doss,

22:30 he said "You can go and try", he said "have you ever skied before?", I said "I've never been on skis before mate, I've never seen". So he said "Well go up to see" this, Lebanon, oh a beautiful area and Bashari village. So they issued me a set of skis and I had to go up to training instructor at Bashari and,

23:00 oh, there was about eight or ten of us. And it was "What are we going to do?", they said "You're going to learn to ski, you're probably going to get transferred to Finland, they want snow troopers" at this, if they, they were going round and Finland was asking for all countries to give them so many men each. And they had to be skilled, well, I'm not skilled but I got up there and I couldn't even put the skis on. I was there for about two weeks and I put the skis,

23:30 I finished up I put them on and I went to stand up and I've got one on and one off and I finished up at the bottom of a mountain on one ski. They took them off and my other ski's still back up there where I hadn't even got it on. So the instructor, he was a Frenchman see, he said "I think you better quit now", I said "Yeah, I'll quit while I'm ahead". Put be in a bus, sent me back, they put me in a bus back to Tripoli.

Boy from Queensland

24:00 **learns to ski.**

Yeah, it was rather humorous. But then, they give me, first of all they give me the skis and they give me an iron and "What have you got the iron for?", they said "You've got to iron your skis", "What do you have to iron skis for?", "What are you giving me the iron for?". Oh dear.

Now I've forgotten what I was going to ask you, I've been taken away with your skiing story. Did you get any leave in

24:30 **Palestine when you'd come back to sign up again?**

Yeah, you got a lot of leave in Palestine. When they, whenever you came out of action, if you were in action for a week, you come out, they give you a good little rest time. I don't know why, because you

don’t do much. I’ve never done so little in my life as I did there. Only go through and check out all the wineries and all, one place there, Mishon [sp?] distillery was

25:00 our favourite haunt. You go and get yourself a jug of wine for nothing, it didn’t cost you any money. You’d go, each time you’d go and put a moustache on one day and put a pair of pips on another day like you were an officer and you’d go in and they’d say “Have you been here before”, “No”. So you’d go through, you could test all the different drinks they had and go through having a sip of this and a sip of that and a sip of that and so you could hardly walk and they’d throw you out then. Didn’t cost you a penny.

Well, what about the houses

25:30 **of ill repute there in**

Jaffa and places like that?

Did you know about those?

Oh yes. You were warned about it every day. Every time, the old padre, the old chaplain would be on your back every time telling you about, never went out with preparatory troubles and things like this and you can’t do this and you can’t do that. As a matter of fact, I was on guard in one of them in, that was in Syria.

26:00 It was Christmas Day and it was rather funny. Our cook’s name was Tom Karney, he was a real rough old shearers' cook he was in Australia. And he was a rough, he was a good bloke but he was terrible, like an old bullock driver. He had more to say than a bullock driver. I was picked with three other blokes, I was in charge of them and the CO said to me or the OC said to me, he said “You’ve

26:30 got a job on Christmas Day”, I said “Where?”, he said “Down at Almeana”, “Where’s Almeana?”, “Oh, it’s a brothel down there at, down on the coast.”. “What the hell am I going to do in a brothel on the coast on Christmas Day?”, he said “Well, it’s a civilian brothel”. The other ones were, they had two types, they had those for the servicemen and those for the civilians. Because, you know, the STD [Sexually Transmitted Diseases] and that the transmit diseases and all the

27:00 worries. So we get in there anyway and gave me a table, sitting there, and about fifteen or twenty girls come in, they were illegal, they couldn’t have, that’s why they kept the soldiers in there, they couldn’t let any soldiers in there because it was an illegal brothel. The other ones, they could go in and there was a soldier there too as a guard, he’d let you were certain criteria.

27:30 Anyway the madam, she come up to me and said, oh, told me “Happy Christmas” and all this sort of thing and I’m sitting there and anyway I said “When do we get dinner?” and she said “Other men from your unit, they come here every time, they come here on guard every time”, apparently all the units had to maintain the place by sending a guard and seeing that there’s no soldiers enter the

28:00 civilian establishment. Anyway, down comes the, a truck, it had a, one of our cook house trucks come along and comes in and this great big meat pie, this great big square, there was only four of us, it would’ve fed I’d say fifty blokes. Big, stew pie, mince stew and stuff in it and it’s got on it, written on top, across “Brothel pie, Happy Christmas”.

28:30 He’s got it written in white, the others thought it was a great old joke. Anyway, one bloke had a photo camera with him and he took a photo of it. I had a photo here for a long time, I lost it, I don’t know where it’s got to but somebody probably liked it better than I did. But that was the sort of nonsense they got up to. That’s about the only trouble we had with them, I never had anything to do with them much. Across the road from our Legault

29:00 barracks in Tripoli, that was alright. We had. it was, there was women there. They were women for the troops, they were in, always being looked after. The doctor was, the doctor would visit them all the time, he was checking them out for STD and stuff. And there’s one girl come there, she was, her name was Georgette, she’s living in Australia now. She was about thirteen

29:30 She was a Dutch, she was something, she was part US but she was, Dad had been knocked out by the Jews, didn’t want any part of her for some reason and she was sort of left as a sort of a floater. She just floated around in the air and she attached herself to our camp. And our OC [Officer Commanding] took her, he introduced around and she stayed with us while we were out

30:00 of action, we were out of action permanently then because we come back to Australia shortly after. But Georgette was there and she, didn’t know whether she was a girl for the boys or what but she wasn’t, she was a just a sort of a student. She was a lovely kid and I’ve seen in one of our magazines she’s a resident in Sydney now, in Dee Why. She’s well, she’s an old lady now, she’d be in her late,

30:30 mid seventies, late seventies. But she followed us right through and she was a very nice kid, she learned English, we taught her English and everything else. And she’s always, if you were tying a tie she’d make you, “Give me the tie” and tie your tie for you and things like that and just everybody’s friend, a lovely kid. But, so I was going to write her and drop a line because I still know her and remember her name and she remembers me, I think.

31:00 Used to try and do good things for them and they were. But the Jewish people, they were trying to get their people into Australia and in Tel Aviv, when the Germans had kicked them out of, or they were exterminating them in Germany and Europe, they came to Palestine. And when they'd came down in ships down the Mediterranean and they'd come in towards Tel Aviv,

31:30 they'd wreck the ship. A couple of ships just off the beach. And the Palestinians had to take them, that's how Israel's formed now. That's how, Israel belongs to Palestine, as far as I'm concerned they, it belongs to Palestine completely. But Palestine's incapable of looking after their own property because they're uneducated and everything else and they don't, it's a pity because the country belongs to them. And Jews, the real Jews, they were native as are the Arabs

32:00 in their day, when the, it was really Israel, per the Bible. These Jewish people are coming from Germany and Russia and all over the place, they're not true Jews. Anybody that, they don't want in the place, they sent them out as Jews to another place, they go to Israel. And that's why all the problems, a lot of the problems being caused now through that. But I was, went to a movie theatre, I went to an opera,

32:30 was it, Mugrabi Opera Theatre in Allenby Road Tel Aviv. And I had met this girl, her name was, well I got named after her, her name was Freda, mine was Fred. Well Freda meant the same as Fred. And she was a bar girl, she was working in the bar. And she, I got to know her and she said, she used to call me Freda and I used to call her Fred. And we used to, that's the way it went on.

33:00 And she introduced me to some other lass and she was, Tula McHooksman was the other girl. I had to meet her parents and her parents tried to get me to marry her. And they offered me a thousand pounds sterling to marry their daughter. And I said, "I don't even know her" and if you went to Mugrabi Opera, you'd have to go with her parents.

33:30 She could sit up that end of the row, I had to sit in the other end of the row, we weren't even allowed to hold hands or anything else. Her mother and father and all her siblings would sit between the two of you. And this is, they told me it's all about. Anyway, I find out they're trying to get, if I married her they'd give me a thousand pounds sterling but we wouldn't consummate the marriage. But I'd be an army, in Australian record books as she's my wife, she's entitled to come to

34:00 Australia as my wife, I'm an Australian citizen. And when she gets to Australia they annul the marriage. After twelve months later they annul the marriage from her own resources and I'm back to where I started. Well they're doing this to hundreds of them I found out later. I thought I was one of the few but everyone I spoke to they were saying "So and so, I met this sheila [woman], she was at the movies or met at a picnic or something like that" on leave and

34:30 they were all from Tel Aviv and these Tel Aviv areas. Bichon [Bayrut?], Tel Aviv and all manner of places around the area anyway, where the Jews were at all these bun camps. And they were all offering a thousand pounds. A thousand pounds was the nominal fee apparently, to marry their daughter. Even colonels and that were getting caught.

I'm fascinated by this Fred, did the marriages actually occur?

Yeah, in some cases it did. And

35:00 you had to, to marry a girl in the Middle East or anywhere in the army, you had to first of all apply to your commanding officer and he'd apply to, through him to the chaplain of your religion and ask for permission. Then it'd to go through Canberra and everything else to say that the girl's of good character and, you should always put that on your papers. Well they organise it before you start out,

35:30 is a good character and would make a good citizen and they're deeply in love and why would you admit it unless it was fifteen minutes before. And you don't say nothing about money exchange. It's all, then the government writes back and says, yeah, the army agrees that the marriage may take place. They check to see if you were married before in Australia and things like this and it's normal procedure.

But the parents were trying to sell the daughters because they wanted them out of the

36:00 **Middle East where they'd be safe?**

No, what they wanted, they wanted to get to Australia themselves. They wanted to, they were selling their daughter to you, virtually, so they could come to Australia. When they come to Australia and become citizens, after two years they become Australian citizens, she's married to me, I'm an Australian citizen. Then she can apply to have her family bought out. They've stopped that now just about but, the next thing is see, well you see a shipload come out,

36:30 forty families, a shipload of people and they're all related. No, in the, from the different bun camps in, where, it was a big racket and it was starting to get out of hand so they put a dampener on it then and you had to have certain length of time with the girl. You had to have arrangements made with their ministers and things, so it went on and on.

But the parents wanted to come to Australia because they

37:00 **wanted to escape any potential conflicts there perhaps do you think?**

No, I don't think so because they took over Palestine just like, they come there, the Jewish people had

stacks of money. But they're, I think they're the most wealthy, they own the wealth of the world, the Jewish. They have money there just floating out of their ears as it were. And they hung onto it like it was,

37:30 to try and borrow a ten bob note off them and see what it's like trying to, well, set fire to the Eiffel Tower. But they used to use their money for things they want, they use it for a case like that. Because their objective is to rule the country. They tried to do it in America, now during the Coronation if you were coming back from England they, in America, the Jewish people were like the Negroes [African Americans].

38:00 They wouldn't let them walk on the same side of the street as, you couldn't, they were, and they were and they were a people on their own, they didn't want any part of them. But now the Jews and a lot of Americans, even the president's Jewish, of Jewish descent.

Okay, well that was pretty fascinating. I know we digressed there but I hadn't heard about that, so that's very interesting that Australian men were doing that. Now what happened after they

38:30 **realised you couldn't ski, they said "Go back to Palestine".**

Yeah, they just, no back to Tripoli.

Tripoli.

They just said "Well, no, not suitable" I was only a private, and they said "Private Williams was not suitable as a ski trooper and is RTU from this date", was "RTU, Returned To Unit from such and such a date". And it goes

39:00 back to your unit, hop on the truck and back you go, back to your unit. So I hadn't transferred anywhere, just sort of didn't, unloaded to my battalion to a job because I asked for it and then they found out I wasn't suitable, you go back to where you start out. So that was it.

Where did you go, by the way? Straight back to Tobruk was it?

No, no. Back to Tripoli. Tripoli was in Syria and

39:30 I stayed with, that was the 2/25th then, I stayed with the 2/25th right through my army.

Tape 4

00:30 **Okay Fred, now you've mentioned that you did a little bit of Don R work while you were over in the Middle East but you were also with the infantry and I believe you did some signal courses as well.**

Oh fitness courses, yeah, plenty of that.

Did you do any signals courses?

Oh signals, yeah, did a lot of signals.

Yeah?

In my record there's

01:00 all the signals work and Don R'ing. But I did, Don R'ing, I took it on because, there again it was voluntary, volunteer. I was an idiot for volunteering for everything, I used to work, fall flat on my face. They called for volunteers in Don Rs and that's how I became a Don R in the Middle East and I put my hand up and said "I'll take a go, I'll have a shot at it". And next thing I was told to grab a silver bike, "There's an AJS [Motorcycle make] over there, take it,

01:30 go for a run up the road and show us how you can ride it". So I did that and I had a bike at home, a motorbike, and did a couple of runs and they said "Yeah, you'll do" so I stuck with it for a few, oh, two or three weeks probably, taking dispatches and stuff from Dimra to Alexandria, nursing it through and places like that. And getting the occasional Stuka coming in and having a shot at you on the way. You couldn't hear what was coming down because of the noise of the motorbike

02:00 and next thing you see the dirt flying up round you so you head for cover or throw your bike aside and you go that way and let your bike go that way and run off in the sand somewhere and hide till they decided they didn't want you anyway. And then they got own, went out, they started the eleven sets came in, the eleven sets, the big wireless sets and, all became more modern and they stuck the

02:30 bikes on the sideline sort of job because you're riding through sand dunes, you didn't know what you were going to hit on the bikes. You'd be riding along a road at sixty K's an hour and all of a sudden there's a big mound there, wasn't there when you went the first time and you hit it and fall flat on your

face in the sand or in the middle of the bitumen or somewhere. But you'd get bogged and all this sort of garbage, that's stuff that they, they decided the eleven set was the best because they're more mobile a war and

03:00 an eleven set was a great big box sort of thing, monstrous big thing and they started training men on that. I had a bit of a go, I was trained for a couple of weeks on them because I sort of come as it may, seeking to volunteer for every damn thing and did a bit of this and a bit of that and flag waving, semaphore and, yeah, had a go at everything.

So this is the advantage of actually being a reinforcement, is that you could actually

03:30 **float around.**

Yeah, everything that was going, anything that they wanted to do, if they wanted a cook, "Yeah, I can cook" and next thing you find yourself in a cookhouse and plenty of food and don't know how to cook it. But you have a go and all things, I always told my blokes "Never volunteer for anything because you always went into trouble". Say, "Any barbers here?", "No, but I can cut your hair, I used to cut my sister's hair at home",

04:00 he'd say "Right you've got a job", "Oh, maybe it's camp barber", "No, you've got to peel those spuds", a couple of great big back of spuds, I finished up peeling them.

So out of all the things that you volunteered for in the Middle East, did you have a preference on what you liked to do?

Yeah, I liked the bike, I liked Don Ring. No, my preference was infantry mainly. Like on Anzac Days,

04:30 well I'm just on eighty-two now, and Anzac Day we had the fiftieth anniversary in Newfarm Park I think we finished up but I marched two mile. And anyway, my doctor said I'm not going "You're not going to do this, you're not going to march on Anzac Day", he keeps on telling me every year I'm not marching on Anzac Day but I still front up. And they tell me at home,

05:00 "Oh, give it away" but, and they told me last year at this thing, "We'll drive you, you can hop in one of the cars", I said "No, that's not infantrymen, when I've got to, an infantryman walks everywhere", I said "When I can't walk", I said, "I don't go". So we just made it last year, just got to the end of the march and almost collapsed. But it's one of those things, my wife says, always says, "You're not going to make it", I say, "I'll make it", like I just, two of us were just about,

05:30 we started off at the front of the procession and finished up about the last three, amongst the last three. But I won't drive it, they wanted me to drive it, I say, "No, that's not what my, what I did".

When you were in Syria, I'm just curious of the stoushes you got into with the Vichy French there. Did you win any, can you tell us about some

06:00 **of the battles, or one of the battles that you were in against the Vichy?**

Well, the end of the Battle of Merdjayoun, that's about the only one that, I mean, that sort of fizzled out. They took one platoon, on of our platoons. I always joined A companies, I always liked A companies, always with my best company, I've been with them every battalion. I always ask, always request to go to A company. Anyway, it was two platoon,

06:30 they were the ones who got caught, I just started, hadn't long joined them, a couple, a few days. And they got taken to Irrilip, up on the Turkish border and they spent fifteen or sixteen days there and the French quit. They let them all go again, they come back and they said the war finished then as far as we were concerned. Then they started this Finland thing, this ski business and that fizzled out and we come back, I come back about a week or so later they said "We're

07:00 going back, we're moving on", "Moving onto where?" and they told us after a couple of days that "We're going back to Australia. The Japanese are having a go at us in New Guinea and we've got to get back there quick smart". So they loaded all our gear onto a truck and took us down to the Suez, put us on the ships again and away we come. Come on the Mount Vernon, it was an American auxiliary cruiser that we come home on, our battalion.

Had you heard about the Japanese entering the war prior to this?

Oh, a little bit from the Palestine Post which is a paper, a newspaper, the Palestine Post. It would come out, it would be in Palestinian, Egyptian, and go right through it we found a bit of Australian, and a bit of English in it and by forming your own conclusions we had

08:00 in signals of course. I was never a signalman, I was just attached to signals, in the unit itself. And, for our own domestic purposes I could get occasional bits on the eleven set at night time about the Japanese and doing this and Tokyo Rose was raving on about how they were going to put Australia on their knees in two weeks and all this sort of garbage. And then I realised why I was coming home and I thought "That's a good thing, I could see Em and

08:30 see the folks again and we'll take whatever comes up from there" but they took us onto, as I said, they put us on the Mount Vernon shot us home. We got, and there was three ships in the convoy and one finished up in, we got to Colombo again, this side of India and they picked of the three ships, there was

our ship and the other two and they let us go, and they picked the other one

09:00 and it finished up in Burma. They had to leave the convoy and they had to go off the ship in Bombay and straight to Burma and they got taken, all got taken prisoner, 8th Division. And they were the first reinforcements for 8th Division. So they lost a whole ship load there and they bought us, we come home as far as Australia, got off at Perth, they gave us the key to the city in Perth. And then we moved from there by train to,

09:30 oh no, we sailed round to Adelaide and got, left the ship in Adelaide, completely. And went up to Mount Lofty up in the ranges and trained for jungle warfare for about a week. And they gave us leave, we'd been away for a couple of years and they decided they'd very gratuitously give us a seven day leave pass and no planes or anything to fly with, so you had to hop on a train, had to come from South Australia to

10:00 Brisbane by train. Got leave, got home, next morning I got picked up by the provosts [military police] and taken back to Brisbane Exhibition Ground and set up to New Guinea. So got home for about twenty-four hours before the police come and picked me up and sent us back again. Told us that we were urgently needed in New Guinea and we had to be trained, we come out to here, this point here, this area, this is where we camped. We

10:30 built the roads here, our battalion, for the week we were here we built roads through to Burpengary, to Burpengary School, that's where we built all that road there. And our division, what we had at our disposal for the trucks to get through and the Yanks came and took over them, they their air force here. And we went to Caboolture, they put us on a train at Caboolture, whizzed us up to Townsville, put us on the Mount Vernon, the Kramer and Both, they were Indonesian ships.

11:00 Whizzed us up to Port Moresby, from there to the Owen Stanleys [Ranges] and from there it was all jungle warfare from them till right till the finish.

You mentioned that you got like a week of jungle training to prepare you for the jungle, going from desert to jungle. So what did the actually teach you in that week?

Oh, the difference between the desert and the jungle?

Yeah.

Oh, it was frightening actually. What annoyed me in the jungle, there was no roads, you've got no roads

11:30 you can, when you step off the beaten track in the jungle that's it, you're on your foot till the end of whatever happens. You've got to cut your way everywhere you go. You've got machete to go through them. But you go through this route today on your compass, you get say from Imita via Indris [Iroibaiwa?] is about, oh, probably eight or nine mile, going down and up and

12:00 again, and I'd say about nine mile it would be from the bottom of one ridge to the top of the next one. And you turn to come back and the grass has, the stuff's growing behind you again. The lantana, wait a while and all this sort of, the jungle closes in on you all the time and it's one. And it rains every, every day incessant rain, it happened from two o'clock in the afternoon, they call it a jungle rain, it's there, it's dripping on you all the time but every afternoon at about two o'clock you know

12:30 you're going to get a downpour, shower. You're soaking wet, you're clothes, you've got, we had one set of clothes, a half a towel, a half a blanket, a ground sheet which was also your shroud, if you got killed they used to just wrap you up in the ground sheet and put you in a hole in the soil and forget about you. Or if you, and a mosquito net, that was it.

13:00 And your boots you were wearing. That one pair of boots would last you about, oh, a fortnight and all the stitching would rot out and then it would fall apart and you were walking bare footed or walking on sloppy, the jungle, it just, any stitching it takes about twenty-four hours for it to start to disintegrate. End of a week, throw them away, you can't use it again, that's why you never see a native wear shoes. And it's,

13:30 the clothes, we had a long, we had long trousers to start off with. After the first three or four days, all the bottoms started to fray so you cut them off at the knees and that was our clothes. Shirt, mosquito net, I had a head net to go to the house for afternoon and that was it. That's the way you lived until, from the time we left Port Moresby to the time we come out of Gona.

14:00 **So with your boots, were you constantly getting new pairs coming in or?**

No, sometimes, it depends. The Japs got most of our boots. The only way you got rations and things was by plane. We got one set of rations to last us three days from the time we left Moresby and left the beaten track and into the jungle, it was just, we were on our own from then on. You've got no method of getting food or anything else. You've got a seventy-six hour ration that's an iron

14:30 ration sort of tin on your hip and you daren't open that, under court martial if you opened that one. If was only for emergency ration of the states. You got one, had two ounces of tobacco, four packets of papers, a couple of boxes full of matches. They were in waterproof, you put them in a waterproof pouch and put them in your pack. And that was it, and your

15:00 three days supply of bully beef. You had two tins of bully beef [tinned meat], that was three meals to a tin, breakfast, dinner and tea. And a tea tablet, little tea tablet about that size, about the size of an aspirin. And you'd make, if you were in a position where you could light a fire and boil your Billy without being shot you could boil yourself a cup of tea, cup of char as we used to call it. And that's about, that was about it.

15:30 And that was your shroud, it had everything, all on your little body and you couldn't carry extra boots, if you carried extra boots you weighed yourself down. The mountains would go straight up and we had a big, well we had native carriers, they dug the steps and they'd put a piece of timber across as you went up, called the golden staircase. And that was, they were muddy and slippery and half the time the

16:00 rod they put across the bottom of the step would slide away and come tumbling back down to the bottom. The golden staircase. That was the worst country in the world, other than the later war, Korean War, that was the worst country you could ever wish to be fighting in.

And what did they tell you about the Japanese before you actually went up into the islands?

Oh, told us that they were cannibalistic, that they were horrible people that,

16:30 they didn't convince me either way very much, I had the idea that they had to, they weren't as sadistic they thought they would be but they were. It's part of their culture. The Japanese culture it's, well it tells them, like we're told to do something, if we don't go and do it, we don't feel like it or if it's not good enough we don't do it. But it's part of their

17:00 doctrine that once they're told something, it's passed onto them, they'll carry it through to the death. And they, they'll shout and scream and they'll do what they're told to do. If they're told by their higher up that you've got to be killed, they'll just whack your head off with a sword, you know. And that's the way they, that's the way they live, that's the way they. They still do it. I saw at, in Japan itself I saw two college students, this is worth noting.

17:30 One of the, oh no.

Okay Fred, you were just about to tell me about two college students that you saw.

Oh yes, they were two people, they were two kids in love, this is a story I think anybody should know, it shows you how they think. They, we were

18:00 going up this hill, this is in Japan, this is during the occupation of course, we're going up this mountain, this is out of our camp. And these two kids they have a little, they have little Shinto shrines up on top of the mountains. And these two kids were sitting up there, they'd be about thirteen or fourteen. And anyway, we'd been learning Japanese, it was part of the job when we got the post, you had to do three months training in learning how to speak Japanese and understand

18:30 but not write it. Anyway, we're talking to these two kids and started telling us that they wanted to marry but they're parents wouldn't let them marry. She wanted to marry this bloke and he wanted to marry her and her father poppa san said "No", mama san said "No" on that side and so they're going to commit hari-kari [suicide]. And they've both got the knives, the hari-kari knives in their hand. I said "What the hell are you talking about?"

19:00 and said "We are", no "We won't be apart". Anyway, it finished up, they committed hari-kari on the spot.

While you were there?

Yeah, while we were there. The girl went first, she put a knife in her stomach like that and put it in and turned and died and the other, that was at Hiro. Hiro's outside Hiroshima, not far from Hiroshima. And he did the same thing. Quite, just like saying goodbye to each

19:30 other. No worries, just no feeling apparently. Just do it because that was the, a ritual and they committed hari-kari because they wouldn't let them marry. I don't know whether there was a family difference or what, but because they, in those days they thought their daughters could marry however they wanted. They were falling over themselves for Australian soldier and American soldiers too.

That's amazing.

20:00 It, those are the customs you learn along the way, you don't get, it can't be true, it couldn't happen like that, but it does, it happens like that frequently. But I found most of the Japanese to be average, well down where we were, down near Hiroshima, Hiro, Kure and our camps from the occupation days, they were nice people. They were farm people but they'd give you

20:30 their left leg if you wanted it. They just couldn't, they'd always help you out and they were nice people. And I didn't like them, I've never had any feeling towards them one way or the other but I never hated them in the islands even. Because they did some shocking things, if you got wounded, there was no (UNCLEAR) if they could get their hands on you, you'd lose your head. We had one bloke cannibalised,

21:00 Bernie Blake, he was cannibalised by them after he was killed.

What did they take?

Took all his rump. And we know it was him because we found him two days later, his body and there was a pot and a camp fire there where they'd been, and the, parts of his torso in the pot with paw paw and stuff, green paw paw and that's all been boiled together to make a stew. And they had

21:30 cannibalised him. But I suppose in a case where, they were starving those poor beggars, they starved all the way across. We were starving, we had, only just taken, we were not half way across but we got the aeroplanes come in and the biscuit bombers. They used to drop our rations to us. And of course we didn't get most of it, the Japs got most of our rations. The Yanks, they were terrible pilots, they'd come in, they'd dive in with these

22:00 biscuit bomber, push the bags out, push all the garbage out of the doors and down would come crates of biscuits and crates of bully beef and stuff like that. Some of it would burst on hitting the ground and of course that's no good, once it bursts in the jungle, it's dead, it's no good, meat, you can't eat meat that's been broken open. And biscuits, flour, potatoes, tobacco and stuff like that. Potatoes were all

22:30 powdered potatoes, all, what do they call it now with the, it comes in powder.

Dehydrated?

Dehydrated, yes. And everything was dehydrated. But half the stuff would land and half of it would land on Japanese side of the mountain and half would land on our side. And if you were lucky enough to get it, you were lucky. But we went without tobacco and smokes, that was our worst problem, for a

23:00 couple of weeks it was at one stage of the game there. We were smoking tea leaves and Traders Swiss, bits of bark and everything. Anything that would light we'd smoke, if we had the where with all to light it with and it got dry enough.

Now Fred, you were saying I mean, they grabbed you off leave before you finished leave to send you up there to start with so obviously something was going on. What did you find when you first got up there in terms of

23:30 **what had been happening?**

Well, they put us on the old Kramer, took of by train as I said to Townsville and hopped on the Kramer and went across to Moresby. They took us off the Murray Barracks in Port Moresby, put us in a, we got to Moresby they put us into camp there, started to issue us some jungle clothes, jungle greens. Mosquito repellents and things like that, and mosquito nets,

24:00 one pair of trousers as I said, ons shirt, one pair of boots, two pair of you got socks luckily. And that was what, they kitted us out there and then started organising for us to get placed in the ranges, in the, so we didn't do any training or whatsoever, all we just got out of the, off the ship, straight up to Murray Barracks, got kitted, and straight down to

24:30 lower levels. And from lower levels you hopped on trucks and went up to, up towards Owen's Corner which is about twelve mile away. They drove us up there, hopped off the trucks and that, this is it. We got there, met the Salvation Army there. The Salvation Army was there to give us a cup of hot tea and biscuits and said "Ta ta, you're on your way". So then they took us down there, give us, we had a quick A group or,

25:00 A group, senior officers telling us that we were on our own from here on, we were fighting the Japanese and we were told, given a quick lecture what to expect from mosquitoes, scrub typhus, malaria and various illnesses you can collect anyway. And I got, well I got malaria, I had malaria every week, just about every day for malaria, shiver and

25:30 carry on for a couple of hours and get over it. But it there was two types, BT [Benign Tertian] and QT [MT Malignant Tertian]. BT was the ordinary malaria and QT was spinal and like a meningitis and it kills you. That was the dangerous one. But I never saw any, scrub typhus, I had scrub typhus, everybody got it somewhere from the rats and things.

26:00 Because the rats were eating the dead bodies of the Japanese and our blokes that were killed and everything else. You couldn't recover anybody. Once they were hit it was down, well the natives, you had native porters, they'd cart the bodies back to Port Moresby. But they were scared half out of their wits all the time, they weren't armed the poor beggars and they used to travel with us. And if you wanted them to do something, they won't go forward, you've got to be up there with them. I had to be up at the top of the mountains. They were building the stairs from the bottom, I'd be

26:30 up at the top of the mountain protecting them and they'd be digging away and merrily building the stairway. But this went on all the time. They were, without the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels [New Guineans who aided Australian troops on the Kokoda Track] we'd have been, all been dead, I think. (UNCLEAR) And the trip to Kokoda, it was a shocker. Templeton's Crossing, Myola, Ioribaiwa we were in. You were fighting everyday and you never saw a

27:00 soul. That's the funny part about it. You never see a, there could be a whole marine division out in front of us, Japanese marine division out in front of us hidden somewhere in there but you never saw them. And at night time, they could speak English some of them, they'd say "Hey, Jack, come over here and give us a cigarette" or something like that and "Who the hell is Jack? Who's that talking?", you know,

it’s somebody, it’s the Japs talking

27:30 to try to get us to answer them. So as soon as you answer them they start spraying the area with machine guns.

Did anybody ever get caught out?

Oh yeah, we got, I almost got caught out early on. We lost, not a lot but we lost quite a few people that way. Night we come back from patrol and Major Dodd and myself and Doug Catherns from down here at Sandgate, we went on a

28:00 sniper patrol. And we went out on this, hear this, we were talking to each other quite loud, it was an area we didn’t think there was anybody there. And I said, I was talking to Doug, I said, I was talking about, he was talking about, we were playing, something to do with golf, anyway, I was talking about golf. And anyway, he said something to do with ninth green, oh, the second nine, the start

28:30 of the, the start of the nine holes. And anyway at night, we were heading back that night and the three of us were still together and this voice came across, “We’ll have to play that second ninth, we’ll have to play that ninth again when we get home hey Fred?” and he’s siting next to me, Doug and I thought “That’s a Nip [Japanese] that’s doing that” it was too. See they would, they

29:00 were so cunning, it’s very hard to describe the Nipponese to an extent, they try to palm things off on you. Even now they try and get the better of you through the verbal sense, like you know, you’re speaking to each other and they’ve got terrific memories. And

29:30 a bloke, I shot a bloke at Imita, a sniper and he shot at me and I shot back at him, I’ve got his glove there.

Can, actually Fred, can you actually tell us the full story of that action, of shooting that sniper and what happened?

Well, we were on a patrol, and oh, we’d been and had a bit of a battle, at Ioribaiwa Ridge we had a big battle in the morning. We lost about seven or eight blokes that day. And anyway, I was on the clean up patrol with the same crew I was talking to then,

30:30 Bob Dodd and Doug Catherns and I forget who the other one was. Oh, Keith Tower. And it was like a, I felt this thing whiz past my ear, I could hear this like ‘zip’ went past and I thought, “What the hell’s going on here?”. And it seemed to be coming from up there, might be a sniper. And I looked up and I couldn’t see it and anyway, he fired again and I skidded over this bank,

31:00 I thought, “I gotta get out of the road of you, you’re gonna get me” and he was, they’re usually, snipers are usually a spot on shot. He had two shots at me, oh three shots at me, the first one was the one that whizzed past me and that other two were getting closer. So I looked up and I saw this, I could see this moving in a tree, big broad leafed, broad rooted thing, I forget what they call them now. But, it’s a common name too,

31:30 but it had a great big high root on it and you could hide behind that. And all of a sudden they’re coming through this root and he’s out, he could sight me, I couldn’t quite sight him. And I could see him moving in the tree, I thought “Something’s moving up there”. So I took a shot and got him the first time, with a 303 [rifle] of course, it was as heavy as needed. And he came down, he came boom down to the ground and I picked him, I went over to see him. I thought there might be more about and I had a good look around

32:00 and I couldn’t see anymore so Doug had wandered, they were singing out, “What are you firing at?”, you know, having a go at me for answering his fire, “I’m not going to sit here and take it”. So anyway he started and Doug said, “Put a bullet through his head and finish him off”. He was sort of laying there and is half, he was, like going to sleep, he sort of looked a bit dopey and I tried to help him, I put a field dressing on his

32:30 wound, he was wounded in the side here. And I put a field dressing on him and thought, “His own people will pick him up tonight”. They used to always carry their, pick these up the same night. Anyway, I, he started to sort of talk to me in Japanese, I didn’t understand Japanese, I hadn’t been in Japan at that stage of the game. And he handed me a photo of himself and

33:00 a photo of his mama san, his mother. And it was, oh, about that size, about two inches square, like snapshots. And had his cap on and everything else and on the back its in Japanese, well I gave it to this other character, he was going to do an interview one time, I forget his name now, the bloke that, he’s one of the Bathurst 1000 [Australian car race] drivers.

33:30 He was working for some crowd in town and he was doing this, what you’re doing now. Anyway, he, I give him a bit of water and a drink, he took a mouthful and went like that and he pointed to his thing, I said, “You have to drink water”, I shouldn’t have given him water, if you drink water you’ll probably kill yourself. I was trying to help him out. But he put me in mind of myself two and a half years before,

34:00 I was only a kid, like he was about the same age as I was when I first went to the Middle East. And it’s got in my mind that I’ve knocked somebody off, how, I’ve probably done the same over in the Middle

East a couple of times, knocked a few of them and didn't do anything about it. This bloke I knew, I had him with me and he handed me his gloves, he handed me his photos, himself and his mama san, his boots, they were

34:30 slot-toed boots, very much like this. Like the kind that go between the toes only they were a full boot and I carried those, I finished up I left them in by levels on the way back months later but they, I never picked them up again because I didn't want the boots. I had the gloves, I thought, "I'll hang onto that and I'll probably have a chance later on, if I ever get through this to get in contact with his parents".

35:00 And I had a photo of her and I had Japanese writing on the back which possibly was an address or something and if they, I can get in contact with a, or a member of the family they might want them back. That's why I kept it. But I've always remembered him because he's sitting there looking at me and I try and feed him and everything else, give him a bit of comfort, and something I never ever did previously, I couldn't have cared less, as I said just a target. I felt so sorry for this

35:30 poor character, he looked back and he put his head back and went to sleep and that was it. But my mate, Doug Catherns, was saying, "Put a bullet through his head", I said, "No, poor bugger, he's a human being, he's got as much right to live as I have". So he was going crook because I was trying to suckle him. So he said, "I'm not looking after him", I said, "He's wounded, he's badly", I didn't know how badly but I could see he was starting to froth at the mouth and I thought, "He's gone". So

36:00 I wasn't going to finish it off. He died peacefully, it was sort of half midnight. It gives me nightmares at times that particular instance. And it's funny that after all these years, I still, I can still see him, when I have a nightmare or something, I can still see him as plain as if he's still there.

But given Fred, that you helped him out,

36:30 **what are the nightmares about?**

Oh, you know, sometimes where, my wife with me have, I have nightmares at night time. I don't know anything about them but on a patrol one night, give her a smack, a swoosh on the arm and she wasn't very happy, she dived out of bed and into one of the other rooms. But I, there's something

37:00 comes back again, a patrol or something I've been on that a sudden memory comes back of. And I'm wondering about before, I've only got to be reading something before we got to bed or something like that to make, to incur these night excursions. So and I've often had patrol engagements and, I did a lot, we did a lot of them in Korea. Was all, mostly in the latter parts of the Korean War was all patrols. I'd do up to five and six,

37:30 seven, seven fighting patrols in a week. And you're out half the night each night on them and nine times out of ten you'd run into trouble. But, and that was the most, worst battlefield of any ever I've encountered, the Korean War. But in the Second World War with, it was all survival. It was more survival than everything else. If you were trying to beat

38:00 an issue, they were trying to beat the same, probably same issue. I'm trying to survive the troubles I'm going through and they're trying to survive the same as I am. And you're basically the same equal opportunity, if you're fast enough, that's the way I always look at it. I've got, there's an article in there, a video of the Kokoda Trail I've got there.

38:30 It's quite an extensive one, that and the Battle of Kapyong. There's four or five hours, they're big long documentaries

Yeah, no, that's great.

Some of it's animated in it too.

Tape 5

00:30 **Fred, over there in New Guinea, correct me if I'm wrong, you were in the Owen Stanley Ranges first?**

Yes.

And then you went onto the Kokoda Trail.

No, it is the Kokoda Trail. The Owen Stanley Ranges is the Kokoda Trail.

Why don't they call it the Kokoda Trail rather than the Owen Stanley ranges?

Well it's not the Kokoda Trail.

01:00 The Yanks called it the Kokoda Trail, they never even went on it, they wouldn't know where it was. But it was the Kokoda Track in correct pronunciation. There's the Kagi Track, the Kokoda Track, the Egofi Track, they're all part of the track. And the Yanks always call it a trail because a trail for the Yanks,

what we call tracks they call trails. So somehow in their writings it's become the Kokoda Trail. It's always the Kokoda Track. And

01:30 Ray [Bert] Beros wrote the story of the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels and wrote the poem, you've probably heard it, have you. The "Many a mother in Australia when the busy day is done, sends a prayer to the Almighty, father of the sons". It's there in the, I've got it, the original, it's there, written by Ray [Bert] Beros, nearly sixty years ago.

Can you tell us about the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels, who were they and where did they come from?

Well they were just ordinary bush kanakas.

02:00 They were from the farmers and the hill people of the island and they were absolutely invaluable to us. They knew the island like the back of their hand because they were born and bred in the place. They had their bad men there the same as a couple, they've got cannibals there, they were very bad people but they worked for us. We used to pay them, give them traders 'twist', it was tobacco there. What they called traders 'twist', like

02:30 they were bits of liquorice and the card bit up and you put it in (UNCLEAR). We smoked it a lot and we couldn't get it air dropped to us. And they lived on the, they'd get, catch fish for us a few months and go spear fishing in the river and things, fly river, Goraka and all the different places they'd get, make fish spears, spear the fish and come and drop them at your feet and say, "Here master,

03:00 fish belong you now". And you'd have a fish, nice big, might be a trout or be a salmon or could be anything, you know. You'd say, "Number one?", "Yeah, him number one", if its not number, if they say "No, it's not number one" you don't, you toss it away because they're poison, you could be eating something poisonous. But they were very good and we didn't do enough to satisfy them post-war. I think we should've a lot more, we've done very minimal up there. I

03:30 went back there a little after the war. I was up in, when I was in the regular army just before I got, I had my hand off up there. He said to me, "Big long fellow, him, belong hand him missing" and they always, I got on very well with them actually and they, in Moresby, Taurama area they looked after us. And we had one bloke shot himself,

04:00 he didn't like the army, he put a bullet through his, put his rifle butt, rifle barrel against his stomach, put his toe trigger guard and pushed the trigger and blew himself apart one night. But that's the only casualty I saw up there the second time round. But they were terrific people, they had their wives, they had their family, called married quarters and things and they looked after their wives and we used to pay them ten pound a

04:30 month. That was their wages in Taurama, in the Pacific islands residence. And we used to feed them on top of that, clothe them on top of that, feed their wives and their piccaninnies on top of that so they did, well, it worked out about twenty-five pound a month I suppose they were getting. That's big wages up there. But some of them didn't like joining the army because big fellow the one Australia were no good for them

05:00 they reckon. It's sad, it's like ours, people here, some of our religions don't like other religions and we fight against ourselves and that matter, it's a similar matter. But they're nice people.

Besides the feeding you and, or helping feed you and look after you in that way, how were they invaluable in the jungle?

Well they knew where the farms were. And there's little villages all over the place, you could walk on a village

05:30 you could walk right past a village from here to you away you wouldn't know there was a village there. There's dead silence, you walk past at, there's a place Kaiapit and Kaigulin, they were up in the, and others up in the Dumpu side of the islands. You can walk right past the huts and you wouldn't see the huts. And you watch and they might poke, a piccaninny might poke their head out and that's all, they're so silent, behind the huts they're growing their

06:00 sweet potatoes, or kau kau they call it, sweet potato vines growing. They feed themselves sufficiently. Grow all their own food, they make their own rice, they, taro root, they let taro root dry out and they mix it up and it becomes just like eating rice. And it was re-cooked, there's a hundred and one things they do. Fish are plentiful they can go and get, a little kid goes into the water and spear a fish like going out of fashion because

06:30 they're there, you know. And they, well they, it's, they liked us because we were a close neighbour to them and they know that our government, Big Fellow the One Australia, he gives them, we give them money to survive. We allow so much money in our budget goes to the islanders and we, they were a trust, they belonged to us during the war, they were a trust territory of Australia,

07:00 New Guinea. New Guinea and Australia were one and the same country actually. And they weren't armed, we couldn't arm them because if you armed the natives they're likely to start shooting themselves. But they lived their national way and we fed them, we clothed them and looked after them, we bought their tobacco stuff for them. As a matter of fact, if you give a native, a true New

07:30 Guinea native, if you paid him a five pound note or a five dollar bill he'd tear it up in front of you. And you'd say "What are you doing?", "Him fellow's no good for me", the want shillings, you give it to him in ten cent pieces and, if you can give it to them in five cent pieces even better, but if you give it to him in ten cent pieces he's got a lot of money to jingle around in his hand. And that's very important to them, it makes them wealthy people. And he'll go and put that money away, or go and hide it somewhere or

08:00 but they won't take notes. I had the job of, in Taurama when I first went up there and this is in later years when I was up there last time, I had the job of being pay sergeant for the period for a couple of times. And I went in and I drew the wrong money, they had the break up of the money and I went into the bank and the bank give it to me in notes and things like that. I took it back out to Taurama about twelve or fourteen mile away and started paying them and calling the names and they're coming and

08:30 "This fellow no good" and starts, I said "What's the matter with him?". Anyway, finished up, I stopped the pay parade, rung the adjutant and the adjutant said "Oh", he said "you're giving them notes", "Yeah", "Oh, you'll have to get it changed, got to get it changed to silver". They'll take the silver, they don't want the notes, they won't touch them.

Even though you told them it was worth the same?

Yeah, it's worth the same money but they don't, they know it's worth the same money but it, you can tear it up and

09:00 it's no good, throw it to the wind. And they would, they'd tear it and throw it in, at you. And the same with tomatoes, they won't eat a ripe tomato. I used to issue them food of a case of tomatoes or something. And the top ones would be to the light for a couple more days than the others and it'd be quite red and ripe as we see them but they'll take the red ones out and toss them away and take

09:30 the green ones out or they're just staring to get a tinge to them. And they won't eat them, just toss them all out, toss them at your feet.

What were they like towards the Japanese?

Oh, well, they feared the Japanese and the Japanese gave them a bad time. Some of the, you've got renegade tribes, and the renegade tribes they were all for the Japanese. And they gave a lot away, information about us

10:00 being there and our location. But see, the good guys, they were, they hated the Japanese and they wouldn't show it because they know they'd be, get their head lopped. And not too many people like getting their body shortened that way.

I've heard of a story of, a Second World War bloke I think was telling us that if he gave the Japanese prisoners to the New Guinea natives,

10:30 **they may not make it.**

That's right.

Did you witness any of that?

No, I had nothing to do with the prisoners. The only ones I saw were dead Japs and we had to put them, make them that way, you know, in open battle with us. We never took prisoners, there was hardly any Japanese taken prisoner in New Guinea as far as the, as far as our battalion was concerned, it was very serious. As a matter of fact, as I said before they, the art of camouflage and the art of hiding,

11:00 you couldn't see them. You'd see the bullet, or see the direction of the bullet, you might see a puff of smoke, you'd shoot at that and that was the worst part of New Guinea. The Markham Valley campaign was different, you had open warfare there but New Guinea was, as I said before was all jungle. You'd cut your way through it and come back the next day and it was the same as it's the day before. Got to cut your way back.

Where was the Markham Valley?

Markham Valley was Lae.

11:30 And Finschhafen and Markham Valley, the Markham Valley was the, Kaiapit and up to Dumpu, Shaggy Ridge, Oivi and Hero [Huon?]. That was the whole area up in open valley which was an open valley of kunai grass. And it was kunai all the way and they could snipe you out of the grass, long

12:00 grass was six, seven feet high and they'd fire on you and we used to set a match to it then and burn them out. Always a way out of any situation. And that was what they call a Lae Markham Valley campaign. We took Lae first, we landed at Nadzab which is the airstrip and the, then we marched from Nadzab, 2/25th. We formed up,

12:30 2/25th, 2/33rd and 2/31st, I was 2/25th. Then we started marching in towards Lae which is fourteen miles from Dumpu, from Nadzab and we fought all, everything, our way into the, we lost a lot of men there, we won two VCs [Victoria Crosses] there. And we took it on, the dates are in my records there somewhere, I can't remember the date it was taken.

13:00 The 9th Division were home from the Middle East then they, Tobruk and all that was all over and the war in the Middle East was over. They were home and they come in from Saddelberg and they contested with us, they reckon they took Lae, we reckon we took Lae so we don't know who took it. It was (UNCLEAR) reunions and that about who took Lae. But we were in there and when we were, we were marching out while they were, 9th Division were marching in so I'd say we had the best,

13:30 been the winners there. They come in from Saddelberg, it was further round the coast. And then we went from Lae to, the battle moved up towards Markham Valley then so we had to go back by, walk back to Lae again, back to Dumpu, not, Nadzab. Marched back to Nadzab and then they battle twisted over to a place called Kaiapit, it was

14:00 a mission station. And we walked across there, had a scrap there, wiped the Japs out there, then we went onto Kaigulin which was the next stop. And they, there was a, they caught us there for about three days, they pinned us down, we got them, beat them out after a while and the next stop was Dumpu. That's where we, opened airfield there and so that's where we started to get our first rations there. The airfield was open, we put a half a battalion or

14:30 a company of people around it and protected it and rations started coming in and medical supplies. And the hooks started and the pimple, Shaggy Ridge they call it, pimple. Shaggy Ridge.

Can, sorry Fred, I'd like to talk about these contacts perhaps in more detail, starting with the first one you had and

15:00 **what have you and I'll get there in a second. I was just wondering, before you went off to New Guinea, how were the people of Australia coping with the fact that the Japanese had now come into the war and men were taking off, leaving Australia? Obviously with no choice, they were told to go.**

That was exactly what happened to us in South Australia. We went to, they call the Cheer Up Hut. It was a hut with, put in for servicemen by the,

15:30 some relative, some, they call it the Cheer Up Hut, anyway it was Cheer Up Hut number one, Cheer Up Hut number two. One was at Glenelg, the other one was in Adelaide. We, I went into the Adelaide one one night and I walked in there, this bloke grabbed me by the collar and he give me, well, hit me behind the back of the head and I finished up I turned round and got getting stuck into it.

16:00 And he handed me a white feather. A white feather means cowardice. So, I got the white feather and this note on it, "You deserted us". And we'd just come back from the Middle East. So if we deserted them, went to the Middle East. That particular night I was only one of about many, most of the battalion got white feathers issued to them, this is Adelaide and they got white feathers issued to them. If you walk into a café someone would hand you a white feather and

16:30 a note saying that you deserted us in our hour of need. We'd been in the Middle East for two years and just come home, we left Australia undefended and went away to the Middle East to fight in somebody else's war. And left our poor militia at home here fighting for us in New Guinea. And I said "Look, we're moving to, we're going to New Guinea, we're on our way now mate so pull your head in" and we had a decent old blue there in the middle. I finished up getting picked up and spent the night in the

17:00 cooler. The police picked me up for, we got into a big thing in the, it was right in the middle of the dance floor and he handed me this feather and give me a clout in the back of the head and I, that was enough for me, I wasn't going take it so I got stuck into it and we didn't do very well.

How old was the man that did that to you?

Oh, he was only in his thirties. He had no sign of a uniform, he wasn't in a uniform himself. He had no sign of a uniform and most Australians with any

17:30 decency were in uniform in those days. Didn't see many in civil clothes. But those who were in civil clothes were very civil. They wanted to be, see, they offered us our, we came into the army offered us our jobs back when the war is over, they could look after us all the way. "You'll get your jobs back on return to Australia". Now of all of us that went away, a hundred and eight thousand of us all together, I suppose about two percent

18:00 got their jobs back because their father's owned the business or their brothers owned the business or something like that. The job I was doing, I was a painter and decorator, my Dad was a painter and decorator, that was my profession, or trade, not professional really because I was a traveller too, I was light footed, but I was painter and decorator by trade. I came back to Australia, and when the war finished and I was out for a few, for a little time, they,

18:30 my job wasn't, no longer available. Of all people, an Italian, I'd been fighting Italians for two years, it was an Italian had my job and they weren't going to take it away from him. And I wrote letters to the paper, I went and abused a couple of parliamentarians I knew, anyway, it went on and on and on. It still goes on even today, they promise you the world and give you nothing. Five shillings a day we got, that was our pay,

19:00 fifty cents a day, that was our wages, seven days a week. And you get your uniform for free which is a raggy, baggy looking piece of this too. And a pair of boots and socks and things like that and five

shillings a day. And then they promise you your work back and you didn't get it back. I was very demanding of the army, of the government after I come out of the army, I can tell you.

You must've understood to a certain degree what

19:30 **the Vietnam Vets [Veterans] came back to then?**

Yes, I understand it very well. The Vietnamese war, see, I've never known an Australian to show cowardice, I had one and as I told you before, that Wingate character. But that's the only one I've ever known in twenty-five, over twenty-five years of service. And I've never known anybody to go dingo on anything. But the Vietnam veterans were forced to go to Vietnam. The National Service was in, I was

20:00 part of the National Service before I left the army, I was an instructor at Wacol. And they, the Vietnamese mob went from there. I would've gone but I had one side missing so I had to stay at home. Anyway, the Vietnam, they were National Service, they were inducted into the army. Then they were coaxed from there into joining the regular forces to go to Vietnam.

20:30 Now, they had no training, only the training we give them, the ninety-day training at Wacol or whatever the National Service camp was. We trained them to a certain degree of activities and made them into, well, what their parents told us was, made them into good type of citizens more than anything else. They went to Vietnam, they, nobody said hooray to them, nobody said hello to them when they come back, the same with the Korean War. The forgotten wars.

21:00 They sent them over there and promised them the world, "When you come back you'll get this and get the other thing". They went away, they were under harsh conditions, very harsh conditions, they were ill trained, under trained, under equipped and they fought like crazy, the Yanks got all the credit for Vietnam, and the Australians did all the work, the Australians and New Zealanders did all the work. This is the way the world runs and if you're not American or American

21:30 citizenship of some sort you're nothing in this world. And [American President, George W] Bush only said this morning that the only one, "We're the leaders of this world and we'll remain that way". He said it this morning on the air, I watched him speak it. He might get his wings clipped in this next week I think too. But that's the type, and they had all these accidents. We in Korea we had, they napalmed [bombarded with incendiary mixture from flame thrower] us. In the battle of Kapyong, they come across in the planes,

22:00 you give them a direct order from a radio on the ground, that's us down the bottom there, we've got an airstrip out with an arrow, showing "Don't fire past this point". They come across and napalm bomb dropped straight on top of us and wiped out a whole platoon with napalm, burnt them to death, all our guys, the good guys. They done it to us in New Guinea, they reckon they won the Kokoda, they call it the Kokoda Trail, they fought the Kokoda Trail.

22:30 I never saw, I saw two Negroes on the Kokoda Trail and they were at Ioribaiwa Ridge, kind of like a machine gun, it was too heavy for, a sixty cal brownie and they pulled out. And the only, next time I saw them was after Gona, after Gona had fallen, we took Gona. All, completely Australian, all Australian, nothing else but Australia in the Owen Stanleys.

Can I ask you something about

23:00 **the Americans that, the two Americans that you saw on the Kokoda Trail, as it's known. We've interviewed a few Vietnam vets and they've said that the Americans, you know, would call attention to themselves, smoke, talk loud,**

Yeah.

all that kind of stuff. Did you see that in New Guinea as well or was it just those?

Yeah, see it right through from the Second World War. They didn't come into the Second World War until the last eighteen months of the war.

23:30 And they took the credit for, the credit for the landing on the, Mission Beach and all those beaches and they were never there. In the movies, they're there, you see them racing up the beaches. Shoulder to shoulder, mind, don't worry about people shooting them, you never see these soldiers, you get further apart because you make a bigger target. They're in line shoulder to shoulder, huddled up and getting shot at, oh, they annoy me.

24:00 We had more fights in Japan than enough.

We'll get to that, but back in the Owen Stanley Ranges, did you have enough water to keep going? You talked about lack of food but did you actually have enough water to last you through the day?

Where, in New Guinea?

In New Guinea.

Oh yes, you get water from two o'clock onwards you've got rivers of it. It rained every afternoon about two o'clock.

24:30 That's what we had too much of, water, the water was coming down all the time. Like it's, you got water out of the trees, the jungle was always dripping water day by day. You can't keep dry, if you go, as soon as you entered a jungle area, the water was dripping on you all the time.

We've heard a lot about the Japanese atrocities that occurred in New Guinea during the Second World War. Besides this cannibalism of Bernie

25:00 **you mentioned before, do you recall witnessing or hearing of any other form of atrocity whilst you were there?**

Oh yes, quite a lot but the truth of the matter is, you know, it's waiverable. I wouldn't like to guarantee anything because, but there were some atrocities carried out but mainly on protected, like prisoners of war. They took a lot of prisoners of war, like in the

25:30 Borneo area they had a lot of prisoners. We released a lot of prisoners of war there when we done the invasion of Borneo. That was later on before the end of the war. The, Balikpapan, we're going up all this junction road in Vasey Highway, they called it, after General Vasey. And there was, we got about sixty prisoners there, that were prisoners and the Japs left them behind.

26:00 Now they'd shot a lot of them as plain as day as we freed them actually. They knew they were beaten and they were running for cover and they shot some of the prisoners because they, they did a lot of shooting because that was their, they were told to do that by their gods or something. And they were, you couldn't get worse atrocities than that, shooting them the day the armistice was being signed. We didn't know, the armistice was signed on the 16th of October I think it was. And

26:30 we didn't know ourselves that the armistice had been signed until well, in November, about the 7th of November. And we were still fighting as though the war was still going and the armistice had been signed on the warships. And nobody told us, we were still stuck out there amongst the monkeys and the, what do you call those other things, those

27:00 oh other big, not gorillas.

Chimpanzees?

Yeah, chimps.

Was there a, before we talked about there was a form of respect towards the German fighters whilst you were in the Middle East. But in New Guinea, was there a form of respect for the Japanese as well?

No, no. None whatsoever. The only Jap I wanted to see was a dead one, that was

27:30 the general feeling because the, some of the atrocities they were carrying out. The Germans, their atrocities were against the Jews. And massively so. And if, I read Mein Kampf [Hitler's publication, My Struggle] and all the different things, I was a bit of a student of reading, I've read Mein Kampf from cover to cover and also the reason behind Hitler's wants, or hatred of

28:00 the Jews. Because they were taking all the artwork that Germany had, it was mostly, German musicians, the Jews took the lot. They finished up buying it, they had the money, they had the money in the world and they were buying all the solid things that were part of the history of the country in which they were made. And that's what caused a lot of it and it still similar even today,

28:30 that sort of thing. But I don't, I wasn't with Hitler, I'd liked to have strung him up myself before I got into trouble with him at all but they did some nasty, atrocious acts too. Well no matter whether it was Jewish or Polish or whatever it was, they were still human beings, they were destroying, they were trying to destroy the human race to make a mandate

29:00 that he wanted, not a mandate that we wanted as people. And the Japanese, they couldn't care less. They had this idea of just go in and wipe out everything and we'll take what was left. But they didn't care about Hiroshima. Hiroshima, they hit Hiroshima with the atomic bomb and the, we had the job of cleaning up the metal other mess, other

29:30 people too because there was two hundred and fifty thousand people in Hiroshima alone were just pushed into mass graves and buried as though, such a mess. After the bombs like this was a shocking area.

You were there then?

At the finish, yeah, when, it was almost cleaned up when we were there. We helped to bury about twenty-five thousand I suppose.

Right, well I better ask you more about the Pacific then and we'll come back to Japan. You've just done too much.

30:00 **I guess if it's possible, can you give us a briefing on the campaigns you fought in New Guinea? You talked about in Lae when you were there the Markham Valley and you talked about the Ridge, when the two brothers died, I believe was on the Ridge? And you talked about first**

arriving there in the Ranges, but

30:30 **was this a, was this kind of jungle warfare a daily occurrence?**

Oh yes, from the time we entered, from the time we got off the trucks at Owen's Corner, that was the last time we saw a truck or anything, any vehicle of any sort. Owen's Corner was about fourteen miles from Moresby, we got off the trucks there and headed straight in the jungle. This was, all this first hundred yards down this one side of Imita Ridge

31:00 is just a track, you can see the track down. But by the time you get down the bottom of the track, it's kept pretty clean on this side of the track, but when you get down the bottom of the track it's just thick jungle. You cut your way through up to Oivi and up to Ioribaiwa Ridge, Ioribaiwa to Kagi, Efogi north, Efogi south, Myola, Popondetta, Templeton's Crossing,

31:30 Oivy, and Kokoda, oh, the Wairopi River, the Wairopi Bridge, and then to Kokoda. And from Kokoda you go onto Gona, and that's where the war finished as far as we were concerned. Our part of the campaign finished at Gona. We walked from one side, from one side of the island side of the island, right to the sea at Gona. And that's where the Yanks come in, they come in at Buna.

32:00 And they got the first, they come in right at the finish and the Japs were starving and they had bulldozers and armoured cars and everything else on the bitumen roads there and plenty of machine guns and mowed them down and pushed them into the sea. And that's, it was the whole crux of the whole thing but that was the Owen Stanleys. And then from the Owen Stanleys, we came home from the Owen Stanleys mind you, we came

32:30 home from there, from the Owen Stanley campaign. We hadn't beaten the Japs by any stretch of the imagination but we had to have a rest and they had enough men on the ground that were fresh troops to maintain and hold the country we'd already taken. They took us home to Brisbane, re-equipped us because we had our equipment, all our clothes were falling off. We were met at Brisbane,

33:00 at the wharf at Brisbane, taken to Yeerongpilly. Yeerongpilly gave us a great meal there and we couldn't eat it because we were starving. Well, the first thing I wanted was a great big steak, you know, a mixed grill I wanted. That's all I wanted and I got up there and couldn't touch it. A piece of steak about that size and pushed it aside. And that hungry, and we hadn't eaten, some of us, for about eleven days, it was

33:30 seventeen days was the worst anybody went without a feed, any meal or anything to eat at all. Seventeen days. Plenty of water but no food. Or food like what they call millionaire cabbage, we were taking the tops out of coconut palms and, you know the white fronds that come out of the tops? You get up, the native boys would get up and cut the fronds off and drop them down and they call it millionaire's cabbage. Used to boil it and if we had a light or something to

34:00 boil it or somehow of lighting a fire we'd put it in pots and boil it. The natives would do a lot of it for us and it's, put some salt water on it and make it salty and it was a food.

Can you eat cabbage now?

Yeah, it didn't worry, it's not bad this millionaire's cabbage, it's coconut. Occasionally you'd get a coconut and drink the milk and things like, eat the coconut around it.

How much weight had

34:30 **you lost when you came back to Australia?**

Oh, I was fifteen four when I went to New Guinea, I came back I was nine stone I think. But it was, what clothes we had, well we were all the same, what clothes were left were hanging on us and when they kitted us out at Yeerongpilly, we told us to take some clothes at Yeerongpilly the day we landed there. "Take whatever clothes you want, there was no, there's no

35:00 papers to sign, just go and grab what you want and fit it on and if it fits it's yours" And had cartons and cartons of shirts and trousers and shorts and underpants, the works. Then when you're finished, have, "Finish your meal, hop on your bus and go home and go to your places of residence". No leave passes, just let us go. And then again we had to return in three days, we returned in three days, most of us did, some

35:30 went AWL [Absent Without Leave].

What was your mother's reaction, sorry Fred, in seeing you?

She was quite used to it by now. They give us a good welcome home and the mayor of Ipswich welcomed us home and there was a few of us in Ipswich, a few of us in our home town, you know, and they give us a good pat on the back which we didn't deserve, I suppose but they reckoned we did at the time. Had a night on the town and

36:00 enjoyed it and then settled down for a few days at home.

Can I ask you Fred, what you think in your opinion, was the hairiest conflict that you encountered in New Guinea?

Oh, I would say that the Owen Stanleys would be the worst by far. It's, there were some hairy ones like at Shaggy Ridge was a nasty one. The ridge itself was, oh, it was about,

36:30 be a seven-foot wide track, to get to the top of a pimple and that's where we were, on the pimple. And you get up there and if they started mortaring you, which they used to do, the Japs would send mortars in while you were walking up this track. You had to go somewhere and the only way was over the side. You've got a two hundred foot drop this side and straight up a brick wall, straight up stone wall the other side so you'd head for the stone wall and stay against there, flatten yourself out against the wall and hope for the best. Hope you got missed.

37:00 But they were dropping shells on us all the time. You could get as many as nine hundred shells an hour coming in at times. And you're pretty lucky to miss a lot of them because they (UNCLEAR) up there.

Was there a time when you thought, "Okay, this is it, it looks like my number's up now"?

Yes, in New Guinea in the same time. As a matter of fact, my daughter's got a diary which she,

37:30 of mine, my eldest daughter, she lives over at Petrie, and she won't give it back to me. It was a diary I had and the censors got hold of it and they hacked most of it out. But I said there that, "I hope today's the last day, stop the world I want to get off because it's" you know, you felt there's nothing in it for you and all you've got to do is, you're going to die today. The padre told us that he told us, he said "If any of you guys can

38:00 pray", he said "start praying now". The day we entered the Owen Stanleys he said "If any of you guys know a prayer", he said "which you should do", he said "in your various denominations", he said "start saying it now", he said, "And remember the words", he said "because that'll stay up there with you in the hills". And he told us we were all going perish up there, we never did. But it was one of the worst in the history of the war, the

38:30 Owen Stanleys. It wasn't the fact of the fighting, it was the fact of the pervasions and things you had to suffer, you know. Food was, as I say, eleven or twelve days it's nothing to go without a bite, you had anything to eat and you finished up you're compulsively eating things off the trees and things like that. The, dipping roots of, taro roots and find a bit of taro root or something

39:00 and dip it in water. Not eating it, just sucking it, and it'd keep your mind and your health. Picking up stones, if you find a stone, a whitish looking stone you keep it in your mouth and suck it. And it gives you moist and also it gives you sucking, it gives you food, you know. And it's in your mind, it feels like you've eaten. And it's one thing, you can always feel like you've had a feed

39:30 if you're out anywhere, hiking or something like that, if you haven't eaten, you missed out on having, stopping at the barbeque place on the way or something like that, pick up a stone, a good white stone, pick it up and wash it or whatever you can do with it. Put it in your mouth and suck it and think of something, think of ham sandwiches or something like that and it'll keep you going. It's amazing. It's something, it's an act of survival and people are doing it

40:00 all the time.

It's a determined spirit maybe too.

Yeah, well, that would have something to do it I guess. You've got to have a strong determination as to what you're doing and how you see things. But when you're, it's, a lot of your learning is in your own mentality, it's of your own being. There's nobody

40:30 can teach you survival. They can teach you the elements of survival, but survival itself is, it's, you're the one that, it's your own brain that's doing the survival, that's true.

Tape 6

00:30 **Okay Fred, we're talking about Thomas Blamey [General Thomas Blamey Commander-in-Chief, Australian Military Forces (AMF) and Commander, Allied Land Forces]**

Yeah, this bloke in the East, they were playing, having a game of cricket in Gaza Ridge and he drove past. We were only about from here to the wall away from the pitch where they drove the car past and this sergeant's yelling out "There goes old Tom and his old grey mare". So his driver pulled the car up, and he got out and "Get that man arrested".

01:00 The sergeant was arrested and stripped of his rank. That's him like that. And he's not a very, he run out on the boys in Greece and left them sitting on, took the ship and left the, he took all the nurses of course, that was a good thing, he took the ship back to Alexandria but he, they escaped and all the rest of the people in Greece to their own affairs. And when they got back to Palestine, after about two or three months adrift they were charged with being deserters.

01:30 And that's the type of guy he was. Nobody liked him. He was a MacArthur [General Douglas MacArthur Commander-In-Chief of the Allied Forces] man, he was like John Howard [Australian Prime Minister at time of interview] is with [George W] Bush [American President at time of interview]. Anything that Bush does, Howard will do the same thing. Well he used to do the same thing with MacArthur and MacArthur told, all the blokes in the Owen Stanleys. They got as far as the Owen

02:00 Stanley, well got as far as Kokoda, after Kokoda fell and they reckoned we were all dingoes, not a fighting man among us. Was in there for two and a half months fighting our bellies out and starving to death nearly and he come up dressed like a, what do you call it, clothing expert. And we give him heaps too. But he said "I don't care if any one of you guys die",

02:30 MacArthur didn't care if any one of us died, as long as the job was done.

Is that what he said?

"I don't care you all, if you all hit the, if you all go under the side, as long as the job is done"

And so you were there when he was saying this to the men?

Everybody heard it when it was said.

So didn't everybody on the hill want to kill him?

Well, it's a wonder he didn't get shot, as a matter of fact. They wouldn't come, well most of us at that

03:00 time we were out of action, the Japs were further on towards Gona. He was back, he came back towards Popondetta. But then we struck him in Korea, he was in charge in Korea too, took a, and he told us we'd be home for Christmas. We'd chase the North Koreans right over the Chinese border which we did, up to the Yalu River, home for Christmas and he always,

03:30 he tried to destroy the Chosin reservoir which supplies all the North Korean electricity supplies. You could see all the lights of Vladivostok in the space of the night, every night. And he decided he was going to cross the river, and when he crossed the river fifty or sixty thousand Chinese come swarming across and that's how we got tied up in the other, hardest part of the war, really. They sacked him, they sacked him, took him home and he retired. You know, MacArthur House

04:00 is now the, I don't know why they call it MacArthur House, it's the new Veteran's Affairs office now, MacArthur House.

Not the best place for that.

They don't listen to stories, the stories when they come out and we were all telling lies but when they're gone, they don't care what you say about them when they're gone. And there was could be four or five said on them when they were alive.

But I heard up on,

04:30 **in the Owen Stanleys when Blamey did his 'Running rabbits get shot', that there was almost a mutiny.**

Oh, a couple of times there were near mutinies with Blamey. But he kept right out of the road of the diggers [solders] as much as he could. He'd speak to you from a dais about two hundred yards away with a loudspeaker and he never comes into line and front of you because he knew he'd cop it. They used to call him the brothel keeper and the,

05:00 he was, he had the houses of ill fame in Victoria tied up when he was the Commissioner of Police down there. But he swore he wasn't but he was. His wife was the madam down there and he was well known by the, you known, the residents that lived in the area. But they make all kinds in this life, I guess, and you've got to put up with it.

Very true.

But they gave him the highest accolades he could, anybody

05:30 could, you know, they made him field marshal and they made him all sorts of wardens, like Menzies was the warden for the sig [signal] ports and all this sort of thing.

But he knew he wasn't liked?

Oh yeah, he was aware of it, no doubt about that. And he used to live on that assumption that, "I'll catch the next man that says something about me". He sort of, he was listening for something all the time as he was walking, as he walked past you. He was listening for a bit of a backlash so that he could cut to you and say

06:00 "Right, you're in. You're under arrest" and that's it. He was always the policeman.

And Fred, how did you find the militia when you first went into the Owen Stanleys?

Oh great. They did a wonderful job, the poor beggars, I felt very sorry for them because they were ill trained, they had no training virtually. They were kids, like ourselves, they had been only twelve months

before we went over the other side. And they took us,

06:30 they took the whole bundle, the Japanese onslaught on themselves. The 55th, 53rd, 42nd Battalion and 14th Battalion, they were all, and until we came home from the Middle East for reinforcements, they were just about out. They finished up with, 2/14th Battalion AIF, they come back from the Middle East, 21 brigade. 27 Battalion and 21st Battalion, they came back, they were the first ones to join up with the militia. And when they went to

07:00 they met the militia up at Itiraga I think it was, they got, the militia had about four thousand men initially and they ended, they a hundred and fourteen left. So they joined up and they called themselves Char Force, and, C H A R force, I don't know why but that's what they called them. And they formed a battalion, that's where they joined the militia that was left, with the battalion and they went in and they did a good job. They, and we were still coming up, we were still

07:30 coming up from Australia. And we joined them, and we joined them at Ioribaiwa Ridge and that's where we got hit hard, Ioribaiwa Ridge, trying to catch up. And they were almost in Moresby, another seven hours they'd have been in Moresby. And if they get in Moresby, well Australia's gone.

That's close.

Yeah, seven hours away from Moresby they were when they first struck them. And they give us curry [under fire], we knew what the Japs were like, they were good fighters there's no doubt about that but

08:00 they had nothing to live for. The rising sun is their only emblem and they used it to the fullest extent.

Now Fred after your, after the war was over and you came back to Australia, you actually were discharged for a bit before you signed up again, is that right?

I was discharged, yeah, well you had to take demobilisation and demob was on and if I'd been, I was five years

08:30 in the army at that stage, in active service five years and five months. They call us five by five. And that five by five you had to take, had to elect demobilisation so that you wouldn't become a dead head on the rest of society when you got home. We were already dead as far as we were concerned. We got home and our jobs that they promised us were not there and I thought "Hell with this". I got married and mucked around a while and then thought, "I'm getting out,

09:00 I could back to occupation [British Commonwealth Occupation Forces]". And the family wouldn't go with me, I said, I had married quarters over there if I wanted, they wouldn't go, "That's where I'm going" and that was it. And I went over, they had a good Nishimura or rainbow village is the correct word for it. Nishimura, it was the marriage quarters, they had servants and everything else, the wives, they could've had a ball there. But a lot of them went and they became real snobs too because every time, we lived

09:30 with the Japanese and they, your wife would be on your back and "You're having an affair with her, are you?" and all this sort of garbage. And so it went on. There was more break-ups of marriages over there than not.

That kind of leads me to the, I guess, our next topic of conversation, is going to Japan. How did you, I guess, how did you feel going, taking up into the occupation forces in Japan given what you'd been through up in the islands with the

10:00 **Japanese?**

Oh, no different I wanted to see them in their home, the little beggars, we've been fighting you for so many years now let's see what you're like at home. This is what, this is an aim I had, I wanted to go and see how they lived at home. And I expected to see a lot of bestiality over there, the real mongrel type of people. I got there and I was pleasantly surprised. But there was non-fraternisation about it which was pretty strict. The MPs [Military Police] were on you every time, every moment you looked, if you looked cross

10:30 eyed and saw a nice little Muslim lady, "She's a nice little girl" and they'd, immediately the MPs would pounce on you. "Don't talk to" they were strict on fraternisation. We used to break up though, we used to go to their Hoochies at night time and might, the father might invite us, they might invite us, the mama san or the brother or something. And they give us, serve sukiyaki on the tatami mat.

11:00 Raw fish and stuff and sit down with a bottle of sake [rice wine] and a glass and drink it and it's fun. But they, oh, they treated us like the lords of the manor, they did, the Japanese people. And I thought they're not a bad type all together. But then I started to delve into the situation, the hierarchy of them and all these different castes and creeds and things they have in the country. This is what started all these warlords and things having their

11:30 say and it's the, what do you call it, the, not the mafia, the Yakuzas [Japanese organised crime syndicate] crowd, they take your finger off and stuff like that to become a member.

Was that actually happening, was that actually happening when you were over there?

Oh, they always do that but none of ours ever joined the Yakuza they, they were just out of bounds to us and we never use to worry about anyway. They were

12:00 just a weak lot, they were the type of, the sadist Jap that was in the war and shoot you without any complaints, you know. They made their money out of the pachinko halls and things, they had these places, pachinko, and it's like we have poker machines here, they have the pachinko ones. And they're milking the money out of their own people and living it up like warlords and then chopping their own people to pieces,

12:30 they were killing their own people. So we tried, we put forces out to try to put a stop that, we did that for three years and of course the Korean War broke everything up and it started again.

Now what were your, what were your initial duties, your first duties when you got to Japan?

Oh, our duties when we first got to Japan were cleaning up all the tunnels, the submarine

13:00 pens and things like that because everything was built underground. The camp we were living in, at the very, a nice little story too, they had a concrete floor over the parade ground. Anyway, we were running, in the parade ground on day they started the, running on the spot on day and this sort of thing and there's about two hundred, three hundred blokes running on the spot makes a pretty fair thunderous hit in the edge of one of these, and the floor gave way and fell

13:30 in this canal underneath. And there was all these midget submarines under there, about forty or fifty midget submarines, that's where they were, that was their house underneath. And we destroyed those, or they made us, got us to destroy them over time. And we started checking the place, we found bombs in places and loaded with bombs around the place ready to go off if they wanted them to go. We got those and destroyed those. Booby traps and things.

Did you ever find the entry, the actual, the

14:00 **formal entry point to these tunnels?**

They did eventually, yeah. The canal goes right out past them and the tunnel in the canal, they finished up getting our intelligence got people with knowledge of what they were doing and got into the Japs and quizzed them and some of those gave the, gave it away I think and told them where they were. And then they got these same people that were telling them, like the screamers or the criers where these different tunnels were, even know

14:30 where most of them were around the place. Except Hiroshima. Hiroshima was a no-no and then the only thing in Hiroshima that was left standing was the peace tower which is now, the peace tower is a big old building, like a town hall type of thing and just stands on the edge of the river there and is stark reality still today.

And that was right in the middle of the blast site, wasn't it?

Yes, at ground zero it was. And it was a mess and we finished up getting

15:00 a lot to do with that and clean it up and

In what way?

Oh, looking for booby traps and hidden mines. They had the river all mined and things like that. If someone had decided to send a boat up, it would've gone sky high too. But they were, in, here again, it was the Yakuzas doing that because they were backing behind, the people of Hiroshima, they couldn't care less. They'd had their hiding, they, people, I see people with blisters, big blood blisters was hanging

15:30 from their jaws from there where the radiation hit them and come out like a great big blood blister and hanging out like a, they're terrible. They passed it onto their kids. They're still coming out the same way, some of them.

So what, the kids have come out with a blood blister?

Yeah, oh yes. Two generations since have come out with, not all of them but some of them were badly infected and their parents, it's carried through in the genes. And they, if you ever see a Jap walking around the place

16:00 with a big red blood blister sort of thing hanging from the face it's mother or father has had radiation in Hiroshima or Nagasaki or somewhere like that. That's providing they look to be Japanese and since they are Japanese.

So there was a, am I right to assume then, there was a bit of a, like a little war going on then between the Yakuza?

Oh, they're always fighting amongst themselves. They try to gain members

16:30 and to become a true member of the Yakuza you've got to have a finger chopped off, they cut the first joint off. And you've got to be pretty well into it and do, they give you five or six tasks to do, they give

them a task of running a pachinko hall or running a house of ill fame or, something that's against the law anyway in their own country. And of course then they'll go and do it and they'll say come back and they cut the joint off, you're a true member now of the Yakuza

17:00 and you become a Yakuza member right through your life. Unless you do something against the unit and then if, that's when they knock your head off. And that's the way it goes. But they gained a lot of popularity, as a matter of fact, I've got a, my son's mate, he grew up with in school, named Simon Foley. He's, now he works for the Queensland Museum, he's a, oh, he does something in there,

17:30 he's a research officer in the Queensland Museum, or the Queensland, Queensland Museum isn't it? Asking him there, his father's an ex-police sergeant. He grew up with young Grant, my son, and he got, they've been teaching school, he's a schoolteacher by profession. And he was went up and taught school over there for two years and he finished up he got, he was going with a Japanese lass

18:00 and her brother was one of the Yakuza chiefs. And he got right behind Simon and tried to get him to join. And Simon wouldn't and of course that broke their romance up and everything else and he came home and he give it away. He said they were chasing him, the Yakuza, "We want you to join, you will join" and Simon hopped on a plane and decided Australia was the safest place. It's not safe here, they come looking for him down here at one time. He lives in Brisbane,

18:30 as I said, he's working for the Queensland Institute there, whatever it is. And they were chasing him. He had the police watching anybody, he keeps away from anybody that's got an oriental appearance now, Simon keeps well away from them. And he's a big bloke, he's nearly six foot three, six foot four and about, oh, he'd be seventeen stone I suppose, a big man.

And why would they chase him all the way over?

They wanted him to, he refused, when they request you don't refuse.

19:00 And he was going with this bloke's sister and that was it. And his other mate, he was over there too, he works with Toyota over there. He was a school, he went over and taught school in Tokyo, or just out of Tokyo then he got a job, he's married to a Japanese, a nice little lass too. She was over here just recently, a couple of weeks ago. And Mia. He went back, they went back to Japan now and

19:30 he's working for Toyota, he's one of the Australian executives of Toyota over there and he's got a good job. It's about three or four grand a week. And that's American money and he's enjoying it, he wants to get out and come back to Australia but he wouldn't get mixed up with that sort of thing. Jason is his first name, Jason Foley.

Were the, the Yakuza, were they ever harassing the BCOF [British Commonwealth Occupation Forces] forces at all?

No, they wouldn't dare,

20:00 we had the right to pull a pistol and put it straight into them. There was no, never had, we've had blokes fronted up with them and someone else's walked out of a night club or wherever they've been and either given them a belt along the head with the butt of a pistol or put one through their throat. It was just simple as that. There was no law against us doing it because the law, their own law's back in now, if it happened now you'd be up for murder. But with occupation

20:30 still on, with occupation we were the ones that were in charge. And a friend of mine down here, lives down at Sandgate, Lloyd Gagan, he's an ex-policeman, walked out of the police force to joined the K force [Korea Force] with me, he was a cop on the beat in Brisbane. And I was talking to him this day I joined, he said "What did you join?", "K force", he said "Good,

21:00 hang around a while", he said "I'll be with you as soon as I come off the beat." He done his beat and his inspector come up to him and said "What are you doing now?", he said "Here's my cap", handed his cap to the inspector, and said "I'm gone". He said "You got your holiday pay you'll miss", he said "You stick in your can", and he said "I'm gone", he said "I'll be in Korea". And come and join up with us out at Indooroopilly. And we got into a Yakuza joint one day over there him and I at

21:30 Kure, or Hiro actually. It was ten o'clock, the lights were out and everything else and curfew was on as far as the Japs were concerned but we'd been busy, we'd gone out for a beer. So we went into this beer hall, this bloke was just closing up and he was the Yakuza chief of Hiro and he wanted, he was going to play hell if we asked him to open up again. Anyway, we, Lloyd said "Open the bar", he said "No, I no open", I said "You open the bar", and he wouldn't open it so Lloyd goes

22:00 bang and puts his fist through the door. It was a white glass door and he stuck his fist through it and of course when he opened the door to remonstrate with us and as soon as he, we just walked in the door and sat on a bar stool and said "Now we want beer", he put the beer up. Anyway, he got two or three of his little mates to come in, they were Yakuza too apparently or would've been. And they started putting on a turn and Lloyd said "Look," he said, "open your mouth" he said "and I'll take this pistol out" he said, "and I'll shoot it

22:30 off through your head". We didn't have a pistol with us, on leave we didn't carry pistols with us. Anyway, he backed down. The next thing we heard, saw him on the phone. I said "He's ringing the Military Police, Lloyd", and he said "He better not be", I said "I'm not waiting around to find out", so we went in,

as we were leaving Lloyd just grabbed the bar, picked it up, the whole thing and tipped it over and two thousand bottles flying everywhere and all beer flying all over the place. We got out just as the sirens were coming round the corner, these two red caps,

23:00 Jeeps full of riot police and we just kept walking up the road like nobody knew us and no one even accosted us. Anyway, we got home, went to bed and forgot about it. As a matter of fact, he sent me a Christmas card this Christmas, Lloyd from down at, he's a pretty crook man at the moment. And he's mostly in Greenslopes hospital. At Christmas time he sent me a Christmas card, I'm not quite sure where he is now. Said "I wonder how those

23:30 two blokes are going that wrecked that beer hall in Hiro way back, he said in 1953, '54" and turned if over and ping straight away, I knew exactly what he was talking about. And the missus said "What is he talking about?" she said, he said "You wouldn't remember them" I said, "I remember them all right, it was Lloyd and I".

Can I just clarify Fred, the midget subs you found underneath the parade ground

24:00 **was that at Kure or Hiro?**

Hiro.

That was at Hiro, right.

Yeah, Kure was the town, Hiro was a little sort of a village, Hiro Machi Machi meant a village, little village. And we were camped there, we had the big laundry, it was laundry camp, what it was, for the Japanese army. We took it over, our army took it over and that's where our barracks was. And then Kure was about three and a half, four miles down the track between Hiroshima

24:30 and Hiro, that's where we used to go on leave and things like that, go to Hiro, or we'd go to Hiroshima sometimes, mainly to Kure. And you had Kure House there was the a big café, regiment, regimental café type of place, we used to go to the restaurant and have a drink and really play up. And come home on the bus and go to bed. But it was the, it was a lot bigger town than

25:00 was Hiro, Hiro was one little theatre and that's all there and Kure had about five or six theatres.

So what were your first impressions when you got to Japan initially, I mean, being in a very different country for the first time?

Well, no, I didn't notice, it was just the houses were the worst thing I saw, you could push the houses over. They have the tsunamis over there, the earthquakes and things,

25:30 they're coming in all the time and you could push it over with your hand, the houses. Paper walls and, well, we walked right through them, go in and you wanted to be in the place, you just walk straight through the wall and that's, they've got windows and things in them but they had pretty sterile breezes and all of a sudden a tsunami comes up and it blows the place to billy-o. And there's one

26:00 there while we were there that we had to go and clean up that eight thousand died in Hiro, Hiro Matchi, Kure Matchi areas between Hiro and Kure.

This is after a tsunami?

Yeah. They, you just, we were up in the barracks, our barracks was a good stone barracks and that was, it was nothing taking it over. But this one, this typhoon come in and took the lot.

26:30 And we were out all night that night stopping looters and bringing in injured, dead, whatever was there. There were boats from the canals, fishing boats, were up a mountain outside of our, it was a great heap of mountains, and they'd oh, be a hundred, a hundred and twenty feet high. And the fishing boats, they were at this down level before it happened, they were sitting right on top of the mountains.

27:00 It's unreal and it only happened, lasted about forty-five minutes and eight thousand deaths that night.

Incredible. So what, I mean, what do you do with all those bodies?

Well, they buried in their own ways. We don't see them again, we bring them back in there and they're collected by the family members. And whether they're buried, oh, some of them are buried. In Korea

27:30 they bury them sitting up but in Japan, I've never seen them buried in Japan. They might fire them, I don't know. But the thing is, with the dead that we got from Hiroshima that we just pushed them, dig a great big hole with the dozers and push them all in and cover it all over. And they've got the names, or, they think they have the names of the people that are dead and they inform their relatives. Very much the same as what we have here. And no tombstone, no gravestone to verify where they are

28:00 or what they are, you hopefully got the right people. Push them in, cover it over, mound it up and walk away and leave it.

Now, when you were clearing away, cleaning up the Hiroshima site with bodies and things that you were finding there, I mean, how far into the site were you going and what kind of damage were you seeing in terms of?

Oh, damage, there was nothing there, it was just the peace building, which is the peace building now, peace tower, and a few outstanding,

28:30 outside buildings. Most of it was as flat as a tack, it was like, you could, all the river was going through, you could see the river going, flowing, it was flowing alright and all the rest of it was just a mass of rubble. There was nobody could've existed through it. But, and this was a fair while after it too, because they never started to clear up, we had, the British cleaned up some, the Yanks cleaned up some, the Australians and New Zealanders, we had to clean up some. And it's the

29:00 full strength of the whole

So what state were the, I mean, it might seem like a gruesome question, but I'm just curious. What state were the bodies in that you were finding?

Oh terrible bloody. Oh blazes, just blown to smatters and clothing still on them and the stench was something horrific. You had white canvas type of clothes, hoods and goggles and masks on, you go in and you'd clean up and big rubber gloves come up to about here.

29:30 Clean up what you had to clean up, do your shift, your shift was about an hour and a half to two hours and you were forced to pull out at that time. Then you'd go through a decontamination room, be decontaminated, then take your clothes off from room to room, your hat off and your gloves and things like that till you got down to your suit. Then you take your suit off, that's all destroyed, immediately destroyed, put in a furnace. Then you get dressed in your own uniform in a

30:00 safe room, hop on the trucks and go back to your base. And that was happening day by day by day.

So how long were you doing that for?

Oh, for me, about three times. Some were doing it probably seven or eight times but the, you're only allowed to do it about two or three times because radiation will eventually encase you, yourself. You can't do,

30:30 you know, everything's got to be right and you've got to make sure you put your fingers on your gas mask and the air comes, any air escapes you're wiped out, but they can take them out and go back to your unit. It's a risky job. It's, and a lot of the boys now are claiming through Legacy and repat for this stuff, for pension claims. They won't give it to them. Like, they were only BCOF, they never fought, they were BCOF, they never fought there, there was no

31:00 fighting as such, the war had finished. But they're never fighting as big a war that we ever fought was ourselves, with rifles. You live with that stuff for a couple of hours and you know what radiation is like. Even when you take your clothes off you can feel it tingling in your arms and legs for hours after. You wonder, like you ever, we used to say, "I wonder if I've taken a hit", you know, because if there's a bit of a hole or a bit of a gap

31:30 in your clothing anywhere, you cop the lot. So it's one of those things.

So that's what you're feeling, you walk away from that job and you're feeling a bit of a tingling in you.

You're tingling through the whole of your body where it's affected. It's probably from the heat inside the uniform, inside the canvas sack suit and it sort of seep through, that's why they keep you there for a certain, an hour and a half because, or an hour and thirty minutes, that's all we were allowed to take. That's the maximum.

32:00 And if you're out in the open, it doesn't make any difference in the open or enclosed, it's still there. As long as there's radiation in the air you've got it, providing you haven't got the right equipment and we weren't sure that the Yanks were producing the right equipment even. We were, like you go home with that thought in mind that, "They know what they're doing, I'll wear it" and they convince you it's very safe and you take it from.

Well these days you wouldn't get anybody walking into a radiation site in a canvas

32:30 **suit, would you?**

No, they did it down here in Australia where they had the radiation down there. That's still coming up with radiation burns and things even now, fifty years after. In Maralinga.

Yeah, so you actually felt that the site was hot? Like temperature wise.

Yeah, you can feel the heat, you feel the heat but it's not a hot heat, it's a heat like it's, you've turned, you suddenly turn your hot tap on, you've

33:00 been, had cold water, having a cold water shower and you turn your hot water on and it comes to a point where it's just bearable, that's about the heat you get. And it goes away, it goes through your body, it sort of, your body adapts to it. But it's, some of those things you've got to be quite careful of and

So where there any fellows that you knew of who got affected by it, who had gaps in their clothing or?

No, I don’t

33:30 know of any. But I’ve never had anything to do with it, any of them. We were there for a short time doing that and we had other jobs, we had caves to clear, blocked caves in the mountains. They had, we still got prisoners of war, we still got prisoners, took prisoners. They wanted to fight us too, shooting back at us in the tunnels in the mountains. Japan is just one mass of mountain tunnels and they had them sealed, and sealed

34:00 in the front of them they, air vents through the top again. And they could’ve hidden there for years and we searched the whole of the country, it’s not a very big area, like you could walk across from one side to the other in a day and a half. You know, you could go through the country, men all spread out, you could go right through the whole country in a couple of weeks. But it took weeks and weeks and weeks of tunnel clearing and things like that. You found the tunnels

34:30 eventually but then you’ve got to find the opening. Sometimes it might fire back at you, the tunnel when you open it but mostly no. And you get up in the tunnel and clear it out, see what was in there, be the fire arms, bombs, sometimes a lot of refugees hiding, things like that. It had different, every aspect of finding things is in the whole deal. Expensive stuff and otherwise.

35:00 **That’s amazing.**

They were wells.

So who were, you mentioned the refugees in the mountains, were these locals who were scared of the occupation forces.

Yeah. No, they weren’t scared of the occupation, they were scared of their own people I think. They were, the farm people never wanted a war, this is what I’m, I’ve got a great deal of time for the country people in Japan. They never wanted a war in the first place, they were quite happy to go out and tend their rice fields and go out and bend along and plant the rice suckers in

35:30 the pools and their, in their pits. And then they reaped the benefits of it when it was harvest, they were happy, that was their life. They were very happy with that. Then of course their people come in and started causing wars and Hitler told them he’d give them half the world when he won it and all the rest of it. And they believed it and, or they assumed this is what happens and when they became

36:00 scared and they decided to head for the bush to make, prepare for things to come because they didn’t want any part of it so they could hide out and probably still work their fields, which they were still doing some of them. But they were scared stiff of their own, a place called Haramura they were very bad up there. The poor beggars had been, it was a submarine area and it’s about four hundred feet high, the area, Haramura

36:30 Mountain, it’s quite a big mountain. They were doing, making parts of submarines up there, just hand parts, small parts. And they never built submarines or anything like it in one place. They built a hull here, something else in another district or another part somewhere else until they finished up with the whole area. And Haramura was one of the areas that made a lot of the small parts. Like meters and things like that for the ships. They got up there

37:00 and they, the funniest part about it, the sea is four hundred feet down and that’s where they had to take the parts, put it into the ships, into the submarines. And they were dead scared because they’re innocent country people trying to do their job and they’ve got these other hoons up the top there and telling them what to do and making them help them. And not paying them, they weren’t getting paid or anything like that, they’re just helping them make parts and they were going into the, school kids

37:30 even helped them make parts for the different purposes they were going to use.

So in a way you were actually liberating these fellows who were in the mountains.

That was the idea of it. We became the liberation army at the end of the war. And then the Korean War spoiled that fun and we had a, had to get tied up and go across there. There was always somebody helping him.

38:00 **And can I just clarify, the fellows who you were having to fight in the mountains, the ones that were shooting at you, who were they precisely?**

Oh, they were leftovers from the Japanese army that, they didn’t want to quit. There were still

Even against the word of the Emperor?

Well in Biak and Buan and places like that, they were picking up prisoners forty-two years after the war had finished. Guam, there were a few

38:30 dozen there still fighting on, right through from 1945 till 1990. And they didn’t know the war was over. They were still feeding themselves, I don’t know how they were getting on but they got, they lived there.

I have heard of those people but I'm quite surprised to hear of people in their own country of Japan actually acting against the word of the Emperor.

Oh yeah, well the Emperor doesn't mean very much these days.

Right.

He didn't mean very much towards the end of the war, he's to the hierarchy

39:00 and around Tokyo, yes, but south of Tokyo, Honshu, Nagasaki, all those places, right the way through he was just a figurehead. And the main boy they were after was Tojo, he was the warlord and he was the man, he was the one that caused all the strife. And once they got him it sort of settled the hatch with Japan as far as religious beliefs regarding the Emperor and things like that happened.

39:30 But I wouldn't say they wouldn't turn on us again. They, the people, they're getting into it now in a roundabout way, they're buying property. You look at the Japanese populace, we were, as a matter of fact I was talking to some real estate people the other day, were here, they were giving me a valuation on my home as a matter of fact. And they have, most of their people are Japanese businessmen, most of the people they've got, and some, something like a hundred and forty or something,

40:00 are trying to buy into Australia. Well that a hundred and forty, only one real estate agent told me this and a hundred and forty big business firms that they're tying to buy and they want, they want Australia. And they're told, Haramura that I was telling you about before, the Haramura place up where they, up in the mountain, a bloke, ex-submarine that told me there, he's a Jap, he said "We'll get Australia eventually, we'll get, 'Agorshu,'" they call us, "We'll get 'Agorshu.' Get it by friendly means, we'll buy the place".

40:30 **Said that to you all the way back then?**

Told, only he told a dozen of the people were with me, with us, he said "We'll buy the place". He said "We couldn't beat you by the sword", he said "we'll get it off you by money". And we're just proving him true, too, up round Yeppoon there, the Japs own most of Yeppoon now. All the big resorts are all Japanese held, Japanese owned. And they, once they get in they bring all their own little Wontuks [pidgin English term for members of the same tribal group] out,

41:00 all their friends and that come out, come in on short-term visas, talk themselves into being part of the company that, Japanese company. And then three or four years time they're naturalised Australians and they've got us by the short and curly then [put us in a difficult situation].

Tape 7

00:30 **Fred, you had to delouse people, as part of being in the forces?**

Yeah.

Can you tell us, what is that, what did that involve?

Well you spray them with detergents and different chemicals to delouse, take any insidious stuff such as

01:00 gas, radiation or anything soft, it would deaden it, to lessen it. It's, delousing, well, when you spray a can of fly spray, that's delousing the kitchen of flies and other vermin, you know, it's using a chemical to defeat the thing that's out there you're trying to get rid of. Doesn't always work but it works most of the time and at least it

01:30 alleviates the problem at the time.

Who was it that you deloused?

We, you deloused yourself. You go through, they have different rooms, delousing rooms. It might be a room that's, oh, half the size of this in here, there might be four of you in there at a time. You go and you take a certain amount of clothing off and the sprays come on, and that sprays you all over your hair and your face and everything else. It's only a fine, fine spray and it's a chemical, called compounded chemical, and then you

02:00 go into the next, each room is a different room. Because the stuff they take off you in this room is going to defeat the stuff they put on you in the next room so you keep on going until they get, one's for the type of clothing you were wearing, the type of helmet you were wearing, the type of gloves you were wearing. That gets rid of the vermin, no matter what it might be, the germs and that. The next one is when you take the next part of your clothes off, your vest and your canvas

02:30 trousers, that's deloused. And when you're finished you go through a hot shower and it's coming out all the time, you go to a hot shower and it's soap, it's like a car wash, soap coming down in the jets, it washes you right through, your whole body. And you walk out and you sit in the warm room and you sit there until you're warm dry, you dry in the warm, and it's like warm air and you go in the next room, put your clothes on, hop on the bus and go home. There's a lot,

03:00 there's five, six procedures to go through. But it's, it's different things, different types too of course. That was our job and when I first joined that was, as I said, gas decontamination, you went through gas chambers. In training I went through, we had the chlorine gas, you had to wear your gas mask and it hurts, it'll suffocate you and

03:30 blind you and everything else if it gets you. You've got arsine gas, that's arsenical gas, it's arsenic based gas. It'll kill you, burn your lungs out and you're dead in a few minutes so you've got to not inhale any of that. And you've got mustard gas which goes in the skin and it makes big blisters and sores all over your body and it'll go, it just keeps eating in like if you put caustic soda on your arm and it eats right through. Then you've got

04:00 arsine, mustard, luicite's the other one. Luicite gas, that's a choking gas and it also does the throat much like the chlorine. And you've got the other one, Lacrimatory gas, that's ordinary tear gas, well that's easy getting it off but the other four are deadly each one of them. And if they ever let that out on you you've got little

04:30 chance of escaping unless you've got the correct equipment on. And go through the delousing chambers. Even when we used to do that, we used to have to go through the delouse chambers, get ourselves cleared. They put a truncheon thing over you, it's like a gun, and if it's got a reading on it you go back and go through again. But when it reads neutral, you're cleared, go.

Now, the

05:00 **idea behind delousing of course, is so that you don't get infected by anything. But, excuse me, when you were cleaning up the bodies at Hiroshima…?**

You don't delouse them, you haven't got to delouse them.

You just have to delouse yourself.

Yes, yourself. You've got the bodies, you've pushed them up into a heap and you've put them in a new grave and you've covered them with at least three foot of, got to be at least

05:30 three foot of fill over every body in that excavations, if there's much you put more. Anyway, you heap it up in the finish and then, with the dozers, and then you go and get yourself deloused. You don't worry about the people that are gone, they're dead, they no longer need it, they don't need delousing because they can't go any further. And they get buried and you've got to make sure that you haven't carried any of their problems with you for your own troops. If I went back to, say went back to Hiro

06:00 from Hiroshima, back to my camp and I didn't change my clothes, well, I'd have, everybody in my quarters would be radiated tomorrow morning. They'd be, probably on the way to be needing a box themselves.

What was the feeling that you had, and indeed Australia had, about the Americans dropping the atom bombs at Nagasaki and Hiroshima?

I think it was necessary. And I, that's one thing I haven't got against them, it's the only thing I have

06:30 got that's not against them because they are so careless. They, that they had a good man in it like Jimmy Doolittle and that crowd, he was a good man, him and Bennett they were both two good officers. They had everything, they did everything right and everything they did towards dropping the atomic bomb was right. And like a good movie to see is Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo, that was a good, pretty true type of

07:00 semi-documentary thing too.

What was it called Fred?

Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo, to drop the bomb. Jimmy Doolittle. They, they were two good Yanks those two, they dropped the bombs, under orders of course, but knowing it could be done, the, what do you call it, the [American] President of the time said "We do something" so they went and dropped it and it worked. I, they could've got away with

07:30 dropping the one bomb, that's the only thing that upset me is they had it, they had a second one in Nagasaki. And it completely exonerate the whole area, the whole area's dead. They can't even use that for anything, can't grow anything there ever again or, twenty-five years before the radiation is gone. But they're still staying, even now today, fifty odd years on, radiation's still coming out of the ground and killing people. It's proven

08:00 by people getting these blisters all over them, blood blisters. It's these blood blisters from radiation.

From living in the area?

Yeah. It remains in the soil for up to seventy-five years, radiation, so like at Mary Kathleen and places like that, up in the, in Queensland, you, or up in the Territory, you can't get rid of the radiation out of that uranium unless you

08:30 leave it and neutralise that. It's neutral now but the minute you disturb that uranium and start trying to treat it, and start putting caustic soda in and mixing something with it, that's radiation and it will cause radiation for the rest of the, for years and years to come. And you can't change it. It's funny, we're playing with danger all the time, you know, in our own lives or we're allowing the dangers to be part of our lives. That's why

09:00 I say you haven't got to fear anything or fear anybody. I always put it this way, the moment I'm born, I'm one split second away from being dead again so it doesn't matter whether you go, as long as, you've got to, like to know when you're going to go to get older. But the moment you're born you're just a split second away from being dead again so it's the way life goes.

How did you cope with

09:30 **coming home at night, having dealt with this cleaning up Hiroshima?**

Oh, it's nothing, just a job, you don't worry about it. You trust the people that are helping, that you are helping to do the job, the people that instruct you on how it's got to be done, you trust in their truthfulness and what they've been taught. They've been taught by somebody and hopefully a very astute and

10:00 knowledgeable person and it keeps on going up the line and down the line the same way. It doesn't worry you.

What was your interest in, now, you were in Japan in the late '40's, is this right?

Yeah, '49. '49.

'49. So once again, the call for adventure must have come to you because you wanted to join the K Force.

Yeah.

In 1949. So what made you

10:30 **want to do that?**

Oh, the tiredness of the outside world and the way our politicians were running the country and things like this. This is what, I'll always come back to them too because they sort of didn't care about us. Now we're known, and the Korean War 3rd Battalion RAR [Royal Australian Regiment], we were the only battalion, we were the first battalion to fight under the United Nations flag. Since the time the United Nations was formed. Now,

11:00 our country, all bows up, all shaking hands, patting you on your back "What a wonderful soldier you are. You've got to go away and fight for us. And we'll have everything ready for you, you'll get the best of everything", now we went away the worst equipped battalion of any battalion that ever fought in Korea. The winter was, over there, got to forty-eight below, forty-eight below freezing point, now that's awful cold. You'd get a jug of water out of the

11:30 hot water, boil your, what do you call it, 'choofas', we had a mortar box where we used to put diesel in and then light it and it'd keep going all day in your bunkers. You'd put your water on that to have a shave. By the time you got it off the stove, put your brushes, there was ice on your chin. That's how much it was. I saw a bloke, not one, I saw about three lose their noses. It's like they were burnt off, come out and "What the hell happened to you?"

12:00 Their nose was burnt off their face from cold, extreme cold. Now we were in, the Yanks had polar gear, it was used for polar country. Nose caps, it goes round behind, and if you're out on a patrol you take your nose cap off, the minute the cold hits you you'd lose your nose for sure. You've got to leave it on all the time while you're out. Now the Yanks used to believe that this was a way of

12:30 saving your life. It certainly is a way of saving your life, but they didn't issue them to us, they only issued them to themselves. We arrived there from Australia in our own ordinary khaki uniform, that's one on that, in there, that's part of the uniform. We went and fought in forty-eight degrees below temperatures, just like that. Had no hard hats, no tin hats or anything else, just a slouch hat with, we refused to wear a hard hat after a while because after they, the Yanks said we

13:00 could have some of theirs very reluctantly, and "We can lend you some" type of thing. And we weren't going to take the stuff, we said "You can keep it, you wouldn't give us the stuff we want". We had no snow boots, we had ordinary boots, we had one pair of socks, and they had polar socks, they had polar jackets, underclothes with, each issued to the Yanks week by week. Underpants with

13:30 like fishnet like sort of stuff in so the air could circulate. That was the first underpants you have, then you got a pair of long johns, they went to about here. And you've got the long john johns, long long johns, they'd go right to the ankles. And then you've got your windcheaters, then you've got your first parka. We didn't get any of that, we were still, they were getting round in parkas and great hoods with fur caps and things on. We were getting around in the old slouch hat and

14:00 we complained to our army or we complained to our politicians and Jock Francis was the minister for the army at the time. He came up to see us and he said "I've come a long way to see you fellows and I

want you to pay attention" and we all said "Go and get lost, you idiot". And we chased him, didn't want him, we he didn't want him to talk to us. "I'm the Minister for the Army" he said, "You're the minister for nothing, you're just a nit wit", and he stood there and yapped on for a while, said "Why don't you go up the front and have a look

14:30 at the people up there". We're in a rest area sixteen mile behind the lines and we're freezing, the boys at the front are freezing higher. He's standing up on the stage there talking to us, he's got all the Yank gear on, parka, hat, helmets and all this sort of thing. And it went on and on and on so I give it away then, I said "Well this is the stupidity of the whole thing." At one stage I wanted to get out because of the way we were being treated. In the wet weather they had lightning

15:00 conducting, we lost three blokes with lightning strikes because they wouldn't give us these three spikes. We're using arms and equipment all day, it's all steel, you've got to have these lightning conductors out. We couldn't, our government wouldn't give us any. They've got all they're going to get, then they called us the Forgotten Armies which we were.

So is that why, do you think, is that why Korea has become known as the forgotten war?

That's right, that's exactly.

Because you were forgotten.

15:30 We were not remembered. We come home on leave, the first leave I had was, I had the bullets through there, I come home, I was in Brisbane, I went to Brisbane and one bloke said, "Where you been mate?", I said, I've got the United Nations badge and everything else on and my resident badge. And I said "Korea", "Korea? What are you doing over in Korea?", "Fighting the bloody war, you idiot". And he said "War in Korea?", I said "Yeah", he said "They wouldn't be fighting

16:00 over there, what are they fighting over?". And this is the general consensus of everybody in and around Brisbane that I ran into. Because nobody knows, it was never broadcast. And then when the Queen's [Queen Elizabeth II] coronation came on and I got mentioned in a few bits of paper there about, around Ipswich where I came from, it's pretty big type for some reason but got a free trip and everything else for coronation. They started realising

16:30 Korea was a place with a war going on. And they wanted to know why I was leaving Korea to go to England for have, oh, what's the use, you know.

What do you think, I mean, I'm just surmising here, but do you think that it became known as the Forgotten War because there was the Second World War, which of course everybody was involved in.

Yeah, only five years earlier.

And only five years earlier, so it's like "Oh, another war, well"?

17:00 Yeah, that is, that's one point and it's quite a valid point. I don't, won't wear that one but they, it is a valid point and I can see the reasoning of it. But people that know, every day in the Courier Mail [newspaper] was casualty lists, Korean casualty list, nobody came, no one reads casualty lists because, nobody knows who was, whereas I've gotten the name of the paper quite a few times and telegrams going home to my Mum or the wife, or something like that

17:30 telling them that I was, been knocked out, I was in such and such a hospital in Japan or Korea somewhere. And they started to panic, they started to say, trying to call or that. You'd ring up sometimes and, from American hospitals you can ring through to Australia to tell your parents where you are but an Australian hospital you can't. But free call, you can hop on the phone in Tokyo and ring home and say "I'm all right, don't worry about me. You get me

18:00 casualty list yet?", "Yeah, we got it. What happened?", "Oh, I got a bit of a scratch on the arm, and they put it on the casualty list", "Okay", forget about it. And it goes on like that but you make them happy by saying you're okay , you know, but not in the Australian Army, you don't do that, you say, hush hush, you mustn't speak about wars and things like that. You might upset some minister, one of the ministers might get a bit shady about something being said against him. And if I talk

18:30 about the minister for the army and mention his name, I'm committing an offence, like in the, I could be charged with a treasonable offence. And that's dead right.

So how could you, what prepared you, you said earlier in the day that Korea was really in your opinion, pretty much the ugliest fighting that you saw.

It was definitely the ugliest I had,

19:00 been involved in and that's still, to my dying day I'll tell you. It even beats the Owen Stanleys as far as I was concerned because the Owen Stanleys we had, we were Australians, we used the climatic conditions to a great extent. But we never, we were Australians, not freeze, not icebergs and we, you go to somewhere where you're so frozen you can't think for yourself, it's the fault of the country.

19:30 They don't, they sent us to war without adequate, adequately equipped, adequately trained for that type of war, that type of conditions. And we had to take it, it's the forced part of it, it's the hardest part of the

lot. And they don't compensate you in any way, like food, we were getting ordinary bully beef and biscuits when we went to Korea. Sit down and there's, sitting down and the Yanks' sitting over there in the next trench eating

20:00 a meal, and he's got pork and beans and ham and lima beans, and fruit salad, can of fruit salad, packet of cigarettes he sticks in the pocket and that's his meal. We got a tin of bully beef between three men. I've got to, that tin of bully beef comes to me and I've got to find my two mates, my two mates and I've got to cut that into three pieces. That's our meal for smoko, that's our meal for dinner. "Take your tin this time Jo" and so it goes on to the third bloke,

20:30 that's your tea. And a couple of hard dog biscuits. That's our food, that's our day's ration. The Yanks, and I was sergeant and warrant officer, and when I started going up in rank and I became a sergeant and a warrant officer later and as warrant officer class one you got a few benefits. You got a bottle of gin a week, and a bottle of scotch a week or I'd a bottle of rum if I wanted, a bottle of SRD [Supply Reserve Depot] rum.

21:00 And the SRD rum I used to feed to my troops, I'd get a big bottle of SRD rum and I'd put it in the water and SRD's ninety proof and I'd give them a nip each, each night. But the diggers [soldiers], not too worried about, they didn't worry about the digger. I'm only a warrant officer, yet I can get a bottle of gin, a bottle of whisky and a bottle of rum a week. So that's just the way it goes on.

Were these problems ever addressed by the Australian government?

21:30 No, we, every serviceman I think has argued with the government that this should happen. That they should, they should first of all before they send anybody to war, or to any conflict of any sort is to first of all go through the thing themselves. Send a representative of their own power themselves, or of themselves and the opposition. One of each. See what the opposite, the points are on the ground, what the troops who are

22:00 already in action are being fed and clothed, the conditions they've got to fight under. We don't do that. John Howard picks, little Johnny picks up the phone and says "Yeah, okay George, I'll do that", and he doesn't even know what he's talking about, George [W] Bush hasn't told him and he goes ahead and says "You do what you think is right" and George goes ahead and says "Oh send them mongrels over there to work for a couple of days for nothing".

Now, Fred you were there, though, during the Korean War from go to whoa [start to finish].

22:30 Yeah well.

The battalion.

I broke to go to England for eight months worth.

Besides the coronation trip, you were there from go to whoa.

Yeah.

Can you tell us if anything changed in so far as being better equipped by the time you left Korea?

Yeah, it changed, so did the war. The point is when we first went to Korea, it was an active war. I say active war, it was all out into it as

23:00 combat troops against combat troops. Then after the campaign in Kapyong, which was the last of the big campaigns, we come to, oh, we had operation command and a couple of smaller ones, and Salmon - Sardine and things like it, they were only small two day events. Then we had the Chinese more or less beaten, or we had them neutralised, and we, they were talking about signing a peace

23:30 conference at Panmunjom. What we did then, they said, "Well, we've reached this side of it now all we've got to do is patrols". All our patrols then was, the actual war had finished as far as hand-to-hand combat with bayonet fighting and things were out. We used to have to fight and get our way through with bayonets before and rifle you had to defend yourself with or kill people with. And when the war,

24:00 in that respect, quietened down come into, they call static warfare. Then, for some unknown reason they started to give us the clothing and the equipment we should've got two years before. See, we had two years of misery before, then somebody woke up to themselves, "It's a static war now", we still had cold coats, the same types of fibres, but they started to issue us with parkas and sleeping bags and things like that then. We said "What's going on

24:30 here?", you know. And the battalions started to move out. I went to the, I come back from the coronation with a completely different set up as, they were living in sort of pre-fab [fabricated] quarters and things like that and still fighting patrols. And I was taking up, I took a hundred, six hundred and nineteen patrols over the last period of the war, and what's that, one a night, in the paper it'll tell you there somewhere. Six hundred and fourteen or

25:00 six hundred and nineteen. There was fighting patrols, prisoner snatch patrols. I got my back broken on a prisoner snatch patrol too. A grenade went up in my, under my flack jacket and snapped my spine, but

Can you tell us about that contact?

Yeah, it was, for prisoners? Yeah, well, personally I had to go out, the idea was there was a fighting patrol, with a three man,

25:30 a prisoner snatch patrol. Mine was to take out two men with me, two of my best men and get up the hill and the fighting patrol's got to protect me on my right flank and I have to go up the hill and sneak up on their, into their lines. I got behind their lines, I was three hundred yards into their territory actually. And I saw this trench, and our object was, the three of us was to

26:00 get a prisoner and take him back so we could pump information out of him what their strength was, and every thing else. That was what the last part of the war was all about. And what their, whether they were Chinese or whether they were North Korean. Anyway, I got up this hill this night and beautiful moonlit night too, and snow was a foot thick almost on the ground. And we got up this hill, I've got my Owen guns and they'd, they're both dead now, the other two guys.

26:30 Oh, I've got a piece of paper there with it written on, anyway. And they, oh, Ron Jarvis was one bloke and myself and I was sergeant there at the time and the lieutenant and his fighting patrol were supposed to be protecting me there on my right flank. I get up, I went too far up the hill, I went up over, past behind the Chinese lines and I saw this great big trench and I thought "We'll get somebody in here" and

27:00 what I was looking for, mainly was to get signal wires. And signal wires means communication. So if I get communication, I know he'd have somebody up here would know what he was talking about if we captured one of them, it'd be a feather in our cap. So I got this signal wire and following it and it's a yellow wire and I got to the end of this trench and I jumped into it, as I jumped, this bloke, I jumped and he jumped on me at the same time, a Chinaman just, almost

27:30 jumped on top of me as a matter of fact. And my two guys they hit the deck and I said, "Get out and go for your life", and I got out and I got, I beat this bloke off, got out, went down the hill, went racing down the hill and this grenade started, started throwing grenades at me and one grenade come down and landed at my feet and I kicked dirt to try and get rid of it and it went off and the pressure under the bullet proof vest snapped the third vertebrae of my spine. And I still,

28:00 I was still able to do everything I wanted to do and then the fighting patrol on my right leg got caught up with mortar fire, they were getting a hell of a time. And Lieutenant Smith, he was killed, he decided to pull out, he pulled out, went to our alternate position, which was another hill across the way from us, across the valley. So he went down and took his patrol of nine men and across the valley and up the spur and was waiting for me to come down with my two guys.

28:30 So we got out alright and we got down the thing and they started to hit us from the rice fields, paddy fields. And we got stuck into it there, we killed about ten I suppose and couldn't more or less count but I don't, about fifty or sixty of them onto us and I was nearly short of ammunition, I had about, oh, half a magazine of my Owen gun left and said "We can't stay here long or we're going to finish up in a POW [Prisoner of War] camp". So we kept

29:00 going and we got up the hill and met the others and we said "Smithy's corp, Lieutenant Smith" and he said "Yeah, I think he's dead". So we walked along the line to where he was, where the fighting patrol was and the RAP [Regimental Aid Post] bloke or the medics, he had him, he was gone, he was out of it, they've got to carry him there. I said "Well, that's my patrol now" I said "I've got to take over it, if he goes, I've got to go because there's two,

29:30 I'm the second senior". So we picked him up and I sent two blokes back, and two with him to carry him back and two blokes either side of him with rifles and that to cover him. They got him back and he was well and truly gone. But they got to the top of the minefields to go in the gates where our headquarters was and they started to mortar the hell out of us. And they give us curry right up till daylight, it was about two o'clock in the morning and right through till about half past

30:00 five they pounded and pounded and pounded us and by this time my back started to get stiff. And I'd already been told I was going to the coronation, this is why I was, the night before I got officially told that I had to have my gear packed ready to go back to Melbourne. I said "What for?", he said "You're going to, you've been chosen to go to the coronation", I said "What for?", they said "Oh, you're running out of luck, you're doing too many patrols and they want to get rid of you for a while", so I said "Okay". So that,

30:30 but it happened that way and when Smithy was long gone, he was cold and stiff and took him in and cleaned him up and took him down to the, got the padre, the chaplain to come up, Father Phillips, he came up and had a look at him and he'd, had two sergeants there that dressed him up and he was, they were sort of if anybody was killed they'd bring them back in. He used to do them up like they were

31:00 dressed in their best uniform, like sort of thing. And they'd take them to Seoul they'd and bury them in Seoul cemetery. So that was how

Was that that, those two sergeants' jobs? To, if somebody died, excuse me.

No, it's not their job but it's they're just sergeants in the line but they could act as sort of, they were

friends of his and they become pallbearers or whatever.

I see.

31:30 It's nobody's job, but Father Joe Phillips, he was, he just died the other day too, old Father Joe. He was a wonderful man, he was everybody's friend, Protestant, Catholic, Callithumpian, no matter what you were, you were his mate. And give him a winter [?] for suds, he'd buy you a dozen bottles of beer. But he'd, knew a lot of the guys around the place and he always wanted assistants too, somebody would give him a helping hand.

32:00 Like Digger James, General James, he got his leg done badly, he was a lieutenant and he got knocked over in Korea. And he was a doctor there, Digger. But he does the same thing, he makes sure anybody, lost a man, that man was picked up and taken if it was at all possible. You can't always do that but if you can possibly to it,

32:30 you lift the body, take it in, clean it up and give it a decent burial. That's the object of mateship, friendship.

Are bodies actually sent back to Australia or buried there in Korea?

No, buried in Seoul, or Pusan rather, Pusan sorry.

I was going to say, I mean, would it be physically impossible to bury a body in the snow there?

Oh no. But it's not, it always, just pour diesel on the ground and

33:00 melt the snow around that and you've got jackhammers and things and always, there's plenty of stuff to make the, a trench. But at Pusan it's pretty, the weather's pretty good down there. That's where they chose the, we had, like Bomana in New Guinea. Bomana Cemetery. They've got to have a special spot for the war cemetery, that's where they put them. And the Pusan cemetery's got quite, about six hundred of our guys in it.

33:30 The Americans take their men home. That's another thing the Yanks do we don't do. You lose a bloke in action, he's immediately put on the first plane back to his own country. And he's given a burial through his parent's wishes or his next of kin's wishes. And we don't, we just, "Oh, you fell there, stay there, we'll put something over you and I hope you don't mind".

Do you know if anyone, talking about the cold

34:00 **of Korea which we've heard so much that it was so cold, so, so cold. I wonder if Australians actually died of hypothermia.**

Yes. Quite a few. Or they died as a result of hypothermia. About seven, I think, in our battalion. In, or in our battalion, one battalion. There were a couple that died with lightning strikes in the hot weather and I think it was about three or four died from

34:30 hypothermia. The book there, Korea Remembered, it's got articles in there written by each of us, you know. They wanted us to write something and very similar to what we're doing now.

I'd like to ask you about some of these people. Now, Old Faithful,

35:00 **was a term of endearment, I'd say, is it from the three battalion?**

Yes.

Old Faithful because you were all old or Old Faithful because….

No, because, it was the first battalion in the, we were the first battalion to fly under the United Nations flag, Australians. And we were all ex-servicemen. We all had fought in the Second World War. With the exception of C Company, C Company was, they were all occupation troops. They were only kids and they

35:30 didn't, they were, finished up one of the best companies in the battalion in fact after they were trained a bit and went through a bit of battle, they become very good men. And they were C Company.

Now, I'm reading from Maurie Pears and Fred Kirkland.

Yes, they were both, Maurie Pears, he finished up, he was a young boot, he come from Duntroon. And he was one guy I didn't,

36:00 had no time for and the first time he had no idea of wartime experiences and when he started to show good he finished up a very good man. He finished up a brigadier I think, Maurie. But he finished up a wonderful soldier, which skittled my idea that Duntroon was only for silver tails, you know.

He's talking about here in this chapter, Off To War, that there were quite a few

36:30 **colourful characters in the three battalion.**

Yeah, and he goes onto tell you about them and I get to be one of them.

Yes. I noticed that. So what, why would he think you were considered a bit of a colourful character?

I didn't care about what they did. I did some stupid things, I guess.

Well you obviously survived, which means you couldn't have been too careless.

They used to call me Magnetic Fred. As though,

37:00 if somebody fires a metal bullet towards you it'll hit you because it, they could fire, they could, you'd be standing there and the bloke would be firing from over there and he'd hit you standing there because he, the minute the bullet left the rifle it'd come and hit me because it used to seem to do. I used to, always getting nicked with bullets. I don't know why but just kept on happening that way.

Do you think somebody in a way was looking after maybe?

Probably right, yes, could've happened too. But, no, it was fun.

37:30 **But you didn't, actually we didn't talk about that in your childhood days, but did you have a specific faith that you belonged to?**

Yeah, I'm Church of England. I'm Church of England, Protestant church. I had no, I was never one hundred percent Protestant, I used to go to church, I was made to go to church by my parents until I was thirteen and I thought "This is not my piece of cake", so I left and they, I don't, I can take it or leave it now. But

38:00 I'm not against anybody's religion, whether they're atheist or what they are, as long as a person has got his own beliefs and keeps his own beliefs to himself and doesn't try and impress me with the various accents of that belief.

I agree with that philosophy whole-heartedly.

Yeah.

Now, it looks like we're running out of time on this tape but I just want to talk to you about, actually I, Chris will probably talk to you about the more hairier conflicts that you had there in Korea to begin with and also who was in

38:30 **charge when you first arrived in Korea?**

Colonel Charles Green, yes, he was killed some three or four months later, killed on October the 19th I think, 1950. He wrote a book Call Me, or he didn't his wife wrote it, Call Me Charlie. He didn't like calling him Colonel, it was Charlie. I knew him in the Middle East, he was one of the old team one of the old, real old team, he was from three

39:00 battalion, 2/3rd Battalion in the Middle East, he was there. And he finished up, unfortunately, being my CO [Commanding Officer] when he came, we joined the Korea force and we all got on very well. He was a very hard man but a wonderful guy and he died at Chongju and as far as we, the furthest port we reached in Korea. And a mortar come in one night, we just, we were, and I was sitting on the hillside about, oh, from here to

39:30 the front door, that door, back door away I suppose. Below his, he had a tent put up there. And he was talking to his batman and he had an officer's conference just before that. And we were sitting down the embankment having a yarn to ourselves and waiting for the Bed Check Charlie to come across in a plane and she used to come across dropping bombs on us at night time. And next thing, a mortar came in from out of the blue, from, the Chinese were only,

40:00 had fought them that morning and everything had settled down. And one mortar come in and landed right in his tent and took old Charlie, took his, he got a bit of shrapnel and he lived for three days and passed away. But he was our first CO in Korea, he took us to Korea, that's the Victory, the ship. And we had a good CO, he won the Silver Star in the Battle of the Apple Orchard. That was Chongju.

40:30 He led us in four or five battles. The first Pakchon, Broken Bridge and Chongju. And on the way back we had another commander was John Walsh, Colonel Walsh, he was an idiot. He led us back and got us in another fight on the 5th of November then Pakchon. And that's where I got, landed there, I've got a photo of us there all sitting on the deck waiting to get carted away with the ambulance.

Tape 8

00:30 **I want to start, actually Fred, just telling us about the difference between enemies in terms of North Koreans,**

Yeah, well North Koreans were a sadistic crowd. They, well they're still the same way, you read the newspapers today, they're stretching the world. They couldn't, they haven't got enough men to feed

their people but they've got enough money to build arms and equipment and throw it around the place like mad comedians.

01:00 The Chinese were a different type of soldier. They were a very hard soldier, but they were professionals, you know, they knew their job and they knew how to administer troops, they knew how to fight against other troops. The North Koreans couldn't care less if they caught you, wounded. Well I was wounded and they caught me and I had a watch, an Omega watch, which I had bought for me as a gift. It cost about three hundred, four hundred quid or something. And I had

01:30 an onyx ring on that finger there and it was, had a beautiful stone, it was well done and they wee both expensive, obviously. They took me prisoner for a few minutes and the first thing they took off, one looted me, a North Korean, looted the watch off my hand and the ring. Now, they then, they sit down squabbling and while they're squabbling I walked away and, oh.

02:00 **Okay.**

They, would have no worries about shooting you, you know, the North Koreans. The Chinamen, well they'd tell you not to make a noise and so that you could, they started shouting at you "Come here and give us a hand" and put a bullet through you no trouble at all. But if you talked to them normally and they could understand you, some, there was always

02:30 somebody in the group who' understand, you could make them understand a little bit. And they won't leave you, they won't, there was one bloke said to me, he had quite good English, he was a lieutenant and he said to me "You no speak, you just lay, you no speak". I wounded and he said "You no speak, you'll be okay" and he said "You have cigarettes?', I said "I have cigarettes", I said "Do you want to give me one of yours?" and he

03:00 said "No," he said "I want a cigarette". I said "Here take the bloody packet", so I give him the packet of cigarettes and I thought he might say, well take off. Anyway, he started yelling a few words to his blokes and he did take off and let me lie there. He said "You make no noise, otherwise we shoot". And I just got up and walked down the hill a bit and the Argyle, and some of the Argyle Scottish soldiers picked me up and took me down the road to where the ambulances were. And I just sat on the side of the road and they

03:30 loaded up there and they took me down Pyongyang. But, you know, he could've easily finished me but I was angry about losing my watch the onyx ring. It cost me about six hundred dollars.

Oh, so this was at the same time that the North Korean, that was the North Korean fellows.

Yeah. Yeah, but he wanted to shoot me, or his men did but they just let me go, anyway, but I don't know why but, this leader he's, I don't know,

04:00 he wasn't a Chinaman, I think he could've been Chinese. I wasn't sure, I didn't.

So what acts, you said they were quite sadistic, so what kind of acts of sadism did you see or hear about?

Oh, cutting hands, cut your hands off if you, if, like we had a couple, at one place we had a bit of a bayonet fight, the Apple was a bit of a bayonet fight on and they got one of the guys and they, I think they hacked his hand off or something like that. This is the type of, but they weren't skilled soldiers, that's what I'm trying to get at.

04:30 They were unskilled, they were peasants with the mind of all wanting to be top guys, you know, big tough guys. And they're still the same way, they're doing the same thing in their own country now. South Korea's quite a good little country. You go up to Pyongyang, get to Pyongyang, cross the border and you'll get yourself shot very quickly. And they'll never meet a peace agreement. And that's what I'm

05:00 against now, with the, they would've been better tackling then than they would've been tackling Saddam Hussein [President of Iraq]. But that didn't work the way that, that's one of the things they boo-booed on, I reckon. Other than that it's, they're quite, well when I say sadistic, they're cruel, they're cruel in they're aspect of living. They're, everything's got to be the way,

05:30 it the religion they've got, I suppose and they've got it themselves, and they, each and every one's the same so it's not something that's the academic right of a few of them, so it's the lot seems to be the same. So it's something in the religious build up.

Just the scuffle in the Apple Orchard, you mentioned that you had some close quarter fighting with bayonets and things like that.

Yeah, C Company was the main ones in the Apple Orchard.

06:00 We were A Company, C Company, the Yanks got into trouble there and they pulled them out and they didn't want to stay, they just wanted to keep going but C Company, was there, Charlie Green, he was the CO. He decided he wanted to have a, he was not going to let them get away with it and he got in and he more or less lead the charge. Although he was the commanding officer, he had no right to but he junior officers

06:30 to him in charge of C Company should've done it but as I said before, C Company were the youth of the battalion. They hadn't seen action in most cases. Charlie Green had seen a lot of it. And they went in this, walked in like the real conquerors and they did and they went through and what they couldn't shoot they bayoneted and they kept going till they go to the end of it. When we got there, there was very little left to clean up but, you know, you get a few strays and it only

07:00 takes one bullet to kill a bloke so easy to get knocked off at that time. But we finished up sitting eating apples for the rest of the evening, this great big apple orchard and never seen so many, oh, beautiful apples they were, as big as paw paws they were. It was the first good feed we'd seen for a while and everybody had diarrhoea and everything else after eating about three or four of them. But then we moved on up to Pakchon from there.

Can I just, can I get you Fred to tell us about,

07:30 **walk us through the Battle of Kapyong for you?**

Well, the Battle of Kapyong in some ways is overrated. But, and this again, this is where I bring the Americans into the game. The Americans were trying to gain favour, they'd run out on us on three different occasions in Korea. They,

08:00 the, there was a song about it in the first battalion. Ashes to ashes and dust to dust, if the Chinese don't get you the Kiwis must and all this sort of thing. But they had, the Yanks were running down [hill] 355 because the Chinese were coming up round the side, they were moving on. And that's what they did, they moved on and left us holding the baby in several cases. Up at Chongju, the place that Colonel Green was killed, they, I saw a tank coming down the road as a matter of face I was one of the people, one of the sergeants that asked them where they were going.

08:30 They're driving tanks down the road and one guy said "I don't know where we're going mate, I was told to go what way" and I said "Well the front's up that way". And he was a sergeant, top sergeant, he wouldn't, go anyway, he didn't have time to talk, he reckoned, and he kept going. And the next tank come along, I stopped and asked him the same question, he said "We're bugging out, buddy, we're bugging out", which meant they were clearing out., and "What about us?", he said "You guys are on your own". And

09:00 a whole division of them took off down the road and left us, we were the next battalion, we were three battalion, and there was the Kiwi artillery, and the KOSB's [King's Own Scottish Borderers], that was the Canadian [Scottish] regiment, they were there. That was really, that's all that was left, there was nineteen hundred and seventy-two of us. And said "How many's there?", this one bloke said "There's five hundred thousand". That's what one of these Yanks said on the way past, we just took it as a joke, we thought they were fooling around. Anyway, next thing

09:30 Colonel Green says, he was killed, the same day he got killed, he said "Baton down the hatches, boys", he said "it's on again". So we decided we'd wait and see what happened. So we all went into battle mode and checked the rifles, checked the machine guns, checked everything we had and waited. And the next thing a few slugs come flying in and Charlie was killed, been quiet all day and all this and Charlie Green was killed

10:00 and then they started mortaring hell out of us, mortars started coming in and lost seven or eight blokes, killed at that particular time. And then we just bedded down and waited to see what happened and nothing happened, nothing more happened, they kept on firing all night, about two or three blokes. A mate of mine that I was, Lloyd Gagan that I was talking about before, he got hit in the arm and several different ones, George Harris, he got clobbered.

10:30 He got hit in the backside and he wasn't very happy about that. "I wasn't bloody running away", he said, but we, they were going, they were hiding these rice stooks, like haystacks made out of rice stooks, rice stores all over this field. Anyway, somebody got the idea if we go and set light to some of these rice stooks we might get somewhere and so they started throwing matches into these rice stooks and a Chinaman come racing out with his

11:00 rifle, screaming his head off and his clothes on fire. So we lit the whole farm then and got about sixty Chinese that way. But it happened and that was a good day out. But then this idiot, the "Bed Check Charlie" come in, as a, he was a propagandas plane. Used to be only a single seater, this little Piper Cub like a spy plane. He'd fly at night time, he'd throw grenades, drop grenades out of his cockpit onto the troops below. And he'd sing out "Nearly got you that time, Aussie" and things like this. He was a Chinese propaganda, Bed Check Charlie he was called, he'd always come around about eight o'clock. Drop a few bombs on a moon lit night and give us a bit of a surprise and fright. And we always liked him, we liked him to go to bed, it was like, and we had the same in Korea,

12:00 Seoul City Sue [propaganda radio host], she was another one. She used to, she was a female propaganda, she used to fly across in a plane and drop bombs and leaflets and things all over us.

What was her name?

Seoul City Sue. She was, and we had in the first war, who did we have, oh, we had Tokyo Rose. They'd always sort of pick a woman for that job, I don't know why. This bloke Bed Check Charlie, he was a guy but the others were all women. And they'd fly over and

12:30 do some strange things, throw bombs, throw things at, if they hit you you'd go with it. But they were pretty good in their activities. They become part of the scenery after a while. "Must be ten past eight or something. Bed Check Charlie's just about due over", and he'd come over and you'd check your watch and find it'd be right.

Now Fred, you said that you reckoned the Battle of Kapyong was

13:00 **overrated.**

Yes, well, the Yanks, as I said had run out on us so many times and we got into positions, the positions, they're going to see that, had tape on it but the positions, there was a valley and a four sided valley, it was like a big box canyon type of place, that was the idea of the whole, in the first place. And A

13:30 Company and B Company and Dog Company were up on top of the hill and this trying to attack the, they were fifty-five thousand we estimated and you could knock them down to, they raced on us all night, you could, bayoneting and hit them with what you had. If you run out of ammunition, smack them with your rifle butt and there were just bodies laying all around us. It's like something in one of these stupid movies you see. Everybody's dropping dead and

14:00 they get up and walk away when it's all over. But these weren't play actors, they were the real deal. But you get that and of course we called the Yanks in to drop napalm. And what do they do? They come in with two planes, called, I forget them, the plane they had now but they're coming with these napalm bombs on and napalm tanks under the wings and they dropped

14:30 napalm bombs against the arrows. We had the arrows out, like we had arrows out, fluorescent arrows and they come in and drop them on the wrong side of the arrows and of course got the whole platoon. And some of those guys, you ought to have seen them, there's, not Joe Booskoth, I'm getting dull in the memory with names, Joe, he got, anyway he was

15:00 he was like as if he'd been boiled, like been dipped in hot water and boiled him. His face, he had no skin on his face, his eyes were burnt out, oh, he was a mess and this, and I felt so sorry for him. If, hoping nobody ever take a photo of it, and his family see it because it was one of the most hideous things you ever saw. I vowed that if I ever got that joker, that plane, I'd done him in quick smart. He's, he goes back, the funny

15:30 part about it, they sent in a success signal as target struck. That came back through the American headquarters back to Benny O'Dowd, he was acting CO. It come back to him that target was taken, target struck.

So did any of those fellows survive or they were just?

Oh, there was about five or six of them badly burnt. One was, one bloke's still,

16:00 he's still alive, yeah, I'm trying to think of his name now. He comes from out, along the road here too. Oh, Coffee, Nick Coffee. He's got, like burns, it's a bit like Hiroshima burns, all around the face here, all into this big red bubble, like a big red blood blister it looks like. He's still around, the others are, most of the others went down the drain. But just gone through,

16:30 the 23rd and 24th of April and Anzac Day was on the 25th when we marched out. It wasn't a long battle but why I say it's overrated is, it didn't, it took a day and a half more or less, the whole activity. There was a lot of Chinamen and I don't mind a heap, if there's a heap there you can spray them with whatever you've got, you know you've got to get a lot of targets. But if you're, if they're in lesser type of

17:00 contact you've got one bloke there, one bloke's about ten feet away, you've got to do a lot of aiming and a log of hoping that he's, they've got to get you before you get him or vice versa. But this is one thing, they always bring up, the Yanks decided they'd give us a Presidential Citation. And this is to qualify that they remembered us and some of their units, they'd let us down previously so they had to sort of cover their own

17:30 footsteps so they gave us the Presidential Citation, made a great big song and dance about it. Two, one, our battalion and another battalion of Canadians, we got a citation and they got a citation. And they said "Well, we've done our bit know, we've done the job", this is

This is to cover up the fact that they left you all alone?

I might be sceptical of them but that's pretty right on the money, I can tell you. Because they see too many movies, they make too

18:00 many movies in their own country. They all follow the [Battle of the] Alamo and things like that, they live on that. They made movies of the Alamo and every time you see a movie of the Alamo, there's something different goes on in it for some reason or another. They live that type of life, they believe in it. Southern hospitality and all this sort of garbage, they see it at the movies, it goes in the brain and they live with it. And this is what Bush is preaching now, the same, similar

18:30 type of line. You'll find, you see, you mark my words, I'll be pretty right. But they, whenever they've got to cover their tracks they give, give one of them, like a, "We'll give him an Oscar anyway, he's done a good job". And that's what they did, they give us an Oscar, the blue, the swimming pool. They call it the

swimming pool, little blue disk with a gold bar in it. That's basically the Presidential Citation, the highest action citation

19:00 you can get. Even a whole group of people.

Even though you say it's overrated, though, I mean, you had a small, I mean, comparatively you've got a small force against a hell of a lot of Chinese, what, on the day, managed to get the Australians through such a huge amount of enemy?

Well, good leadership, I'd say. The brass of blokes like

19:30 well, the CO, 2IC [second in command] and all the company commanders, they did a wonderful job because they all worked in unison. The different areas was Dog Company, A Company, B Company, across the valley, C Company, headquarters company down the road and the headquarters itself, the battalion headquarters on the road further on and there's Chinese right round the whole lot, we're completely hemmed in. So what have you got to do? You've got to

20:00 fight your way out. And if you've got a reason to fight it's okay, but when these idiots come and drop the wrong things in the wrong places and could've wiped us all out, they could've wiped everybody on the hill out. But Corsairs were, dropped the napalm, Corsair fighters. And a couple more of them, they could've make a nice old job of the whole lot, wiped the whole two, three battalions out, two battalions out. And they don't,

20:30 but once, once is an, and they always call it accidental. Always an accident. And they go back and they brag about, they've got to drop, when they load their bombs they've got to drop them somewhere. And if they drop them on a ship at sea, it could be a fishing boat or anything else but they've dropped their bomb and successful, ship or whatever, they drop their bomb on it and dip down then it's gone. And they write it up as a success story, it goes on their

21:00 merit sheet, they become an ace and "Fourteen killed, fifteen killed, sixteen killed" and each one becomes a kill. And that's what gets the whole thing very nasty.

So what was, the most savage, I guess, complex or contact you had in Korea in terms of your battles?

The worst ones would be, it would be Pakchon. No,

21:30 Chongju, I'd say. Pakchon, Broken Bridge was our first one, or it wasn't our first one, it was the third action we had before, after we landed on the island, on the place. The Apple Orchard wasn't much to do with our company because it was mainly C Company. Sarawon [sp?] was a bad one,

22:00 that was further down the line. One the way up, and Apple Orchard and then Pakchon, the first time in Pakchon was the Broken Bridge. That was when we went across, we had to get across, they were firing at us on the other side of the river and we had to get up, somebody had blasted the bridge, probably the Chinese or the North Koreans and they'd made a muck of it. And we had to get up that ladder, the American engineers had stuck a ladder up there, wooden ladder, home made ladder and

22:30 they climbed up that, we climbed up that onto the bridge. And headed, the fire, it was like crossing a double laneway bridge. And it's about, oh, two hundred yards across the river, I'd suppose. You can imagine what, a bit of lead flying around our heads that time. And we got across the other side of the bridge and straight up the hill, there was a hill on the left hand side and high-tension lines coming across and they go straight through to Vladivostok in Russia. So

23:00 we got up this hill and the OC [Officer Commanding] of our company, or platoon commander actually, he said to me, he said "Well, put your men down here" and I got a two inch mortar and "You keep", he said "Make sure you keep that mortar handy and active" so I said "Okay". So there's myself, Ross Burn, there's three of us anyway on the mortar. I, OC mortar and we had twelve bombs, that's all we

23:30 carried, they were two-inch stuff, only small bombs. And we settled, we tried to dig in and we couldn't dig in it was like, oh, ice was, the hill was frozen and trying to dig in with these little shovels with a pick head on one side and a little blade on the other side. And hammer and hammer and hammer and you couldn't get anywhere so finished up we built a little sagance [shelter], grabbed a few bricks from around the place and put them up as cover. Although they were worse than nothing because a

24:00 tank came that night and decided to give us a bit of a play up. And he was firing guns from the road below us and they were hitting this tower, we were right under a tower and a big high tension line tower and the bullets are flying off that and they're whizzing bits and pieces were coming down, you're getting burnt on the side of the face and everything else. It was, as the bullets were hitting steel pylons everything shattered and the shower is coming in on top of you. We couldn't move, we moved we would've been dead. But our sagance was getting

24:30 hit with bullets and the bricks were breaking up and these bullets would go whizzing off of this stone and of course the stone collapsed. And it was a real good night, we had, it was all night, it went from daylight, oh, until dawn really. You couldn't move, we were just absolutely pinned down. It was a tank that causing it and Simmo, this little bloke, he was, had the bazooka and I said, "Go and have a go at it, Simmo" and Simmo got the bazooka.

25:00 The bazooka was a thing we'd just got them off the Yanks, they give us three bazookas and they didn't take, they gave them to us fresh out of the boxes. They didn't, we had no way of cleaning them before we used them, they give us a heap of bombs and these two bazookas. They were full of packing grease. Because none of the working parts were working when he pulled the trigger because it was like real green, slimy looking grease and

25:30 couldn't make it work. So Simmo gets the, he snuck out from behind the rocks we were hiding under, the crawled up the side of the bank and he got the bazooka going there and Ross Burns followed him with a couple of mortar bombs to put, bazooka bombs to put in the bazooka. And he crawled round the back and they got this tank right in the sight, took him right, just down like that, he was down there and they were here. And Ross said "Now I'll load up, nice and quiet here, load up", he loaded the bazooka

26:00 onto the thing, contacted the two contact lead wires which are risk wires that go into a dynamo and that dynamo starts when you push the trigger, the dynamo starts working and it shoot. Lets you shoot. Nothing happened. And he, Des says, "Oh", he could've, would've got it, no trouble at all. He fired, had another shot and it wouldn't work so to hell with this, we started throwing grenades down on it. And we might as well thrown stones because the grenades weren't, nobody was,

26:30 there was nobody at home, they're sort of in the turret, pull the turret down and didn't worry about grenades or anything else. They would've if the bazooka would've gone off. The next morning, Bravo come and they look at the bazookas, they're packed full of grease. So the CO done his lolly, he said "Get those things out of here", he said "tell the Yanks next time they give us one, to give us the right stuff". So we boiled some water and, got some water out of the river and lit a little fire on the bank and boiled up a big pot of, big heated water,

27:00 threw the bazookas in that. After it they worked. Simmo got four tanks a couple of days, up at Chianmanjoo [sp?], further up the line, he got four tanks in the one day, that's good shooting. And they were, there was nothing wrong with the bazookas, that's the way they're used. That's one of those things, you had anything you wanted but you had to make sure it was checked out before you accepted it. But I was short of one of one machine guns in my platoon and I said I wanted a

27:30 machine gun. The boss, the OC he said, "Why don't you go and talk to the Yanks", he said, "You've got a pretty good bloody tongue, go and talk to the Yanks about it". So I went over and I said "Oh, I haven't got any beer left, I haven't got any grog left", he said "What do you want?", I said, he said, "Juno whisky", this is the OC, and I said, "Oh, give us a bottle of scotch", he give me a bottle of scotch so I said, "Okay skipper, I'll see you later". So I went across to this American crew, they were a tank crew

28:00 and I said "How you guys going?", "Oh, pretty good", you know, and "Care for a snort?", "Oh, boy, would we like", have a snort, they opened the, said "Here's a bottle here", a bottle of Johnnie Walker [whisky]. And they opened, took the top off it and straight out of the neck of the bottle, gulp, gulp, gulp, gulp. And I said "While I'm here" I said, "How are you off for hardware like sixty cals [calibre] and things like that?", he said "Take the bloody lot", he said,

28:30 "if you want them" I said "What the tank as well?", he said, "Yeah, I'm going, I'm sick of this place". So anyway, I got a sixty cal Brownie [weapon] out of them for a bottle of whiskey. It's worth about, in Australian currency it's worth about three or four grand, you know. And anyway they just handed stuff, didn't sign for anything, you take what you want and if you want something you try to get it out of them without having to go through the Pentagon and everywhere else. So I took it back to the unit and we had a sixty-calibre strength now

29:00 and we enjoyed it. And the skipper asks me, he still asks me if he sees me now, he's a full fledged general now, he's down in, he's retired but he still rings me occasionally and he says "You owe me a bottle of scotch, you know, you bludger" and I said "I owe you a bottle of scotch?". He said "Remember that sixty cal Brownie", he said "you want the sixty cal Brownie back I suppose, too", I said "No, not a sixty cal Brownie", I said "I've forgotten about those by now". Anyway, he says, "No", he said, "We'll write the bottle of scotch off",

29:30 he said "You can do the writing off". That was Anzac Day he rung me and talked about the bottle of scotch I owe him. He kept me up to it too, one of these days I'll see him and hand him back one, or I'll give him a couple of snorts out of one.

Now am I right saying you fellows also kept a count of your kills? In terms of how many enemy you knocked off?

No, we didn't actually. But the, we had a press

30:00 correspondent, a correspondent always travelled with us and Arthur Richards was our, used to work for the Courier Mail. He's dead now Arthur, but he came up and we had a count, Len Opey and myself and George Harris, we were the three of them, we were the three villains in the battalion apparently. There's an article there somewhere in, about

30:30 George Harris got around a hundred and eighty to a hundred kills, Len Opey got around a hundred and I got a hundred and ten or something. And they, it comes up in the Courier Mail day by day, the day by day column that they used to run? And it's in there but we have a feeling of how many we have knocked off but as individuals you don't, in the heat of battle you could knock

31:00 off two thousand and you wouldn't know how many you've knocked off. And some of the battles you're in, when they're pretty thick on the ground, you probably just keep on spraying and people start dropping, if they keep on dropping until they're finished, or you get one yourself. But the thing is, you take a lot of the journalism with a grain of salt. It's the way they, they write it up with, some silly things, they write about patrols you do and things like that.

31:30 It's a newspaper article. There it is, that one.

Beautiful.

Indonesia and all those different places.

32:00 **Yeah.**

Weird places we used to get to.

I guess. It's alright, you can, I'll take your word for it. Fred, can I just, can I just ask you Fred, I'm still trying to get my head around some of the battles that you were in.

32:30 **I guess, particularly the one at Kapyong, even though you say it's overrated but just trying to get an image of that many Chinese coming at you, because they actually came through your forces at various times of the fight, didn't they.**

They did breach the battalion several times, they broke into it several times, but the thing is, the

33:00 way they came, like it was just like rabble. You could see them coming and they were blowing whistles and trumpets and things like it, you only had to fire at the sound and you've got them. But at some stage of the game they were from me to you away and it was just a matter of pulling the trigger and they're no longer there. But that's the way they went and that's all there is to it, just a complete, and I don't think it was a complete, it wasn't a shemozzle, it was well done. They were brave men going down

33:30 doing it but it wasn't the ultimate of the Korean War, put it that way. There was a lot of other battles lasted perhaps a bit longer and every bit as tough. The Apple Orchard for instance with C Company, that was, I reckon that was a master of well-planned strategy of the troops that were taking part in it. And they were raw troops, which was good, but I still maintain that

34:00 the, well it didn't warrant, I don't think, it didn't warrant a decoration, well, it may have done but according to individual officers, such as different company commanders should've got good recognition from it from the Yanks that they got. But to give the whole plateau a gong which is a pretty useless, it's like a, just a bit of rag on a little of gold frame. It's not a very important, it might be to some of the guys that got it but

34:30 it doesn't give me any satisfaction whatsoever.

Well, particularly if you are passing tanks on the way in that are heading in the other direction.

Yeah. I don't, yeah, the way it was given, I believe that there should've been more American involvement in the whole thing than there was. Their timings were out, their, the locations you gave them to assault a particular

35:00 area was out, they could never do anything right. And I'm not particularly, as I say, I've got relatives in America but I'm not particularly keen, the people that are there to do the job, do what they're told and they're probably as brave or as game as anybody in Australia. But the tacticians that are running the show, haven't got one snig. Half of them haven't seen, wouldn't know the end of a rifle that the bullets come out of, half of them. And they

35:30 try and tell you and the demand it, they are the leaders of this world and all this sort of thing. And, which is a lot of nonsense.

So tell me your impression on the, like of the actual American soldiers on the ground who were, well, if they did actually fight alongside you or you saw their fighting. What was your impression of them as fighters on the ground?

Some of them were good. Some of them were dedicated to what they were doing, but you find that the ones

36:00 that were dedicated they were usually farm boys or something like that. They were nobody in their own country, they were farm boys and they were supposed to be undereducated and things like that. Now, they'd fight to the death and back you up every inch of the way provided somebody was there to tell them how to do it. The others are, inter collegiate boys and things like that, they're the ones that, they know everything, in a bar room they'll come and tell you how they did this and how they did this and they swagger round and of course that's,

36:30 that goes down big with their side but doesn't go down very big from an Australian's point of view. I had a case in point there at the British Empire Hotel in Brisbane when that was, that was the old British Empire, did you know that? I was on leave from hospital at, this thing here at, from Greenslopes. And I

had, I took three or four days off as it healed up.

37:00 And anyway I went in the British Empire and I was with Lloyd Gagan, this ex-policeman mate of mine and two or three of us, or Joe, Tiger Lyons. Having a couple of beers and this big Yank came and he stood beside me. One was, he was, oh, like a half Red Indian, he probably had Red Indian or something in him and another big bloke, looked like a big Irishman. So they're standing next to us in the thing this one bloke had medals everywhere and I can, and I said

37:30 "How old are you, mate?", and he said "I'm twenty-seven, boy", or something like this, "Twenty-seven?", he said "Yeah". I said "What have you got all the medals?", he said "Oh", he said "I got that one there for being at Okinawa, I got that one for being the best cook in the company", or in the regiment and all this sort of garbage. He's got medals, he's got fifteen or sixteen medals, he looks, they're ribbons, not medals, they're all ribbons. And it covers half of his breast. Anyway, I'm wearing, well,

38:00 probably four or five, not as many as I've got now, I've got twelve now, but I had about maybe five. And he started to ask me "Where did you get yours from?" and I said "I don't know why I got it, just come up as rations as a rule", I said "Every time you get top dog or something they give you a medal to go with it". And anyway, went out to the toilet well that's in the British Empire and this bloke, he followed me out. And I'm standing in the toilet there and he said "You're a smart guy", I said "What do you mean

38:30 I'm a smart guy?", he said "You talk about medals", he said "You probably got that one there for shining somebody's bloody shoes" and I said "Yeah, maybe". Anyway, I went to walk away and then bang, he hit me so I turned on and hit him and knocked him down. And next thing, his mate come in and he wanted come into it so my two boys, big Lloyd Gagan come in and he was going to clean the place out. So he was always, we were always on side, I was a lot bigger than him too, I was about sixteen stone.

39:00 Anyway, that was my running weight about sixteen. Anyway, he came in, next thing there's a big bloke come in, he's got a hat on and he called out "Detective so and so from Woolloongabba". I can't remember his name now, but Lloyd knew him when he was in the police force, Pete somebody I think his name was. And he said "I'm taking this guy in", he said to Lloyd, me, he was taking in. He said "You're not taking my mate anywhere", he said

39:30 "he's coming, we're going home and we're going home now", he said, "No he's not", he said. He said "Do you want to go with him Lloyd?" and Lloyd said "I'll go with him if you like", but he said "Am I charged with something?", and he said "No, you're not charged but I thought you want to come over with him". And I said "No, not bloody likely". So anyway, he took me over to Woolloongabba police station and they were going to charge me with assault, assaulting one of our neighbours, one of our allies. And

40:00 "What do you mean assaulting one of our allies or one of our", he said "Well he's an American serviceman", I said "I don't give a damn who he is", I said "he doesn't take a swing at me and get away with it". So then he started reading the riot act to me. This result, that is a lethal weapon, you know, with your, that is a lethal weapon. And it's in the law, I've read it in the book, it's, he read it to me. I can be

40:30 charged with criminal assault by hitting somebody with this, and I can drive a nail in with that, it's as solid, I can, you can drive a, often do start nails off with the end of the stump. And this cop says to me "It's here in black and white", I said "It's there in black and white all right", he said "What are you going to do about it?" I said "Well I'm not", "Are you going to apologise?", "I wouldn't apologise to a bloody Yank", and he said "Alright", he said, and he started giving me a lecture and then he

41:00 let me go. But he said "Well remember that in future, that is a weapon, it's classified as a lethal weapon". And you can close a fist, use that fist as a punching bean, hit a bloke in the head with that and a fist, that's a lethal weapon. Now that's the truth and it's in the, I read it in the statute book. And I thought, "That does me".

Tape 9

00:30 **Fred, before we headed off for lunch, you talked a bit about being chosen to go to the Queen's coronation in 1953. And how you were replacing a sailor, is that correct?**

Yeah, we had to replace a sailor, each of us that went to the coronation had to take the place of a sailor who would have normally been sailing on the ship because they could only carry a certain complement

01:00 of troops, or of sailors. And for every one that goes off you put another one back on. But in this case, they had, the [HMAS] Sydney was selected to go as part of the convoy for the Queen, for the celebrations after the coronation and we had a hundred and eighty of us altogether from Australia were going, we had to take our place on the ship on the HMAS Sydney, the aircraft carrier, and

01:30 we took part as normal sailors. But in the army uniforms, of course. And we had to get used to the idea of becoming sailor oriented and also in our activities and our discipline. And the navy discipline is different to ours and we used to get, have a lot of little run ins with the officers on deck which was to

our own disgust because we

02:00 used to get the worst end of the stick. They were on board the ship, they were the masters of the world when they're on board that ship, it's their ship and you do something wrong, you cop the consequences. And it might be a couple of days on board at the first port of call or something like that, we, every port you got a couple of days leave so we had a lot of fun and not enough money to continue the trip though so (UNCLEAR) going. And

02:30 they accepted us, as we accepted them, but we had to live in hammocks which I wasn't very fussy about. Mess deck thirteen was our deck, it was warrant officers' deck thirteen and you had to put your own hammock up and I had no idea, or I had it from the Middle East, going to the Middle East years before. But I'd been out of that for quite a while and I rigged my own hammock up. The first couple of times I fell out of the damn thing, I got, climbed in one side

03:00 and fall out the other. Got used to it after a while. And we went on and on and on to drill on board during the day on the flight deck. I took on aircraft handling for a while and it was very boring getting fighter planes up on the deck and you've got to tow them up by hand, they put them up on the lift and you tow them to the launching pad and then hook them up onto the

03:30 static line and then they take off and wait for them to come back in and pick up the line as they come back in and you stood on the gunners sponson and waited till they, did the same work you'd be doing if you were a sailor or very similar. And you got, you're paid the same way, you got paid the same way and everything else. But that was the whole trip we had to do that, for the whole eight months. So we got quite adept at being sailors by the time we finished.

04:00 And it was a fun trip. We stopped at, oh, all the various ports on the way over, Aden, Bombay, Ceylon, which is before it became, before it changed it's name, and Suez, Tobruk cemetery, stayed a day at Tobruk and went and looked through there, saw all my old mates still buried

04:30 there. They're well looked after, it's beautifully looked after, Tobruk cemetery, it's a real credit to the Germans to it. They were the ones that put most of the guys there in the first place. So they looked after that, they took over the directorship of it after the war. And they, but it was beautiful and it's immaculate, like even the headstones are each individually looked

05:00 after, the gold and that and everything else, it's best one I've seen in the world and it's in one of the most desolate looking places you ever wish to see one. Anyway, from there I went to Aden and stayed in Aden, we got into the port of Aden, Gibraltar, oh, then onto England, onto London, and Southampton. We got off at Southampton and went down to a place

05:30 called Pirbright. It's out on the, about some forty, fifty, sixty K's [kilometres] from Portsmouth and we were invited to Badd barracks there and we had, Briton was the RSM [Regimental Sergeant Major], he was a real tough guy, a real, all their, our tins of boot polish have got his photo on the front of the boot polish can in his old military cap. And he was in charge of the parade itself and then we, I trained on the horses for a couple of days at Earls Court, riding on the, to ride behind the coach. But I wasn't successful at that, they found somebody better, I wasn't a horseman, I always rode horses but I was never an equestrian, put it that way. So I was asked to stand down for

06:00 some, another bloke, I forget his name now, he was, had a crook leg too so I said I'd stand down, I stood aside and I went on the guard side of it and then and the march side of it, back to the infantry style of work. And we marched behind the coach, done a guard at Buckingham Palace, twenty-four hour guard, and met the Queen on the day after coronation, she gave us our coronation medals, stuck them on our chest and

07:00 shook hands and we had, it took us about two weeks to teach us how to shake hands with the Queen. And you just hold her hand gently and just go like that, you don't squeeze her hand in any way, put your hand under hers. And anyway, that was all taught to us and we did that with quite beautiful aplomb, I suppose, and kept on going.

Can I ask you, Fred, how the British treated the Australian contingent?

Oh

07:30 good, they gave us a great time. I have, parents on my mother's side, or relatives on my mother's side, she was still living then and they were her sisters and in-laws and different things lived over there so I was right for company. I didn't want the company because I was having too much fun otherwise and didn't want to get tied up with relatives. But finished up I spent a week with them and spent a week or so in France and

08:00 week at Ireland and a week in different places. Places that I hadn't seen before, and all free so I lapped it up while I had the chance. And then after coronation, it rained all through the march and we were nice and soaking wet and then we had dinner. I was, had dinner at the, at St James Palace

08:30 in fact and it, oh, squab and all the different types of things I'd never tasted before but squab and partridge and all this sort of garbage.

What's squab, sorry?

It's a fish. Yeah.

Oh, okay.

And I had, you, we had about fifteen courses I think. And the first course was an olive, one olive, and a matchstick, toothpick stuck in the end of it.

09:00 And you can't eat anything until Her Majesty has her food, she has the first one. First of all, they've got a food tester. The food tester tastes the wine before, it's like Mr Vice in the sergeant's mess, you've got to, so she's not going to get the Micky Finn [drugged] or get killed or something by poison, the most junior in the party has to sit at the end of the table and becomes Mr Vice, or

09:30 Mrs Vice, whoever it might be. And they always sip the wine first and you pass the port around the table, you don't, never touches the table, it goes from hand to hand, one hand, right around the table and each one puts their snort of wine in the glass, goes right around the whole table, exactly the same as in the sergeant's or officer's mess. And we trained like crazy for a week or two to get that all sorted out, do to that. And

10:00 the first meal, the first course, as I said, was an olive. The second course was a sardine, like one little sardine like that, and they came in these little white dishes and all these things and they're eating, and scoffing them down, you've got to wait till the Queen, or the tester has their bite first then the Queen has hers then the whole table picks up and goes into it. We went through about five courses before we got anything more than one bite on each plate

10:30 then we got a bigger plate and got, oh, a bit trout or something on that. Trout and lemon and all sorts of different bits and pieces and I was a bit sick of it, I'd just as soon been home with a great big feed of corned beef and carrots. Anyway, we went through the day all right and they took us out into James Palace yard and we had, they had tea out there. And my mate said, he said "Oh", he said "I'm getting sick of this",

11:00 I said "There's a good pub across the road" I said, "I'm just, I'm eyeing it off" and Turkey, oh Turkey Gravy or something to do with turkey, but eating turkey or something and they advertise the pub the same name. So there was the Duke of Gloucester, he was in the grounds, and I said to him "Sir", I said "Is it alright if we can be

11:30 excused for a while?", and he said "It doesn't worry, no worries at all, sergeant", he said "Go for you life" so I said to my mate, "Let's go". So we'd been excused by the second in charge, he was the Duke of Gloucester, he was, like the Governor-General of Australia. I said, we took off and away we went and out across the road to this Golden Squab or Golden Turkey or whatever it was across the road. And we had a few of beers there and a couple of hot pies to fill up. I

12:00 was more hungry after I had these bits and pieces, little buns of food and things we ate that and we decided to go back to Pirbright. We had a good day out. And that was the end of the tour as far as far as the Queen was concerned. We got our medals and things like that and

I can imagine there would've been a lot of fun amongst the men learning the correct etiquette for the table manners and things?

Oh, it was

12:30 good fun but the, they are very, their table manners don't suit some of our table manners, I find. They're very finger conscious, picking up things with their hands, like we never pick up a, you've got a toothpick or thing, pick up a little fish or a sardine with a toothpick and put it in your mouth, no, they pick it up in their hands and in the finger bowl, got the finger bowls there. Everything to eat

13:00 your fingers and dip your fingers in the finger bowl. Well I couldn't get used to that. I didn't know whether I had to drink it, wash with, water there that, finger bowl and serviette underneath the finger bowl and dip the fingers in and wash them and clean, dry them off and go again and do the same thing over and over and over again. And as soon as it was, there's footmen all around everywhere and they see your finger bowl getting grubby or

13:30 unnecessarily empty they'll come and take, bring a new one in and take the old one, fill the old one up and take the old one away and bring back a new one for you. It's all protocol, and it's, we had to learn it, we spent six weeks learning this sort of garbage because we knew what we've got to do, we were told before we, I don't know how I got in in the first place. But I didn't want to go in the first place, I had no intention of wanting to go to the coronation, I thought "How the hell am I, what am I going to do over there? What am I know, I know

14:00 nobody" oh, I had relatives over there but I thought we'd be fully tied down. So then they took us onto, from there they give us seven days free pass. Wherever we wanted to go. So I went down to the, oh, the sergeant in charge, I don't know who, he said "Where do you want to go?", I said "I want to go to quite a few places, more than seven days. I want to go, well, first of all I want to go across to Paris and up to Belgium, then back to Ireland",

14:30 he said "Why do you want to go to all these places for in seven days?", I said "I want to see them", I said

“I haven’t seen them before”, I come from a different country than he did, I said “I come from Australia and I want to go and see them”, I said “and it’s as simple as that”. He said “Haven’t you been here before?”, I said “Yeah, I’ve been here before”, I said, “But I didn’t see anything, I was in the forces and I had, pretty much tied down”. Anyway, he give me the ticket and away I went across to all these different places and enjoyed them and

15:00 came back and I got back and I was back six hours before the Sydney was set to sail. No, it was six hours before, it was, Prompy at Portsmouth, we hopped on the ship and there was the fireworks display, the Queen’s celebration for their wedding. It was out in Spithead, in the harbour. It was about a hundred and seventy-one ships and all ready to fire which was the one time, there was two

15:30 Russian ships, two little things, in the entourage. There was ships everywhere, it was night time, and there was all these fireworks going up and that was, lasted about an hour or two. And that was it, cost millions of dollars for the fireworks. Then we sailed on from there, went on to Nova Scotia in Canada.

Are you saying, Fred, that they actually paid for you, when you were talking to this bloke about wanting to go to France and Belgium and what have you, that they actually gave you tickets

16:00 **to travel anywhere?**

Yeah, they were

Didn’t have to pay for anything?

No, never paid for a thing. And not even food, your food and, you had barracks to go to once you got to these places. Like, they were all convened by the armed forces and of course during the coronation year we were delegates of the Queen and they, it was, she didn’t pay for anything either so, and our guests and

16:30 we were virtually guests of the Queen, I suppose, of the Royal Family.

Are you glad you went now?

Oh yeah, I enjoyed it. It was a long trip for nothing. I don’t enjoy the sea, I’m not a sailor, I don’t ever want to be a sailor but I enjoyed the cruise and we got to interesting places I hadn’t been before like the Panama Canal and the locks, the Balboa Locks and different locks, how you go into one lock and you stay there until they pump all the water into the

17:00 next lock so the ship can sail into there. And so it goes on until you get to the last lock and then you’re out in open sea again. Panama City, had time there, had time in Jamaica, Balboa, then and in America. Then in America for, a couple of weeks we stayed in the States and Baltimore,

17:30 and we stayed for three or four days in Halifax, Nova Scotia, which is in French Canadian.

We’re going to take a photograph at the end of the day of you with some mates in a rifle shooting competition that you won, was that the, is that when you went to Nova Scotia, that competition was held?

Yes. That was the Pioneers, the Nova Scotian Pioneers, they were the army unit. They were allowed to grow beards. The only army I’ve ever seen where they’ve been allowed to grow beards, all had big, bushy beards.

18:30 They were called the Pioneers, they do all the engineering work and preparation of camps and things like that and they were all top shots, all top marksmen and we went on with them, shot against them. We had pistols and rifles. And we were, I got the pistols first and then the rifle shoot and then, I forget his name now but, oh, Woods, Noel Woods I think his name is,

19:00 he come second.

What were the Nova Scotians like?

Oh, nice people. We had a, they give us a big party the night, the next, that same night. We were invited there, we went to a place called Towson in America and they put us onto this engineering crowd and I found they were terrific guys. And they, their families were nice people, they joined us like we, you would think we had known them for years, and they went into these,

19:30 I only met them in the afternoon, they knew my name and everything else. And the people I was tied up with, he was a barrister and his name was Thompson and, Dave Thompson and I think her, she was Cheryl. And anyway, I, Cheryl invited me, introduced me to all her friends “Fred Williams” and tell me their names and everything

20:00 and I couldn’t remember the names, after they’d left her mouth I’d lost them again but she gave me the names and he was doing the same thing. Oh, he give us, give me a moose head, this was, that was rather funny. This great big moose head, he said “Is there anything here you’d like to take home with you?” I said, “I’d like to take that back to Australia, he said “What”, I said “That big bull moose heard there hanging on the wall”. He said “I’m a barrister”, he said “It’s yours, it’s yours buddy”, I said “Good”.

20:30 So he give me this moose head, they had a presentation, they had, opened a bottle of champagne and he presented it to me at the table and a couple of the wives were in there, a couple of wives of the shooting team said “You can’t take that, they’ve had that here for years”. I thought “He give it to me, so I’ll take it”. So anyway, we got him back to the ship, we had a taxi, like a taxi truck something, like a closed Ute, put the

21:00 moose in it, took it back to the ship and put it on board. They said “You can’t, where are you taking that?”, I got half way up the gang plank the divvy of the one, the second in charge of the Sydney, he said “Where are you taking that thing, you stupid idiot?”, and I said “On board, sir” and “Permission to board ship, sir”, he said “No, permission not granted”. And I said “Why not?”, he said “Well that’s got to, that’s quarantineable goods, you can’t take that on board a ship”.

21:30 So I’d have, I finished up, I won it and I lost it again, and they took the thing off me.

Oh, I wonder if it went back to Thompson’s?

I told them where it come from and they probably would’ve done but I never wrote to them again. I was, it was only a one-day event and they were such a great crowd, oh, rough as, rough as bags they were, god they were rough.

And generous it seems.

But everything, oh, generous, you ought to seen the food they put on for us.

22:00 And you haven’t had enough yet. As a matter of fact they even started, they started raffling their wives. This is the fun part of it, they give you tickets and they had a ticket and it had a number, you take two tickets, I’ll take one, instead of being one green, and one with seventeen. So when you go back through back through this door and you put them in a hat,

22:30 you get your name on the back of your ticket now and just put it in the hat. And you go out, you don’t know what you’re in for but then we got, finished up putting these tickets and I thought “What’s going on here, there must me some sort of raffle on”. Anyway, they start talking and later on, a while, they get a bit more giggly and a bit more fun with the booze and he said, this one bloke, he said “When are they drawing the raffles?”, “I don’t know”, and he said, I said, “What’s it all about?”,

23:00 I said “I didn’t pay for it”, he said “You don’t pay for it”, he said “it’s free”. I said “Oh”, and he said “You’re not married are you?”, I said “I’m not married here”, he said “Well I’ll have something for you”. “You’ll get something”, he said “a bloke who’s unlucky”, he said “he’ll draw his own wife”. So (UNCLEAR)

Did they really do that?

Yes.

They switched wives?

Yeah, switched wives for the

23:30 night. And they had a, I said “What a strange habit”, he said “We always do that”.

But what about you, because you weren’t married?

No, we finished up with, I finished up with a part Indian girl. She was part red Indian, part, and nothing happened, we went home, we got kicked out of the place about by her husband about ten thirty, we just dived off and I had this hog’s head, this head of this moose and that was causing a bit of strife.

24:00 But the funny part was, rather fun I thought,

They sound like great fun, those Nova Scotians.

He said, according to him, if you’re unlucky you could pick your own missus.

Oh, that’s a great story. But you did end up getting married and having children later in the ‘60’s, didn’t you. But in this particular time coming back from the coronation you were still single, and still in the army, and you went back to Korea?

Yeah

24:30 I did come back. I come back and that was home to me, Korea at that time as far as I was concerned, I was going home. And I got back to Australia from the coronation, put my foot on the floor and then asked for the first ship, first plane out and I got a plane the following morning. And I was back in, I was back at Seoul nineteen hours later.

Now how much longer did you stay in Korea before coming back to Australia?

Till it finished, till the last shot was fired.

25:00 Then I came home, and then I went through this business here, this arm, like and lost the hand and they wouldn’t let me go away again. They said “You stay here but you’re too valuable to leave our” he said

"You got twenty-four", twenty-three and a half years service I had then, and he said, the big boss said "Well you're too valuable to leave, it costs about twenty-five thousand dollars a year for you to be with us", he said "it adds up about twenty-three times, that's a lot of money", he said "so

25:30 the army still needs you", I said "What capacity?", he said "An instructor". So they sent me to New Guinea then, back to Arnold Barracks.

Now did you enjoy instructing?

No I didn't, I had nobody out there in the front, no targets to fire at so. But I had to instruct and recruit natives in Taurama, for the Taurama, for the Pacific island regiment.

26:00 They were recruits, they used to get them out of the villages, go to the villages and they were like National Servicemen they were. And you'd see how many boys in the village, say, Garara or somewhere like that see, look at and see there's about sixteen native boys here, they only need about three or four. We'll take four of them. I'd go and say "I want four, four you boys come along me, become soldier" and tell them how much they get a month and

26:30 things like that and we look after them. Then you take them back and give them a uniform, medically examine them and everything else. If they're not fit they go back to their village, if they are fit they stay and they do the recruit training. I was only doing it on relief, I wasn't full time doing that. And then we come back to Australia, after my term finished there, I came down and they wanted me to start training the

27:00 National Service at Wacol. That was the men for

For Vietnam? For Vietnam?

Yeah, well not for Vietnam exactly but for National Service as it was designated. And they were trained troops and make sure we had some part trained servicemen to carry on if anything did happen.

What do you think about National Service?

It was a great thing and the parents thought it was wonderful. I had, they did, I had a, I used to, every

27:30 march out parade, there was ninety days they did in National Service. The kids themselves hated it when they come in, I'd make them stand up straight, I said "Now stand up straight and don't back out". If one of them back out I said "I'll take you down the back of the toilet, lock it and I'll belt your head in". And they'd sit and look at you, they didn't know how to take you but, "Yes sir", "Alright now, settle down". And then parents after the first week, they couldn't have any visitors for the first week, but in the

28:00 second week of drilling and instruction, the parents were allowed to come in and the mothers would come to me and say, "Oh, what a wonderful job you're doing with them, sergeant major, they've changed their capacity, their interest in their family has changed completely" and they, at the finish, the march out parade in ninety days, they used to come and thank you for what you'd done for their sons. And in fact we had, we won a lot of trophies, we won,

28:30 I'm talking about myself and my own group, other groups were doing the same thing, but we had them on Telegraph Shield, there was the Field Shield, Platoon of the Month, Platoon of the Year, Platoon of the Quarter and that was it. And we used to drill, different types of drill and things like that and taught them what to do and how to do it and they

29:00 finished up absolutely as good as trained soldiers. But of course when they went out they lost it all again. But they still come to me in the street today, I still, I know there are a couple, there's a police inspector here at Peach Tree every time I go out through Peach Tree always gives me a yell, I trained him in National Service and it's the best thing ever did for him. He said, "You know, you made, taught us some discipline." he said "You were rough", and he said, "But you", I used to call them all sorts of things and get away with it. If they didn't

29:30 do it right they were told they were idiots and I was going to give them, I was going to throw them in the pig swill and stuff like this sort of thing and feed to the pigs and out back and belt their heads. But

I don't know if I could cope with that.

They appreciated it. They, this inspector up here, he always has a go at me, he said "I don't think you're big enough now", I said "You aren't either, mate", I said "when you're big enough you'll be too old to". So we still, they always have,

30:00 I've had nobody come up to me and have a go at me about anything. I have a go at them about myself, you know.

What made you decide to actually leave the army after twenty-five years?

Well they wanted to make me, turn me into a commissioned officer and I didn't want to be a commissioned officer. I'd go as far as a warrant and I said, I told the whole story about Duntroon and I said "I don't want any part of being an officer". I never did and never will.

But what about then, could they, what if they had said to you "Well look, Fred, what about if we

30:30 **demote you, that you don't become a lieutenant, you just stay". Would you have stayed in do you think?**

No, not, I'd had enough, I bought a hotel. I bought a hotel, in, I, well bought into a hotel, not bought a hotel, I bought into a lease of a hotel in Rockhampton. And it was the, the person I bought into it with was a woman I met in Rabaul, she was a

31:00 clerical type and I was doing business with them as a warrant officer up there and they used to, part of, do our supplies up there. And we got on pretty well together and she said, mentioned to me one day, she said, "How are you strapped for an ants nest, Fred?", I said "Oh. I'm not too bad", I had about thirty-six thousand pounds from the Japan black market, you know, we used sell things over there we shouldn't have done. We did, we used to sell our

31:30 goods, cocoa and stuff, we used to get cans of Bourneville cocoa sent up. Mum would send great parcels up there, I'd get up to fifteen pounds sterling for one tin. You make, and I had at one stage had a hundred and twenty-nine thousand pounds stashed away. Anyway, sixty odd thousand, and I said to Sherry, she wanted to buy this pub, I said, "I'll tell you what I'll do, you find the pub", I said "and I'll go in it with you,

32:00 see how it goes". So she said "How, how long is if for, the lease?", I said, she, I asked her, she said "Five years" and I said "Alright, I'll have a go at it". And I put my money down and she put hers down and it come on that she was very free with money, she, I didn't know, I just knew her like a friend type of thing. And anyway, we bought this pub, bought into the pub, I couldn't go because I was still in the

32:30 army, I got caught by my CO, in the pub serving in behind the bar one night in uniform. And he come and had a go at me, he said "What do you want to be in the army or in civil life?", I said "Why?", he said "Well if I catch you in the bar again", he said "you'll be in civil life quick smart", he said "you can't do it, you're a public servant as a soldier", I said "I know that", so he says "Well make up your mind and let me know". So I made up my mind, I said "I'll get out and run the pub", so I did.

33:00 But I just resigned, my commission was coming through too and they were going to try and make me take a quartermaster's commission. "No", I said. They, it's on my papers, I'm listed as a lieutenant and I was being paid as a lieutenant and I said "No, don't give it to me, I'm not cut out for that type of thing". I didn't rave on about my earlier experiences with Duntroon. Anyway, then

33:30 we got in the pub and Sherry the, well I was still training, I was training cadets and that in Rockhampton at this stage of the game and the, my partner, she was, all the stockmen were coming in from the bush and things like that and booking rooms to go up in the hotel and they were going in and staying three days in the pub, the ringers and that from the different stations. And anyway, they, Lex Walker, he was the

34:00 main squatter out in the district out round Emerald and places like that. He had farms everywhere and practically a multi-millionaire. Anyway, he'd just send a sheet of paper saying that "We'll pay on you on seeing you at office", something like that, some word he put in it. And Sherry used to say "Okay", she, we could've wallpapered the bottle department with all these bits of paper and never had a penny out of it.

34:30 So we just went down the drain and I went through sixty-three thousand dollars in about, oh, about twelve months. I said to Sherry, I said "Write me out, I'm finished". So I give it away and I went to Darwin then and I got, started getting, I had a job on the paper for a while and got married but that's forty years ago. And then I went to Melbourne and started working, I worked a little while down there on the Truth. Got in a bit of a

35:00 bingle down there, they were the under-age drinking kids and gave that away and went back to, well I did explosives. And I went, stayed with that until I retired. I opened a couple of mines in Central Queensland and drilled and got them all core tested and things like that and fired shots in them and made sure the coal was right,

35:30 right coal and stuff like that and I had it for quite a while. Then I went to work as a manager to Herbert Hire, it's a construction company in Central Queensland and stayed with them until, I was seven years before I retired, I took a job with Gladstone City Council as work supervisor up there, that's how I finished up. I used to do my own shot fire, I used to go and keep an eye on all the road works and main roads and that up round Gladstone, Miriam Vale and places like

36:00 that. We lived at Tannum Sands for a while. And that was it, the kids were growing up so I said well, I said to Belle "Well let's go down south somewhere". With kids, no work up there for the children so Fiona was in the government, she had a job offer down here, she was with the corrective services for a long time, the eldest daughter. She was corrective services officer, and, in the main office in Brisbane and then they quit

36:30 doing that, they opened the new jail up here, they wanted to go up there, I said "I'm not going up there", so she pulled her super and everything else out and bought a house over at Petrie.

Fred, sorry to interrupt you but we've only got a few minutes left on the tape. Can I, I've got three questions to ask you. One is, what happened to your finger on your left hand?

That one?

Yes.

The both of them, that one there was taken

37:00 off with a fan belt on a drawing machine on a, and that one there was, it got, what do you call it, gangrene, gas gangrene. That was from an explosion and the gas gangrene set in and they, it was about the same length as that and that, they had to take it off down to the thumb.

You're like a walking tink annual. The other question I had for you was, you

37:30 **were telling us, I don't think you were telling Chris and I on tape about Anzac Day, how you will try to march, you won't take a ride in a car.**

No, I won't take a ride in a vehicle. You can, all over the old, all the old diggers, they want them to ride in the cars. They've got these old model cars and they drive them round in and my brother-in-law's got one, he's got a heap of the old model cars

38:00 out here. He's retired just recently and he always says "I'll drive you" I said "No you won't". And they, you can get a drive a taxi, they'll pick you up in taxis and they'll take you behind the march, I said "No, I come, I'm an infantryman. Infantryman marches, right?", they say "Yeah, that's right", and I say "Well I march. If I don't march, I don't go".

Do you march with any mates?

Oh yeah, yeah. Yeah, stacks of mates around from the third battalion. See, some of them are still comparatively young in

38:30 comparison to me even now, because three battalion's still an active battalion. And I give it away, well, years ago now, 1970 I think. It's thirty years since I got out, so, I couldn't done what I wanted to do, but, I could've been an officer and it annoyed me. I wanted, easily I wanted to become an army officer and I dipped out because, as I

39:00 said before, I thought Lawrence of Arabia, he was my, he was, I built my life on that type of thing and he was adventurous, adventure is what is in most kids minds. And I loved him, anything that was something to do, I jumped out of a window with a parachute. I did it at Mum's place in Ipswich. Our old home in Ipswich. Mum's come home from into

39:30 town, she went into town, she saw me standing on top of the roof. And she's "What's he doing up on the roof?", she didn't know what I was doing, and I had a tablecloth that I'd tied up four corners of it, put a big knot in it and tied it up with a big piece of string and I held onto it like that and jumped off the roof and come down like a parachute. Mum's watching me there, yelling out, "What are you trying to do?", and I said "I'll show you in a minute", "Oh", she went to me and went like

40:00 that and done her lolly and she went inside. Next thing, she hears this bump and out she comes, "What did you do, fall off the roof?", I said "No, jumped off the roof", "What for?", "It's a parachute I'm hanging onto", she said "It's my best tablecloth you're hanging onto". And she done her lolly about that.

Oh Fred, you're a national treasure, I can only say thank you for your time today.

National Disaster they used to call me.

Thanks very much National Disaster.

INTERVIEW ENDS