Australians at War Film Archive

Daphne Wright (Miss Wright) - Transcript of interview

Date of interview: 3rd March 2004

http://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/1518

Tape 1

00:41 **We're going to begin and to begin with thank you very much for taking part in the Archive, it wouldn't exist without**

01:00 **your generous participation so from us and from every...**

Will you tell me when I'm being filmed?

Well that's what I was about to say. You are being filmed as of now.

Oh I see.

First up, I'd like you to take us through that summary I just explained to you and perhaps you could go back and tell us about where you grew up and your family.

I was actually born a few streets away from here in Chatswood, I was born in 1921. I had my brother was

01:30 fourteen years older than me, my sister was sixteen years older and my mother was forty when I arrived in a street not very far from here. And I grew up in Chatswood, eventually my family bought a home in a nearby street further around, a few streets away from here. They bought a Californian home when I was about eighteen months old

02:00 and that's where we went to live. Of course that would have been about 1922–23, years before the Depression. My father was a foreman baker, he had, at an early age of his life, at about twenty-four years of age he had his own business, he'd been, he received a small inheritance. Incidentally, my great great grandfather

02:30 arrived in Australia in 1826, an Irish man, eighteen years of age. And on that paternal side he did very well in the colony as Australia, New South Wales was known. And my father put his money into a small business at the age of about twenty-three. He then went, because there was a recession in Australia at that time, about 1904,

03:00 he left his partner in charge of the business, which was a bakery in a place called Harris Park in adjoining Parramatta. So he went north like young men did, he eventually landed in a place called Gympie, Queensland. Here he met my mother who belonged to a family of nine children; their mother was an Irish woman, Irish woman, a widow.

03:30 So she had a general business there, a big, fairly big general store. He met my mother and they were married. When they returned to Sydney, unfortunately he found his partner had gone bankrupt so they faced a very uncertain future. But with the great hard working heritage

04:00 that these people had, they managed to get a little home of their own. My father being a good baker he became a foreman baker in the Parramatta Bakery, they bought themselves a little home there, did quite well and that is how they finally, eventually arrived in Chatswood.

Well I'll come back and ask you a bit more about your parents cause we're very interested to know about that, but back to the

04:30 **summary of your own life, where did you go to school and...?**

Well at the age of about six I went to Our Lady of Dolours, which is still the primary Catholic school in Chatswood, Our Lady of Dolours I went at the age of six I think I was. That's where I did my primary school teaching, that's where I was when the Depression broke out. And but fortunately because my

05:00 brother was fourteen years older, my sister sixteen years older, they were both working and my father of course, he had work too. So even though those Depression years were very, very nasty, I was able to grow through them without any personal hardship in my home. I even learned music, I, my

05:30 parents were able to pay the Sisters to learn music. I think it was, as a matter of fact I think in those days we used to take our shilling a week up to the nuns and pay for our shilling a week for our schooling. There were some who were so, parents were so badly hit by the Depression, they couldn't even pay for their schooling.

Again, we'll come back and talk about the Depression. How old were you and where did you finish school?

06:00 I finished at my primary school at Our Lady of Dolours and then they, I did a twelve months course at Our Lady of Dolours to learn a bit about, by this time I was about thirteen, I did shorthand, typewriting and bookkeeping for twelve months. And then in those days so many young women left school and they just went into

06:30 very ordinary jobs, very ordinary, unless they had the opportunity to go to a college of some kind. So my Sister, my, the nun in charge of Our Lady of Dolours, which was incidentally a wonderful, wonderful woman, Sister, not Marcella, Sister Genevieve, Sister Genevieve, she asked my mother to

07:00 come and see her and she said, "Daphne has potential, is there any chance that she could go into Saint Patrick's College in the city." My mother thought about it, it meant paying out extra money of course, but I had wonderful parents and she agreed to that, so I went into Saint Patrick's College at Gloucester Street. Where, the college

07:30 is no longer there now but it was a very, very, in those days, that would've been about 1935, in those days it had a premier record amongst the businesses of Sydney for the graduates of Saint Patrick's College. So that's where I spent two and a half years there.

All right without, again, without telling us too much of the story behind it, where were you when the war came along and can you take us through

08:00 **your naval career?**

When the war broke out I was, war broke out in August, I was still seventeen, I wasn't, I didn't turn seventeen till October, two months after war was declared. By that time, it was in 1938 that I obtained a position with Universal Pictures, the movie company,

08:30 which was a great delight to me, this is what I wanted to do. I'd always been a great reader, I liked to write, and I was put in, I went into the Publicity Department, which it was called in those days, I think they call it 'public relations' and all kinds of things these days. So I, at the age of seventeen, 1938, I went into Universal Pictures.

We'll come back and talk about that job, so where were you when the war broke out?

I was there when war

09:00 broke out, I was there actually in 1939, I was there when war broke out. And of all things, because I was with Universal Pictures, I used to meet quite a lot of celebrity people of different kinds. I even met Chips Rafferty, Peter Finch, because Universal Pictures were subscribing to Forty Thousand Horsemen, which was being made at that time. So

09:30 from different ones that came in, one young man that used to belong to the Film Weekly, his name was, Brennan was his name, Kevin Brennan, who actually later on became quite a, went into, he was on television in Britain. Nevertheless he encouraged me at the age of eighteen to join a play [drama] group, so, which

10:00 is what I did. So on the night that war was announced, we group of about twelve or fifteen of us were assembled down in Mishiberlakov's, an old-fashioned ballet school which was up above a fish and chip shop, opposite Circular Quay. And we were on that Sunday night, we were rehearsing for the play that we were going to put on

10:30 and suddenly of course we had to listen to Mr Menzies make the announcement that we were now at war. And I've always remembered where we were that night. And I remember looking around at the young men that were in the group, they were only twenty years of age or so, I kept looking around at them and feeling the, that intense feeling that suddenly we are at war. What's

11:00 going to happen to these young men? I didn't think of myself being in the services or anything like that. I thought, "What's going to happen to them?" So that was a significant night that I always remembered where I was and what happened when Mr Menzies made the announcement that we're at war. So that, of course, after that things went very slowly in Australia we were, took us a while to become aware that we were

11:30 suddenly at war. The only people that really, were straight away at war was our navy that were out on the high seas, they were the only ones that were first involved in any, in the war. Wasn't till the beginning of 1940 that the 6th Division was formed. And it so happened which strangely is what brought me into the WRANS [Women's Royal Australian Naval Service],

12:00 I had a friend who was in the permanent air force and he was a sergeant wireless operator and

technician. And he was one of the first Australians that left in about January or February 1940 at the time the 6th Division were also leaving to go to Britain, he was sent to form Number 10 Squadron, the famous Number 10 Sunderland [aircraft]

12:30 squadron, so he joined that and we used to correspond, we corresponded. And that is why when I saw this person at Universal Pictures, one of our switchboard operators, sitting there in the WESC [Women's Emergency Signalling Corps] uniform with the wings and a flash of lightning through it on the left arm, that's what brought me

13:00 to the notice of wireless, you see. So that...

Stop there for a second, we'll just stop the camera for a moment.

about I, when I first noticed at Universal Pictures our switchboard operator sitting there in a green uniform, a green uniform and I first noticed the wings, wireless

13:30 wings with the bolt of lightning through it. I enquired of her, "What is this organisation you're in?" This would have been around about February 1940. She said, "Oh I'm in the Women's Emergency Signalling Corps." I said, "Oh I want to know," what was that. She told me it was a voluntary organisation run by Florence McKenzie, Syd, New South Wales, one of Australia's very first electrical engineers. An

14:00 incredibly outstanding woman, great patriot, who had formed this organisation in 1939, she had been an amateur wireless operator herself. And I said to this lass, "Do you think I can join?" And she said, "Yes, certainly, come along." So I went along to, it was then 9 Clarence Street, a little shop. Went in...

We'll talk about what you

14:30 **did in the Women's Emergency Service in a moment, but I just want to finish that list, that summary I was talking about. So after that you were training there for a time and then how did you end up in the WRANS, can you take us, without telling the story behind it but where you were?**

Yes well anyway I joined the Women's Emergency Signalling Corp. and I learned Morse Code and I liked it. I became, I think we found out that we who amongst us who were musical, had trained in music, we seemed to be able to

15:00 take to Morse Code, particularly transmitting Morse Code much better than people who hadn't been musically... so I became very proficient at Morse Code and I liked... We then changed to number 10 Clarence Street, then we were engulfed by RAAF [Royal Australian Air Force] trainees coming in because they had to do, learn ten words a minute in order to get into air crew.

15:30 So we used to spend many voluntary hours after work, I'd leave work at five o'clock go straight there and we'd be teaching these young men to be able to be selected for air crew. So anyway at that time then as the months went on through 1940 Mrs McKenzie was trying to get the authorities, defence authorities to accept women in the

16:00 services. She was getting no response, no response. First, the best response she got was from the WAAAF [Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force], from the RAAF, they gave her the best response, however, that was very slow going along. Then she approached the naval headquarters, again the Defence Minister then was Billy Hughes, he was quite adamant, no women in

16:30 the navy, no women in the navy. So Mrs McKenzie was still very, very determined, she went down to naval headquarters in Melbourne and she there saw the Lieutenant Commander then, John Newman, he was the Lieutenant Commander Director of Communications. She saw him and other authorities, and when she saw

17:00 other naval authorities they said, "Women in the navy, what are women going to do?" You know, just putting it aside. I'm quoting as I am from things that have been written up about this. And so finally Commander Newman was very determined. So Mrs Mac said, "If you want to see, you come up and test my girls." Commander Newman came up about

17:30 December or January 1941, 1940–1941 he came up and tested several of us. I was one of twelve who was told to stand by, that would've been about January 1941. Still nothing happened, it was just all, we didn't know what was happening. Suddenly the WAAAF became,

18:00 got galvanised, the WAAAF became, RAAF I should say, became galvanised. And they then said, "All right," because another twelve had then been selected for the RAAF if they wanted them. So they galvanised themselves and they said, "We'll take twelve WRAN, twelve WESC girls." I still, one of them is still my friend after sixty-five years. Anyway they went in,

18:30 they formed the WRANS, so this must have galvanised again the Royal Australian Navy. Commander Newman then, Mrs Mac got the, was announced, can those twelve girls report to Loftus Street to the, we're only given a week's notice. I only gave Universal Pictures a week's notice, they treated

19:00 me marvellously, they treated everybody that, you can't, there's no doubt about the Americans, they treated everyone that joined from there, from Universal Pictures, they even paid money into a gratuity

for us after the war. But anyway so we were told, a week to stand by. So up we go to Loftus Street on the twenty-fourth of April, Anzac Day. In fact one of my colleagues, Jess Prain

19:30 said, “My father’s out marching today,” we could hear the band marching. And we did our medical and then that’s where you’ll see outside my, I signed my enlistment papers at that time. That was the twenty-fourth of April, a Friday, and on Monday the twenty-eighth of April we left Sydney for Canberra for

20:00 HMA [His Majesty’s Australian] naval WT [Wireless and Telegraph] Station.

How long was your posting to HMAS Harman in Canberra?

Well I arrived there on the twenty-eighth of April and I stayed there until May 1943 when I was sent in charge of twelve telegraphists and six teleprinter operators

20:30 to the signal station which adjoins HMAS Cerberus which is Flinders Naval Depot so I spent, that was May 1943. That was the first time drafts were, drafts, first time any of us were drafted anywhere, where between ‘41 to ‘43 that was two years, no drafting, no-one had

21:00 been drafted out. But as soon as war had started, in 1942 immediately the navy was engulfed with more, a lot more WRAN signallers came up to Harman but it was two years before any of us were drafted. I was drafted down to the signal station at Flinders and another group, a twelve group were drafted up to Townsville

21:30 to HMAS Magnetic in Townsville, so that was the first time we broke up at all.

And again we’ll come back to Cerberus and Harman in time, but how long did you stay at the signal station at Cerberus?

I stayed in Cerberus until June 1944 when I was returned to Harman because by that time I had done at least three examinations

22:00 at Flinders Signal School and I had then become a W…, what was known as a WT1, which then entitled me to be, really entitled me to be promoted to a chief petty officer, which we didn’t have at that time. But nevertheless they found that by becoming a WT1, I was still only a leading, what was called a leading telegraphist, so they

22:30 didn’t require a petty officer telegraphist at Flinders or the signal station. So therefore they decided to return me to Harman where my other colleagues that had stayed there hadn’t been transferred to Townsville or elsewhere or had already been promoted to petty officers, so that’s why I was returned to Harman because I was,

23:00 I had to be given my promotion as a petty officer. And also things had changed at Harman, it was, being the largest in the whole south west Pacific and by that time, and even in 1944 things were very, very, things weren’t going very, very good so the more experienced personnel they had the better it was. So I returned

23:30 there.

And you stayed there until the end of the war?

I stayed there till the war ended yes. And then when I found out, I was still only twenty-three when the war ended and I found out suddenly, by this time I was very, very tired, four and a half years was a long time and I naturally thought, oh we first ones are going to be able to get out. Then I got the sudden, was

24:00 told that, “Oh no, most of the point system is going to go on age, not on service.” And I was looking at the fact that I could have been in there until 1946 sometime. Course this horrified me, I thought I’ve got to get out. So fortunately one of our initial WRANS, about, at least six of them had become commissioned officers by then, and

24:30 one of them, Pat Ross, was attached to Harman as a commissioned officer. And I went and opened my heart out to Pat and said, “I just can’t stand it any longer, I’ve really had it,” and Universal wanted me back again, they were, had their open arms to you to go back there again. And she said, “Can you possibly get out on compassionate ground?” I said, “Yes, my

25:00 mother,” by that time my mother’s a pretty elderly woman, she was sixty, she had very high blood pressure. I said, “Yes, I can, they want me at home, they would rather have me at home.” So she said, “You go and see your doctor, your family doctor,” which I proceeded to do on the first weekend leave I got, saw the [doctor], and he very willingly gave me a

25:30 letter to say that I was needed at home. So that’s how I got out in October the seventeenth 1945 - I was released on compassionate ground.

All right, well that brings a summary of your service career, just briefly can you tell us what happened after that, did you marry in the post war…?

No, not immediately I, my, actually it was a match making.

26:00 My husband had served in the navy too and he, of course he had friends who were friends of mine. He joined the civilian defence force after the war, naval defence, and was through him I, we were match-made, friends wanted us to meet. And by a very strange coincidence, he had the same name as me, I never changed my name. His name was Wright

26:30 so I became, still remained Daphne Wright.

And where did you move to once you were married?

Well we married in November 1947, we struck the same difficulties that everybody was receiving at that time, where could you live, nowhere to live. But fortunately my parents, at my insistence at the age of sixteen, my mother, being a very industrious woman,

27:00 had put money into property, things like that. And she had bought around about, oh I don't know what year it must have been, I must have been, about 1934 she'd bought this block of land, way out in the never never in Avalon, Avalon Beach, it was in amongst all the bush and trees. I can always remember my mother telling me, she went out there with the estate agent because there was no,

27:30 no, at that time, you could only get as far as Narrabeen by tram from Manly you see. So the estate agent had taken her out there and my mother had gone with an old friend, a very, very Scottish old friend. And my mother told me later on that between her Scottish friend and the estate agent she put a deposit on the land just to keep them quiet.

28:00 So here she buys this block of land way out in the never never in Avalon Beach. So of course me being fond of the swimming and surf and everything like that, I had learned to swim actually at Balmoral, my father taught me to swim at Balmoral. And by the time of sixteen was just before war broke out, I eventually got my mother to build a little cottage

28:30 at Avalon, just a little fibro cottage, few bed, one bedroom, lounge room, big veranda and a bathroom with cold water and toilet down the back yard. And anyway that was built about March 1939 before war broke out. So here we were, you know, by the time, we used to go down there for holidays and things like that even in the,

29:00 before I went away in 1941. And so 1947 came, we thought all right we'll move into this little cottage, which we proceeded to do and which we renovated it. Considerable renovations took place, we built on to it and renovated it, still had our back yard toilet though, that took us quite a while before we got the next kind that you

29:30 could, still didn't put sewerage on for years. However we stayed there for nine years and I had two children, my eldest son, and a daughter too came after that. So we were there for nine years and I loved it, it was beautiful, it was beautiful spot, of course Avalon did grow a little bit but it hadn't grown very much. So then we decided that it was, the

30:00 travelling was very, quite severe for my husband, you know, going from, we did manage to get a little car, a funny little Ford car but that wasn't good enough for him to travel in, back and forth, to the city. But by that time we had double-decker buses, so he used to travel in and then once a week we'd drive the car up to Chatswood to my family, stay the night and there were so few

30:30 shops in Avalon, they only had one general store, that I'd mostly do quite a lot of my shopping while we were up at Chatswood and we'd go home the next day. And I learned to drive myself then, I've had a licence for over fifty-five years. So we stayed there then, we, my husband had a lot of trouble with, feet trouble, so he spent quite a lot of time in Concord hospital. So at this

31:00 period we were looking around for land where we could come nearer to the city, to... And I happened to see this block of land advertised in the, one of the local papers so we pursued it, we bought this block of land, what is it forty-six, it would have been over forty-six years ago cause that's when we built the house, and it would have been, I, we

31:30 bought it for five hundred, five hundred pounds in, when we bought the block of land here. My last valuation for this block of land, the unimproved capital value, valuation is now four hundred and nineteen thousand dollars, we bought it for five hundred pound, which would have been equivalent to about a thousand dollars. So we had it for a couple of years

32:00 and then we finally built this part of the house on. We managed to get, my husband got a, women at that stage were not allowed to get a, any mortgages, but they do now, service women. But at that stage he was the only one who could get a mortgage so he managed to get a mortgage from the Veterans' [Department of Veterans' Affairs]

32:30 and we built this house. Well that would have been, just over forty-six years ago, getting close to forty-seven years this year.

And you're still here today.

I'm still here today, yes. Oh we built another beautiful home at, on the central coast on, again, fortunate enough to buy a block of land for four and a half thousand dollars, that was in the 1970's and

33:00 those blocks of land are now, three hundred thousand dollars. But it's right on the cliffs of Copacobana Beach, right on the cliffs looking right down, out to sea. It used to be a wonderful thing for us, because both of us being in the navy, the sea meant quite a lot to us, so we've still got that property up on the central coast. But mainly my family use it now for, they use it as a,

33:30 for holidays and things like that because it's very valuable, I don't want to see it... So in many ways from the very beginnings of my parents, we always had visions to go ahead, we belonged to a generation where you wanted to proceed ahead, you didn't stand still. And you saved your money to do it, you didn't do it on time payment and anything like that,

34:00 you saved your money. We even put this, twenty years ago we put the extension on to this house, simply because we had the vision, we didn't, we wanted to do it and it's a beautiful extension upstairs, very large. Bedrooms, lounge room, kitchen, bathroom. We even put a, we have a, in the basement below, we put a, we have a bathroom down in the basement below and also a bedroom and a,

34:30 and a storage room. So in every possible way that we could, which is what's still happening to Jose Rodriguez is now still doing maintenance around my house, I'm not going to allow the house to more or less fall down, I'm going to keep it maintained for the benefit of my family.

All right well that brings us up to the present, we might just stop there for a second again.

35:00 **Your parents, you told us a little about their background already, but what memories do you have of your father and what kind of a father was he?**

My father was, I could just say he was a gentleman. Very gentle, never had any rows in my household, he enjoyed at Christmas or Easter, he'd have a glass or two of beer

35:30 but from a very early age too, I am a Catholic, and I was brought up with fairly strict, strict ideas on behaviour. And I, the years I spent with the nuns teaching me and then particularly at Saint Patrick's, the most wonderful nun there, Sister Marcellas,

36:00 who was in charge of the, principal of the school, I learned standards and values and responsibility, they were very much an important feature in your life. You weren't really aware of it but it was there, being taught to you, not pushed into you but gently you were learning.

36:30 And this is what I learned in my home, my parents, there was no bigotry or anything like that. Many of their friends were of other, Presbyterian faiths, and there was never any, I never ever knew what bigotry was. The only ever time I ever realised that there was big differences between us was, in those days

37:00 the big school, the GPS [Grand Public Schools; Head of the River] Regatta was the big event in our lives, the GPS Regatta up at, on the river. And everybody would wear their colours, and course naturally our colours were for Saint Joseph's College and that was the only time I ever felt any kind of differences between our religious

37:30 outlooks. Otherwise I grew up totally, just not aware of any kind of bigotry and it was never ever in my home. As a matter of fact from a very early age my father had joined the Saint Vincent de Paul Society and I can remember particularly during the Depression years my father never hesitating always to go out

38:00 on cases that he had to go out on, people that were really in a very, very unfortunate state. And even then after the war I can always remember my father, once a month, every Sunday he'd go to the hospital, go around the hospital, North Shore Hospital, and enquire of anybody he could help. Do you need cigarettes, do you need, what can we do for you?

38:30 And this was a, very much a part of my life that my father wasn't a stringent man, he was just a good man doing what he could in a very gentle way. My mother was a very, very able woman, very good at saving her money, she was an outstanding dressmaker, I don't

39:00 think I was, for many, many years, I don't think I ever had a bought dress in my life, she'd made everything, made everything. She made different items for my father but, and the same for my older sister, who by that time of course was, had married, she married before I went into the navy. But my home life was a wonderful memory to me.

39:30 Wonderful memory.

On that note we'll stop cause we have to change the tape, so we'll do that.

Tape 2

00:44 **Can you tell us a bit about the house you lived in, you mentioned you'd moved into a Californian house that was your earliest memories?**

That's right my home there. Well it was, it had

01:00 two good sized bedrooms, and a small bedroom, a front veranda which my parents had, with a bit of vision, glassed in and it became another, a bed could be put on it if we ever needed, any extra people. And at, to start with, we had the old back yard toilet but as soon as sewerage was available my parents had sewerage put

01:30 on, so I did grow up mostly with sewerage. I can't, have very little memories of the night cart man as you called them. But it was a very comfortable home, I had a fairly long walk to my school. But we did have an early tragedy in

02:00 our life, as I told you my sister was sixteen years older than me and she met a young man when she was about seventeen who was training to be a pathologist at, out on the other side of Sydney. But they met when they used to go to the beach swimming, and he was a surf lifesaver. Anyway my mother wouldn't let her get married till she was twenty-one. He

02:30 was a wonderful person, I can remember him, I was only, as a matter of fact I've got a picture, a large picture of their wedding group out in the other, second bedroom. But at the age of twenty-one or twenty-two my sister married Andrew and he was a pathologist by then at what was then the Randwick hospital [Prince of Wales Hospital]. And it was then

03:00 the ex-service men's hospital at that time, which would've been 1928, it wasn't that long after the First World War. Anyway she married Andrew, they built a lovely, bought a lovely little home over in nearby Greville Street [Chatswood], he was very keen to put as much lovely furniture in it as they could, took great likings for it.

03:30 And then we came July ten months after they were married, was a very severe winter and Andrew had caught a bit of a sniffle, and at that time one of the Veterans died. The doctors could not decide whether it was tuberculosis or lobar pneumonia, which was a very severe illness in those days. No penicillin,

04:00 we didn't have things like that. So Andrew performed the autopsy on the man to determine what he had died of, a week later he was dead himself with it. He caught the disease from the patient and he, because he had a cold himself, he was run down, so ten months after they were married, my daughter became, sister became a widow, at the age of about twenty-two. This was

04:30 the most tragic thing that happened in our family's life, terrible tragedy, it did cause quite an upset in our whole lives. So my daughter, my sister came back to home, she wanted, didn't want anything to do with, they had a mortgage on the house of course. She didn't want anything to, my parents

05:00 bought quite a lot of her furniture because my brother in law had not made a will, and of course it went in to, whatever it does do. And my sister just wanted to forget about it, she wanted to die, that's what, that's how she felt. So this, I was only young, I was about, only about seven or eight years of age but I still felt the tragedy of this. And

05:30 again it showed the resourcefulness of my parents and particularly my mother. My sister just wanted to forget about the house you know, let it go, forget about it. My mother said, "No, you're going to hang on to that house and you're going to put tenants into it and they are going to buy your house for you." It showed you that she still had enough strength and vision to not let

06:00 her. So my daughter, sister came home and my parents never, she went back to the jewellery store, famous jewellery store in Sydney, and was a family of, family, Jewish family that ran these couple of big jewellery stores. And she had been a very, very, they had thought a great deal

06:30 of my sister as a sales assistant. She went back to the jewellery store, my parents refused to take any board from her or anything like that, she got her house tenanted. So that was a very, very harsh tragedy that hit our lives, at the very outbreak of the Depression.

How was it for you having siblings that were so much older?

To what?

How did it affect you having siblings that were

07:00 **so much older?**

Well I don't know, I suppose I grew up almost like an only child. I grew up, I was, I became a great reader, I did a lot of reading, enormous amount of reading. I didn't have many friends nearby from my school but there were a couple of boys, neighbours, a couple of doors down, so I was a little bit

07:30 of a tomboy. We'd go out, the opposite was all bush at that stage, now they're all homes built on it, but we'd soon make up a cricket pitch and play cricket out there. Or we'd come, Carr Street, which is the street I'm talking about, is very hilly like that, and we'd get in our billy carts and we'd go down the billy carts, so I had a very happy childhood that way.

08:00 And but as I said I, it was, I had a great regard for my sister, I used to think she was so beautiful, she

was a very beautiful, lovely. And I can always remember she'd go to work, my mother used to make her clothes for her, she'd wear black skirt and a little black jacket but she used to wear these beautiful pink or white silk blouses,

08:30 that would be double breasted. And she was shorter than me, she was very dainty, she was only a bit over five foot one I think, and she was very slim, blonde, very pretty. I used to be so proud of my sister when I'd see her going off in these pink or white blouses, you know, to go to work. She was very, she always stayed very, very,

09:00 dressed beautifully always. She married later on, she was about twenty-eight when she married again.

What about your brother?

Well my brother was, he became an apprentice with Fairfax Newspapers in the printing department. He was quite a handsome young man and he was very fond of cricket, played cricket, very fond of playing cricket.

09:30 And when he joined John Fairfax Newspapers, in the printing, mostly it was with the Sun newspaper and he enjoyed the mates that he had there. And I can always remember even, possibly there was a [Returned and Services] League's Club close to where John Fairfax was then in those days, and my brother was a keen poker player,

10:00 he liked his little drop of beer and unfortunately he smoked. But he was thirty-four when he joined up at the end of 1942, he was, he knew that he couldn't, he didn't want to go into the army so he joined the RAAF, but he wasn't

10:30 in air crew. As a matter of fact I have a little photograph of him there taken at Tarakan, he ended up in Tarakan in the, he spent about, must have been over twelve months in the Pacific as a member of the ground crew. Unfortunately he got a very severe dose of malaria, he also got fungus growth in the ears, which eventually he lost his

11:00 hearing, almost lost his hearing through that. But he came back from the war and he remained a bachelor, he didn't marry but I have, he was always a good brother. And also one of the things I did, at the age of about fourteen, because my mother used to, parents used to take me to the Royal Easter Show so much, they became quite keen on

11:30 horses. And my father hired a horse for two weeks, an old horse Daisy, I can still remember it, we couldn't even keep it in our back yard because it sloped but the people next door had a flat back yard and we kept Daisy in the[ir] back yard. And here I was at the age of, oh, fourteen or fifteen, I had Daisy for two weeks, and I learned to drive, ride. So I used to ride all around, down to the Lane Cove river

12:00 and everywhere like that on Daisy. Then after that I joined a, used to go to horse riding club and this when my brother also, he'd done a bit of horse riding when he'd gone on holidays and things like that. So I can remember joining my brother to join me in going to horse back riding. Even when I went to

12:30 Harman I used to go and hire a horse from the nearby farms and go horse riding.

What other interests did you have, you said you were a bit of a tomboy, you liked billy carts and cricket, what other things did you like as a young girl?

Well I, by the time I reached the age of sixteen

13:00 my sister was by that time living...

Even younger than sixteen, as a girl, as a young girl, what did you do?

Oh, I don't suppose I, I was rather a quiet type, I just liked to go to nice, see musicals and movies, I loved to go to the movies. I was very struck on, that's why I was so thrilled when I got a job at Universal Pictures. And I went to the

13:30 movies and I was, when I was thirteen or fourteen when I went to Saint Patrick's, but I just seemed to... I joined the library, that's right I joined the, one of the girls at Saint Patrick's knew I was very keen on reading and she said, "Why don't you join the council,

14:00 Sydney Council library?" which was then situated in the old Victoria, Queen Victoria building, which was then a very dilapidated old place. And I can always remember going to their library and joining it and at that time you were allowed to take two books, so I, a fiction, a non-fiction. So I went through all the normal girl's books, Pollyanna books

14:30 and Anne of Green Gables and all the other ones, and I found that the fiction book wasn't enough for me, I wanted to get onto the non-fictions too because you'd take one of them. So that's why I joined the non-fiction and I learned a great deal about the First World War, I bought books on that, I also got books on the Civil war in America, so in many respects I had a very

15:00 distinctly, I suppose you'd say historical bent on the world in general. Even when we went to war with Germany in 1939 I was well aware of what was going on in the world, even at the tender age of fourteen. I knew the Abyssinian war went on, you knew the horror of that and the injustice of it, I knew

the

15:30 Civil war going on in Spain, well aware of that. I had a household that we kept up to date with all those things and naturally got the [Sydney Morning] Herald newspaper, Sun newspaper. And I, and then reading about these things at school, the non-fiction, I became very, quite obviously very interested in world events and what our world was made up of, and I

16:00 wasn't, more so than possibly other young women of my age. So I suppose this is what I did more of until, as I say, until the age of about sixteen when my sister had returned to her home herself, she'd remarried, and they had formed a tennis club,

16:30 so I started playing tennis. And then through that I met young people that lived nearby me and that was a period of my life which I look upon probably as one of the happiest periods of my life between 1938 and 1940. When we went, we'd go surfing, they're fortunately, one group of the boys,

17:00 there were three or four of them, brothers, all three brothers, they borrowed their father's car, he was fortunate enough to have a car. And we used to go to Avalon and we'd fish around the rocks of Avalon, you know, things that you regard today as very, very dangerous. We'd be doing rock fishing on, without, and we'd even go down the south coast,

17:30 and surfing, fishing, picnics, this was a very wonderful part of my life. And they were wonderful friends, they were really very loyal, very, one was very devoted to me but of course war came and our lives went in different directions. But nevertheless it was a very, very happy period, that period.

I'll come back and talk about that

18:00 **period in just a, there's a couple of things I want to ask you about that. But before, you mentioned you knew a bit about the world and you followed the news, especially the troubles in Europe, what did the British Empire mean to you growing up in Chatswood?**

I don't know if I thought so much about the British Empire, I always looked upon Australia as being very independent. I never ever

18:30 felt as though, I suppose I had a very Irish background you see, extremely Irish, I only had one small part, the Wright part, was English. My grandfather apparently came out from England, this is something I would like to have found more out about him. Apparently when he married my grand mother, he settled in Bathurst

19:00 and he had, he was a manufacturer of soap and candles, manufacturer. But both of them died quite young in their married life, my father was left an orphan more or less, at the age of about four or five. And I've never ever been able to find out very much about my grandfather's background. I always thought it rather

19:30 an unusual thing. Why would he and his brother, he had a brother named Hugh, his name was Thomas, Thomas Wright, why did he go to Bathurst and have a soap- and candle-making factory? And it brought to mind the fact of the very famous Wright's Coal Tar Soap and I often thought was he an off branch of this family company. And many, many years later when

20:00 I made, I've been seven times overseas you know, I've been to Russia, I've been everywhere, I've been to all those places that I've read about and wanted to know about. And on a visit to Ireland I, no, on a visit to Ireland I managed to find the background to some of my Irish heritage, but on a visit to England while staying in London I went into a pharmacy

20:30 shop and they had Wright's Coal Tar Soap on display. And I said to the pharmacist, "Is this a family company?" And he said, "Yes, right up until just recently it remained a family company but it is now gone public." But I have never ever been able to, I've reached too much of a late age of my life now to try to follow up

21:00 the background of my... I have no doubt in Bathurst there they would have some historical background as to this soap- and candle-making manufacturer.

What about the Irish side of your family said, you said was more important, how did your Irish heritage influence your family?

Well it's more important because my mother's parents were Irish, they came to Australia separately actually.

21:30 My grandfather came out in, must have been about 1862, something like that, and he came from Cork and he was brought, he came out to follow the mining, gold was the thing that got, came out for. And my mother, grandmother apparently came out because her brother had come previously and she came out to join

22:00 her brother. She must have met my grandfather probably on the gold fields, down the south, in Victoria and anyway they were married, I've got their marriage certificate as a matter of fact. They were married in 1863 in the just newly built famous St Francis church in Lonsdale Street, Melbourne. And they,

22:30 so therefore my mother was brought up with a very strong Irish heritage from her own mother you see, who had come, she came from Waterford, my grandfather came from Cork. And my grandfather apparently died quite young in his forties, he caught pneumonia riding his horse, he caught pneumonia. So grandmother was left with nine children and a large general store

23:00 to run, which she did. So I learned from my mother this, and they had a very unusual Irish name, their name, my grandfather's name was Millerick, very unusual name, you'll probably find there's hardly another Millerick in the whole of Australia. And there may be, I think I have found that there is one in the

23:30 phone book. However, I did get to Ireland in 1978.

Well when you were growing up, how did that Irish heritage come through, obviously you were Catholic, that probably came from your Irish background.

That's right, yes.

What else was there that was Irish about your family?

Well I found that, the parish priest of Chatswood at, when I went to school, he was an Irish man, Father Barry was his name. Extremely

24:00 Irish and extremely possibly a little bit too strongly Catholic in his outlook, you know, in his doctrines and that. So in some ways, but apart from that, the, there was no, I didn't, my parents, my

24:30 mother never expressed any Irish, and of course my father mostly all, he always felt that he had an English background because his father was. But as I said, I have subsequently found out in recent years that his grandfather who was the one who left him an inheritance arrived in Australia in 1826. Can you imagine what Australia, Sydney was like in 1826, and he was eighteen years of age,

25:00 he only came from north of Dublin. I've never been able to find out under what circumstances he came here but I rather believe he was a free, he came here free, didn't come here as a, under imprisonment or anything like that. But apparently he did very well in Australia, and as a matter of fact I believe that the main street of Liverpool is called after his name,

25:30 Reilly, their name was Reilly, you see, his name was William Reilly. And I believe, that is where he settled in, in Liverpool in the whole area there. And so but as far as any, being aware of the troubles in Ireland, they never seemed to conflict into our household, we became completely Australian.

26:00 I might've, we might've, my mother thought about her Irish background through her mother but there was no, no political feelings between, about the Irish rebellions or the difficulties in Ireland.

All right, well moving back to your story rather than so much of the family history, what celebrations or big events do you remember from your childhood?

Well

26:30 we always celebrated Christmas was always a big event.

What happened in your household around Christmas time?

Just the normal thing, it was the, I put out my pillow slip the night before and wait for Father Christmas to leave me the usual things, and kept that up even long after I realised there wasn't a Father Christmas.

What sort of things do you remember getting as presents?

Oh

27:00 I had a beautiful doll, I still have it as a matter of fact, most beautiful doll it is, I've got it put away. Matter of fact friends have told me, after I started painting and meeting quite a number of people, that, "You've got a very valuable doll in that doll," it's a porcelain doll you see. I've got it rolled up and put upstairs in a cupboard, put away.

27:30 So I was, I suppose my sister always saw that I had, I always had dolls to play with and every, games to play with and everything like that. I always remember my parents loved their playing cards and so this was quite a normal event in our home on a Sunday evening.

28:00 You'd, after dinner and that, they'd bring out the cards and they'd be playing cards while I was sitting there on the sofa you know, falling asleep, while the adults were playing cards and enjoying it. And I also remember my father was very fond of the cricket, listening to the cricket and I can still quite clearly remember being, hanging over the

28:30 wireless. At one period, I don't know which period it was, I was only probably a girl of about twelve or thirteen, whatever it was, but I remember listening in to the Test being played in Britain. And I can remember at that time how, apart from Bradman, I could be able to tell you, oh, McCabe is playing, you know, he's hitting them. And then when O'Reilly would come in, our wonderful

29:00 bowler, O'Reilly'd come in and he'd have a few swipes at the bats and he'd end up with a few sixes, that's what had been... And I can remember how thrilling it was to just sit there with my Dad and listen to the test cricket over seas. Things like that would, were rather important in our lives, they were the little events that happened to make our lives quite

29:30 important. Simple things, very simple things. Also I had, my father had a brother whose, who married my mother's sister, so they were naturally very close. They never had any children. And my Uncle Walter had a very outgoing personality, he'd also, was a member of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, they lived at Enmore, over on the other

30:00 side of Sydney. I can even remember before the [Sydney Harbour] Bridge was built, going down to, catching the train from Chatswood to Milsons Point and catching the ferry across to Circular Quay. Then getting a tram and going all the way out to Enmore to visit my uncle and aunt. This was also a great, always a very important enterprise in my little life.

30:30 And my uncle had quite a personality and on that piano he used to strum out a bit, music, you know, he wasn't a player. But this could happen on a, they'd come out for Sunday dinner and Sunday afternoon we'd be around the piano or early evening, they might stay for tea at night too, and Uncle Walter'd be around the piano strumming away at just, at the

31:00 piano and the singing would go on. And that's another thing as you say, when I met my young friends from the age of about sixteen, when we played tennis, went picnicking. My mother was a very hospitable person and she would say, "After tennis, if you want to invite any of your friends for supper, tea at night, bring them in." This became quite an,

31:30 a usual Sunday event, they'd troop into my home, Mum'd put on a nice cold tea you know, just meat from the Sunday dinner, lettuce, tomatoes and salad. And she also was very good at making what we used to call the jelly cake, she'd make this cake on Sunday and fill it with jelly

32:00 and a little bit of cream on it. So naturally these friends of mine, this became a very popular thing and then what happened then is we'd proceed into the lounge room, I would get the piano going, I'd have all the songs that they'd be singing on the, in the movies from Naughty Marietta and such things like that,

32:30 and then we'd have a sing song. This became a normal event in our lives, this is the way we enjoyed ourselves, a singsong. And another thing is that my parents always celebrated my birthday, right from a young child, my birthday on the second of October was always celebrated with a little party, and even as

33:00 I grew up, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, these friends came, my mother'd put on a party for them. And even on the Saturday night before I left to join the navy on Monday the twenty-eighth, Saturday night the twenty-fifth my mother put me on a going away party. Even Universal Pictures put on a going away party because

33:30 they had a big theatrette and I was very pleased because I was one of the first at Universal to actively go into uniform. And the managing director came to it, the whole event was put on in the theatrette at Universal Pictures, gave me a beautiful new suitcase and a lovely blanket, in those days it was a

34:00 travel rug, a coloured travel rug which I went everywhere. So these were the simple events that were important in your life.

What about holidays, what sort of holidays did your family take or where did you manage to travel to as a girl?

Well in early years my mother took me when I was very young back to Queensland to Gympie where I had an aunt who had been fortunate enough

34:30 to own two hotels there, she owned the Imperial, one large hotel in Gympie. An Irish woman who had made, started with nothing and did very well, she owned this hotel in Gympie. By that time my grandmother was dead and everybody else had dispersed. But my mother liked to go up and visit this aunt who had married

35:00 one of her brothers you see, she was a widow. So I was, I think the last time I went up there I was about eleven so I had at least done two trips Queensland in the early age of my life. As far as any other holidays concerned, never went any, my mother used to sometimes take a, a little flat down at Manly because I was so fond of swimming. She'd take

35:30 this, be just a little flat at Manly, might only be a room and the use of conveniences, and I would spend my time going over swimming in the pool at Manly, I was really quite a good swimmer for my age. But that's the only holidays we took, we didn't go in... My brother and sister used to take holidays, they'd go up to Lapstone, places like that,

36:00 never far away. They'd stay at a boarding house, and that's when my brother started learning to ride a horse mainly then. Oh that's right, he did a couple of cruises my brother, but of course he's much older than me, he did these before war broke out. But as for me, my life was very simple, quite simple.

You mentioned before you had an attachment to the sea, where do you think you picked that

up?

36:30 I don’t know, strange thing is I, well I did know somebody who, I suppose going to Avalon. I just, through swimming and surfing it became an attachment to the sea and the sand. And then one friend I did have he knew, he lived at Greenwich, and he happened to know somebody who owned this very,

37:00 very big yacht, big yacht I suppose it was and I can always remember Bob asking me out to go on it and we went right as far as the heads. I never got sick, I enjoyed it thoroughly so I knew I was not one going to be sick, so I proved that, I was never sick either on the sea, the air or the land. But I suppose, as far as

37:30 my husband’s concerned, he did spend six months, very bad six months in 1942 on, in the Pacific, he was on the Merca, a supply ship. Which strangely enough I never realised later on but I could always remember sending signals to the Merca when I was at Harman. I’d know that these certain signals were going to the Merca because it was a supply ship, and it was being

38:00 directed where to be, get its escort and where it was to go to. Never realising that even in 1942 that my subsequent husband was serving for six months on the Merca. Very, very, very anxious six months in that... people don’t realise how many ships we lost in 1942, on the east coast of Australia.

Well you’re in a good position to tell us more about that, and we’ll

38:30 **talk about that when we come to that part of the story. We have to stop again and change the tape I’m afraid, so we’ll take a quick break.**

Tape 3

00:46 **We’ll start again.**

So you’re going to question me now?

I’m gonna ask you some questions now and listen intently, my turn. Just coming back to Avalon and some of your memories there, swimming costumes, can you share with me what you actually

01:00 **wore, swimming costumes?**

Just a plain swimming costume, back-less swimming costume, that’s all it was, I’ve even got photographs of it if you... Very ordinary, just a, woollen it was, woollen costume, backless costume. I used to play, used to wear shorts around, I’ve got photographs of myself in white shorts, khaki shorts, t-shirts, things like that. It was

01:30 very, very, we were very up to date.

So there were fashions as far as swimming costumes?

Oh I wore, but I well remember when we arrived at Harman, I was most astounded to see that June, she’s the one I told you that had been, actually she was training to be a harp, she was a harpist, eighteen year old. It showed you the diversity of the young women

02:00 that were in that first group, how diverse we all were. Here was she, eighteen years of age and she was a harpist, of all things, a harpist. Here she was joining a naval service. And we went swimming at the pool in Canberra and I was most astounded to see June had a two-piece costume. Of course two-piece in those days was a little skirt and a bra

02:30 up here, but it showed you that we were very modern. She was, she wore, I still only had my back-less costume, my woollen back-less figured costume, but I was very surprised to see that June was even, very much more modern. So we were, we dressed very prettily I think. I can still remember even at Universal Pictures, my mother used to always

03:00 dress me in very pretty clothes and I remember this day I had a very pretty blue flowered dress on. And at that time we had a, the, a member of the British, I think it was, I don’t think it was Gormand, Gormant, but anyway he was a manager and he joined, he had an office at Universal, he was an English man,

03:30 and he represented the English producing companies. And I can always remember I walked through the office and he came up to me and he said, “Miss Wright, you should always wear blue, to go with your blue eyes.” And it struck me then, this would have been, I would have been about eighteen then, and it struck me then that we weren’t dowdy, we were,

04:00 in fact I think we wore prettier clothes in those days than the young women of today do, much prettier, they were very feminine, the clothing was very feminine. Then when the 1950s came and the new look came, which was famous, that was really beautiful, the clothing then was beautiful. So I think that

women of today have lost a lot of their femininity.

04:30 **Let me just jump in there, what were the expectations of you from your parents and society as a young woman, before the war came along, what were you hoping to be or become?**

Well I, you just knew that, I suppose I was very romantic, loved to see the movies, loved to read romantic books but I had a certain,

05:00 quite a reserve about me. I knew that eventually you would meet somebody that you would fall in love with and marry, but I was very reserved about it, I was not in any great rush to do it, I was not in any great rush to do it. So I, as I said, this one young man who was three years older than me, belonged to this

05:30 group of brothers, three brothers that were almost inseparable, he was the second one, he became very devoted to me, very much so. But I, this was of course 1940 to 1941 too, before I went away, but to me there was a war on, nobody knew what our futures

06:00 were, I just didn't want to become too closely involved with anybody romantically. I know it disappointed him terribly, it almost, possibly in many ways it almost broke his heart, young man of twenty-two. And I have realised in as, in the following years

06:30 that happened, he turned out a wonderful person, a wonderful man. He's dead now but he was a wonderful, turned into a wonderful person. So no matter who I had, the different young men that were in my life, no matter who I had teamed up with, they would have, they all turned out to be

07:00 wonderful men, so.

You shared with Chris [interviewer] earlier that you're an avid reader, what did you know, again, '38-'39 about the war that was coming to Europe, did you see the war coming?

I, yes, yes, yes, I was absolutely horrified by what was happening in Germany and not only that, I was horrified by what was happening in Russia. I feared Stalin and the

07:30 Russians almost as much as I feared the uprising of Germany. You'd go to the movies, they put the Movietone [cinema news film] on, you'd see the Germans marching, you'd see tanks and aeroplanes and everything. The next thing you do, you'd be seeing Moscow's square and you'd see Stalin sitting up there, reviewing all of his troops and everybody

08:00 going by. And here you had this horrible fear of both Russia and Germany, it was both of them. And then of course when Russia signed a peace agreement with Germany prior to the outbreak of [war against] Poland, before Germany went into Poland, that was a horrifying thing to

08:30 me. I can remember even my brother-in-law, he was a bit of a, I suppose he was a bit of a, would like to tag me along a little bit, you know. And I can remember sometimes at Sunday dinner, actually he wasn't very popular with the family, the second, my sister's second husband, he wasn't very popular with the family. But of course being in the family in those days

09:00 you never put a foot out of place, you know, you, for the sake of the daughter you didn't have any antagonism. But I was different by this time at fourteen and fifteen, I was then fifteen, I'd have, we'd have, almost have arguments after dinner at the table. Because he'd be more or less saying, oh, he'd get on to this point possibly to

09:30 irritate me, "Oh, you never know, you, the Germans have got this or that, they might be..." and of course this would aggravate me so much, I'd be so intensely anti this rising Germany. And so much so that in my trips abroad later on, I had to go and see these places, I had to go to them. I had to go to Russia, I had to go there. And we got to Russia

10:00 in 1978 and when I saw Red Square, I thought, "How in the name of heaven did I think this was such a powerful place?" I tell you, Red Square just left me phtt. I wasn't a bit impressed by it. I thought, how they could use propaganda in those days, how clever the Germans and the Russians, it wasn't just the Germans, how clever they were

10:30 at pursuing propaganda, frightening us, trying to break our morale. In other words they were trying to scare you by these, particularly putting it on film, putting it on film.

Just on that subject, during your time at Universal, did you come across, I guess, the issue of propaganda or censorship while you were there?

No, no, not that I know of. As a matter of fact,

11:00 I can remember in 1940 Charles Chauvel coming in, and as I said, Universal were financially supporting him and they were also going to distribute the film for him. And Charles Chauvel and his wife Elsa came in and I had the great privilege of doing work for him. And then one day in comes Chips Rafferty, Peter Finch, and I can't remember the other actor that

11:30 took the other part, I think his name was Grant somebody or other. And I can remember being so

intrigued at the age of eighteen to have these celebrities coming into the office, you know, our own publicity office was separate to the rest of the general office. And I remember particularly looking at young Peter Finch, and I thought, you've got a future ahead of you. There was something very distinct about him,

12:00 he had a, he had that charisma already, showing out. So I, that was quite an adventurous thing for me that they should come into the office, and that was 1940 of course, they did Forty Thousand Horsemen. But yes I loved being in the Universal, being in the Publicity Department, going up, every week the staff

12:30 would see a new film, go up to the theatrette upstairs and see a new film. Sometimes I'd be lucky enough to go up with the boss, if a new film came out, and he'd of course have to review it and have a look at it before he started publicising it. And sometimes I'd go upstairs with the boss and view a new film with Diana Durban or the Costello Brothers or you know, people like that. So

13:00 I can also, I can always remember the picture that Marlene Dietrich did with, I think it was James Stewart, we made that, Universal made that picture. So it was hard for me to leave Universal and go into the navy actually, it was hard for me to go. But most, duty and patriotism was the only thing that caught up with me really.

You shared

13:30 **with Chris where you were when the war was declared, can you now just share with me a bit more of the story when you actually started to join the services and the response of the services in allowing women to join certain elements?**

Well when we arrived at Harman of course all the sailors didn't know what was coming in. It was a village, Harman was a village, you see, they had built all these houses for,

14:00 when they built, Harman wasn't built until 1939, this big Belconnen service station was built, the early part of 1939. And they built all these cottages, all these wooden cottages, and of course the inmate, the personnel would live with their wives and families and also the sailors who were not married, they

14:30 were there too. So when we arrived, this, even our poor old Commanding Officer McLoughlin, he didn't know what to expect, he was petrified, fourteen young women coming onto his station. What was he, how was he going to do, how was he going to manage? He was protecting us just like a father figure, he was for quite a while, it was really funny

15:00 to see some of them, the protection that he took and the way the sailors, "You daren't have anything to do with those WRANS," you know, "You keep right away, you don't go near their cottages, I don't want any mis-goings on at all." And so, but he got quite a surprise when he realised that he had very, fourteen very responsible young women,

15:30 fun loving, fun loving, enjoying, but still very responsible and very disciplined by Mrs McKenzie. She had been able to, as a matter of fact, she has said in the books that've been written, that the navy got the, what did she call it, 'the cream of Australian womanhood."

16:00 That's what she called it, that the navy had been fortunate to get "the cream of Australian womanhood," and that is the whole feeling that we kept there, it was a feeling of respect. But we had great fun, we used to go with the boys on picnics and all places we went altogether. But yeah,

16:30 I personally, I never had any, I think there were, did eventuate a couple of romances, they married, but I didn't have any romances with any of our personnel. And then as time went on of course the boys went, all the families had to go, they all had to leave the cottages and we eventually took them over. Finally of course a big,

17:00 a big, they had to build more accommodation for the extra WRANS as they came on, for more and more came on. And the boys went to sea or went to, onto naval establishments in, on land, land establishments but most went to sea.

You've spoken a bit about Mrs McKenzie, can you share with me what type of woman she was,

17:30 **she was like?**

Absolutely wonderful woman she was, absolutely gentle, quiet. She would have been in her, probably only in her fifties when she started on Women's Emergency Signalling Corps. Course there are books written there about her, things that I've even found out more about her since. One of our coders that we had who was there when we arrived at Harman,

18:00 he has just recently written a book, A Tribute to the WRANS, about all the WRANS that have died and their obituaries were put in ditty box you see. And he eventually married one of the WRANS, who has subsequently, she's died now. But Lawrence,

18:30 after he left, after they became, were married, he did very, very well in, he joined an insurance company and he studied and did years of studying and he became, what do you call those people that are attached to insurance companies, that, oh that...

A broker?

figure out, figure things out [actuary].

19:00 Anyway he did astonishingly well and he went abroad a lot, they went abroad quite a lot in his work and everything. But he has just written this book, A Tribute to the WRAN, [or] to a WRAN.

So just coming back to Mrs McKenzie, what are your first memories of her?

Well my first memories of meeting her and being, she was, as I said, the first electrical engineer

19:30 to gain her degree and her husband also was an electrical engineer too. They didn't have any children, never had a family but she had been always interested in wireless, she was an amateur wireless operator. And so she got this idea that women were going to be needed, she formed this organisation,

20:00 never, she put all her money into it, she leased this warehouse at 10 Clarence Street, top of a huge flight of stairs we used to have to go up. I think we used to give a shilling a week in, to help the canteen, we had a canteen where cups of tea were given out continually, you see, particularly when the, all these from Bradfield Park, all these RAAF boys used to come in.

20:30 She also taught people in marine, people in the [merchant, civilian] marine, people in the army, anyone that wanted to go there and learn about, she knew, seemed to know everything about signalling and particularly about marine signalling, she knew everything. So much has been written about her that I can't speak about it here, because I can't remember everything that she did, it's a whole, pages and pages of what she did. But to

21:00 me she was just a wonderful woman, that taught us signalling, went with us to Harman, watched over us and even after the war when she, I used to visit her and she ended up in a nursing home, she lived till she was ninety and I used to regularly visit her. She was probably a

21:30 great Australian patriotic, an outstanding woman. Australia can be very, very proud of her. Very proud.

You mentioned that she set up with her own money, I take it this was the Women's Emergency …

Signalling Corps.

Signalling Corps. Did the government contribute…?

Never got any money from them at all. She, the only thing that she did get was an honorary commission from the WAAAF, they made her a lieutenant, flight

22:00 lieutenant, she had a, I've got photographs of her there in uniform. She was made an honorary, got an honorary commission as respect to her for all the women she'd supplied to communications in the WAAAF. But no other, oh, she received an OBE, an Order of the British Empire that was the only… and there are plaques in different

22:30 places put up to demonstrate what she did, I can't remember where the plaques are. But I think that I would only be very pleased that if history can, when you read about the outstanding women of our country, I would relegate her right into the top class of the most, great women of Australia.

23:00 She had a very Scottish background, she herself had a Scottish background, but it was a privilege to have known such a woman.

You mentioned paying a shilling to cover the canteen costs there, was that also seen because it was like doing a course, that you were being trained up?

No, it was just to help the canteen going. We didn't expect her to provide biscuits and

23:30 tea all the time, which was continually on, available, so we used to just give that shilling a week to keep the canteen going.

Can you share with me, just take me with you in your imagination to what she was actually training you on, the sorts of equipment and the sorts of things she was trying to teach you?

Well we, she had buzzers, you see, and she had an enormous

24:00 amount of them, naturally you have to, because if you're training somebody you… And actually why I probably got along so much better is this young friend I had that I was telling you about, he was, he had done engineering himself, this is what was his course in life. He rigged me up, I've still got it outside and stuck it away in a cupboard,

24:30 a transmitting buzzer, and he had put it so that you could hear the dots and dashes you see, so I could train myself at home. That's why I soon got to my three gold badges, we used to get to a gold badge for every, how, once we got to twenty-five or over twenty-five words a minute, you got your third badge you see, third, it was like sergeant's

25:00 three stripes, you know, you'd get on your uniform. So this became a normal thing, first it was, I'd go to the organisation perhaps once a week, it started off once a week, then I'd start going twice a week. Then as the war increased during 1940 I found I'd be leaving Universal at

25:30 five o'clock, we finished work at five, another great thing for an American company, you didn't have to work till five thirty. I'd finish work at five, I'd walk up Clarence Street because we were in, we were down in, down towards Town Hall Station in Kent Street, Kent Street, Universal was. I'd walk up to Clarence Street at five o'clock, I'd sometimes be there till eight o'clock. My poor Mum is, mother is keeping my dinner

26:00 hot at home and I'd be there till eight, eight thirty I'd be arriving home. And his started to become, perhaps three and four nights a week , as 1940 went on. So that you were voluntarily giving a lot of your time to something that you knew was most important, desperately important. When, after May 1940,

26:30 when the Allies were caught at Dunkirk after the, and the Germans entered France in May 1940, that, and then after that, by August the Battle of Britain, this had a tremendous affect of us, tremendous affect. I don't know if it did on everyone but we who were involved

27:00 in the thing, this was having a tremendous affect on us. It made us all the more eager, all the more eager to help Britain, it became almost a necessity that we had to help Britain, she had to be helped, that it just became a necessary objective that

27:30 Britain needed help.

What Mrs McKenzie was teaching you, was that simply Morse Code or was...?

Mainly Morse Code, but no, we also learned signalling too but, and we weren't very, I wasn't very fond of signalling, I didn't like signalling. But she was capable of teaching everything and technically she was brilliant, she was brilliant technically too, on the technical side of wireless.

28:00 She was an engineer so she could help in all directions, everybody that ever came there. They were army came there, navy came there, air force came there, Merchant Navy came there. Everybody came to her for help in gaining their, oh, signals, you know, ships wanting to know what signals they had to give, when they're entering or going out of Sydney Harbour,

28:30 she was able to help them in all these things. Absolutely remarkable woman.

So the things you actually learned on, can you share with me how the wireless actually worked?

Well I was supposed learn technical part of it but that's one side of me, being more creative than technical, all I knew was where my valves were, what would happen if you needed to change

29:00 a valve, but beyond that, I never did. We did have one, one of our WRANS, WRAN number five, Marion Stevens, she was really remarkable Marion and she did become the first chief petty officer. And then she returned when the war ended and they disbanded the WRANS, she returned later on in a very

29:30 quite an eminent position in the new WRANS that were formed, not the new navy, the new WRAN. But she was remarkable technically, quite remarkable. But Marion was that kind of a person, she, but I personally didn't know very much how, beyond the fact that I knew when, where

30:00 my, what frequencies I was working on and if I needed a transmitter in order to answer a ship at sea, but I left the technical part to the ones... But when I did my exams of course I had to answer certain questions, but I think it was still over my head what I was, what questions I was answering in order to gain my WT3, WT2,

30:30 WT1. I did those exams at the Signal School, the only one who did my exams at the Signal School, when I was at Flinders for that year. I did those exams. But no, they were a remarkably good twelve operators that you probably find the very, very few that were as capable as they were. And I can always

31:00 remember when we first started, started our wireless operating, the, we were advised, I forget who we were advised, I don't know if it was our commanding officer. But we were told, "For goodness sake, try to remember that sailor at sea that's receiving your signal, interception," would be on what we'd call "interception," they only receive this signal, because every

31:30 ship at sea is WT silence you see, during wartime. And the only way they can get their signals is through interception, by you sending your signal to Wellington in New Zealand and Wellington New Zealand sending it back again and the ship would be able to pick up its signal you see. And he said to me, "Try to remember those poor sailors taking there, under the conditions they're trying to receive under." And do you know that the greatest thrill we

32:00 got when we first started, was to get the coded signal, "Your Morse is good." That's what we were thrilled, gave us the biggest thrill of all, to get that signal from a land station, might have been New Zealand or Batavia or Singapore or Ceylon. Just to get that signal, "Your Morse is good." The ships couldn't give it to us, but

32:30 they were doing it on behalf of the ships, so that was what we valued more than anything.

So how long did it take to get up and running with Morse Code…

Two weeks. Oh, Morse Code, to learn Morse Code, oh.

and to have it 'good' as you say?

Oh, I think it only, it didn't take me very long, I suppose it took me possibly, might have taken me two or three months to get up to a high standard.

33:00 Two months, I don't, I really can't remember, I know I took to it very, very well, I took to it very well. But when we got to Harman, when we turned up at Harman, as I have written in my, in that Ditty Box article that I wrote. I can remember arriving at Harman and being taken up to the wireless station

33:30 and looking in through the big glass window into the afternoon watch on duty, my legs almost were trembling, with apprehension and inadequacy. I thought, how am I going to go in there, and seeing these wireless operators at their sets, you know, I thought, how am I ever going to do it, I felt absolutely inadequate. I was only nineteen.

34:00 So within two weeks we were operating, two weeks. We'd double bank next to the operator, what we call 'double banking', you know, you could put two sets of headphones into your receiver. And we'd double bank with our operator and he'd say, "Okay," after a little while, he'd say, "You start sending that signal," and then suddenly you'd,

34:30 you'd lose your frighten-ness and you'd suddenly become quite positive and you'd send the signal. Within two weeks we were replacing the operators.

Just before we go further into Harman, you mentioned Mrs McKenzie described you ladies as the 'cream of Australian womanhood…'

That's what's written in a book. I didn't say that, that's what is written in some of the

35:00 books that've been written.

Where did the others sort of, the other eleven girls come from that were starting this signalling course that you were doing together? Were there more and some dropped out or…?

Of the twelve of us at?

Yeah.

No they stayed in, they never left the navy.

But during your time with the Women's Emergency Signal Corps, were there more women who didn't pass the exams or there was just that set of…?

Oh no, no, what happened was Mrs Mac,

35:30 then Commander Newman came up from Victoria and tested quite a few of us, tested us, and was absolutely amazed, absolutely amazed at their ability. And then it was left to Mrs Mac to pick out from the ones that'd been tested, the twelve that she wanted to be kept for the navy.

36:00 She picked out her twelve, her twelve, and we were told to stand by. And we stood by for some weeks, this was, well it was more than weeks, it was about three months we stood by. And I don't know if it was, if she picked us out immediately after he tested us or whether she picked us out when the word came through

36:30 that finally we want twelve operators, we want twelve WRAN. It may have been then, just before we had to do, might have been a couple of weeks or few weeks before, when she got the word, that she then picked the twelve that she wanted. And asked us of course, were you prepared to go. See some she asked said, "No, we can't,

37:00 we can't leave our jobs or we can't, we're not ready at this moment to go." But the twelve of us that did say, "Yes," we were quite prepared to drop anchor and go.

You were all single ladies?

Yes, all single, yes, nobody was married.

Was there any distinction even during the training time between marrieds and singles?

Well I don't think that

37:30 I can't remember any married ones being amongst them, any of the ones I knew, I can't remember any of them, anyone being married. It just seemed to attract single women, just seemed to attract single women. But later on, as the war went on we did have WRANS who'd lost their husbands in the air force. Two in particular, two

38:00 from Tasmania who, very, were on my watch and very, became very, very dear friends. They had lost their husbands in the air force, young women, very young. And subsequently, later on too, many lost their brothers in their service, quite a lot.

So Universal Studios,

38:30 **what did you say when you went in there to inform them that…?**

Oh I felt they were very proud really, they were very proud. They got quite a shock. At that time of course by 1941 they didn't really have to do much publicity for films, films didn't need to be publicised, there was very little newsprint [paper] too for anything for publicity. And

39:00 in other words our department had become rather slowed down, become slowed down. But I can remember they got a bit of a shock I think, they got a bit of a shock, but they were very proud and I think I was the forerunner. Some of the other boys had their names down, particularly for the navy and the air force. Subsequently one of my

39:30 colleagues at Universal, probably the same age as me, he was a sub lieutenant on the [HMAS] Perth when she went down, and thankfully he was saved but bitterly he became a prisoner of war of the Japanese. So he survived the war though, Ray survived the war. So Universal were very, very proud of their personnel and I was absolutely

40:00 staggered to find, unbeknown to me, when I got married in 1947, in other words I was back in Universal for two years. They gave me a promotion, they made me an assistant to the publicity director and gave me more wage, promotion, I was there for two years and I left in 1947 to be married. In those days

40:30 you didn't stay on so much with your career, with your work, and of course going to live right out at Avalon I couldn't see myself coming in, so I just subsequently left. I was then amazed to receive a letter from Universal to say that all through that period that we'd been at war, in the war service, they had had a trust fund going. They had been paying money into a trust fund and they gave

41:00 me a cheque for nearly four hundred pounds, which was a lot of money in 1947 and this was, really staggered me. That a company, I already had, having worked amongst Americans and writing to their sisters in America, I knew Americans very well, I wrote to, letters, I've got, still got letters there, piles of wartime

41:30 letters, still got, kept them. And I've always had a deep regard and thankfulness for America, nothing is ever going to be able to take that away from me. I will ever be grateful.

We'll just pause there cause the tape…

Tape 4

00:38 **Okay, just a few more questions. You said where you were training was near Bradfield Park, can you just tell me a little bit about Bradfield Park and the servicemen that were training there?**

Well Bradfield Park, they had built huts there and this was the initial training school for the air force

01:00 and this is where any young man who wanted to join the air force, they went to Bradfield Park. And this is where they were, they determined what they would become, whether they would become air crew or whether they'd stay on the ground. Or whether they would become pilots, whether they'd become navigators or whether they'd just become wireless air gunners or whether or not they'd

01:30 eventually go to bombers or whether they would go to fighter planes. So all the determination was done in Bradfield Park, from there they would be disintegrated, many, many, as you know went to Canada for their further training.

And Mrs McKenzie's sort of school, the Women's Emergency Signalling Corps

02:00 **was training some of the men?**

And so, they suddenly found out that they had to, in order to get into air crew, they had to be able to transmit and receive Morse Code at ten words a minute. They had very few instructors at Bradfield, very few instructors, there were hundreds of young men up there, hundreds, they had very few instructors so, and they had no opportunity to get on to

02:30 a key themselves, they probably only had a few keys. So they used to come in their hundreds to number 10 Clarence Street for we girls to teach them ten words a minute, Morse. So that is where we did a great service in being able to help these young men to… and so many of

03:00 them were very dense when it came to Morse, to try to tell a dot from a dash was very hard for them. Even after all these, so many years, what is it sixty-two years, sixty-more years, I can still just say my, I

can still, I still know my whole Morse. Sometimes you'll hear, RKO [Pictures, movie company] might come on, on television, and you can still

03:30 tell the RKO [corporate audio logo], you know, daa, daa, di, daa... daa, di, daa, you know, we always, that's what it always was, we never said dots and dashes, we'd just say di-daa, di-daa. Di, di, was a dot, daa was a dash you see, so that's how we... but the boys were very hard to train.

So just with some of the boys, they wouldn't have been used to, I presume, women training them

04:00 **in anything very much. What happened in relationships there?**

Well I think some, is some, some actually met their future husbands there. The, my first neighbour, I was astounded when I came and bought this, had a look at this block of land, I went up to the neighbour to see what's it like living here, you know, this was one of the second last blocks of land in the

04:30 street, you see, and I was astounded to find that it was a dear friend called Beryl Spence. She had never, she had belonged to the WESC, Women's Emergency Signalling Corps, but she had a very sick mother and she never joined a service, but she was always in the canteen. She met her future husband there. He went away, he was in, he became a navigator in the Lancaster bombers

05:00 and he returned and they were immediately married after he returned. So there could have been other ones that I don't know of, I just know particularly that this pair did meet up at WESC, there could've been plenty more that met their future husbands there.

Okay. Now, you've been told I guess that you're now moving on. Did you go straight into the Women's Royal Australian Navy

05:30 **in respect to this new position at Harman, after leaving the Signals Corps?**

Yes we went straight to Harman.

Harman.

Yes, Mrs Mac came with us just to see that we were...

To set you up.

properly looked after and treated. And we were wearing our WESC uniforms, you've

06:00 probably seen photographs out there what they were, they were a green uniform, more like an army uniform with a forage hat, cap, and it was a dark green, more like an army uniform. Well we landed in Harman at, well we landed... in books they've written there we landed, they said we landed at Queanbeyan but we did not, we

06:30 caught the eight thirty a.m. train that went straight to Canberra. We went to Canberra, we were picked up by car there and taken to Harman. Here we were in our green uniforms, we didn't get our naval uniforms for four months. And this is what I had written in that article which I wrote for our organisation Ditty Box, and which subsequently is

07:00 now in the war Memorial. I wrote in that, "That for four months it seemed so incongruous that here we were, losing our troops in Greece and Crete," this was May you see, we joined up in April and in May we, April and that, "we'd lost all our troops in Greece and Crete.

07:30 Our ships were in a lot of engagements over in the Mediterranean, and I just thought that it was very incongruous that they had to give so much thought to what kind of uniforms we were going to get." Subsequently it took four months, I have photographs there showing you our first, my first leave in Sydney in my new naval uniform. And I also wrote

08:00 in the, in this article that I wrote, and they have used it in books that've been written, particularly that book, Belles of the Navy. And I said that on one occasion, I could always remember it, we went into Canberra, I never ever told them though in the story that the strange thing was we were going to church,

08:30 we four, three girls were going to church, to Saint Christopher's Church. We were going to church on a Saturday afternoon to receive a sacrament there, we were going to church, the three of us. I was in naval uniform, Marge Price was in the green WESC uniform, the other girl was in, Claire, was in a Girl Guides uniform, the first Victorian

09:00 to be brought in to the WRAN. In to the church we go, we sit up there to receive our sacrament that we were going to go and receive. In goes, I don't know who went in first, might have been Claire went in first in her Girl Guides uniform. Then in goes Marge in her green WESC uniform, simple me goes in last in my,

09:30 in my naval uniform. Monsignor Hayden was our confessor. He's, by that time, his curiosity had got so much the better of him. "What's going on?" he said, "I've just had three of you come in here, three different uniforms, what's going on?" I had to try as quickly as I could to tell him

10:00 what the story was, didn't he know that we were WRANS, we were associated there. We were actually under the chaplain-ship of Father Casey who was the parish priest of Queanbeyan, he was our chaplain you see. But why Monsignor Hayden of Canberra hadn't heard from even Father Casey that there were women already out there, see this

10:30 was early 1942 by this time, there were women out there at the naval station. So you, can you imagine my embarrassment when I came out of the confessional, I was pink as can be because Monsignor Hayden had to have as much of the story as he could. And I came out, but when I wrote the story in, the article, I never told them what actually happened, I just said that this made

11:00 the locals very confused, the locals very confused. I didn't tell them that the confusion was between Monsignor Hayden of Saint Christopher's church it was then, it's now the cathedral. But it showed you the funny things that could happen to you and how, the embarrassment you could feel as a young girl of only twenty, come out of the church and be...

11:30 So these were the, probably a humorous thing that happened, but at the time you failed to see so much of the humour of it.

And I guess the fact that it was surprising to have women there, from everyone, from the Prime Minister down, didn't think you could really do the job?

Well the Government was kept in, kept quiet about this all through 1941, the government was kept quiet,

12:00 that was one of the conditions, that we had to be very low key. I think they was scared stiff that we were going to turn into a shambles you see. And so it was kept very low key from the naval point of view and from the Defence Department. But in other ways, I was going to take it out and show it to you actually, in other ways, commander, our commanding officer was intensely proud

12:30 of us, he was intensely proud of us. And I can remember on one occasion, it must have been, it must have been late 1941 or early '42, it was when we had our gold buttons. When we first joined the navy we had six gold buttons, was part of our uniform but when 1942 came, I don't know whether it was because of camouflage, they put it over that it was camouflage, but I think it was a little bit of indignation from the,

13:00 the male part of the navy that here were these WRANS wearing gold buttons that they weren't entitled to wear until they became a petty officer you see. So in the, mid way through 1942 our buttons were changed to black, they became black buttons. But I can remember on this occasion the CO was so proud of our transmitting ability, that

13:30 in those days in, particularly in 1942 and 1941, while we were in there, in order to reach the ships we used what was called 'the intercept', 'intercept way'. In other words you transmitted a signal to different land stations around, beam up to Darwin, Perth and New Zealand and Singapore, and the ships in those areas would pick up the signals, you

14:00 see. Cause the signals would be re-transmitted back to us, and then at another time of the day we'd go through the whole rigmarole again you see . And I can remember this occasion we had quite a few dignitaries visited the station, might have had a vice admiral, captain, commanders, and they all came into the communications office and I happened to be transmitting on the

14:30 intercept, you see. Commander McLoughlin was so proud that he put the tape machine on and the tape machine recorded all your signals you see, that I was sending out. And he was so proud to be able to show these brass, high brass, how perfect this Morse is, you know, the dots and the dashes were

15:00 perfect in their, the way they were sent. And so when it was all over, I still can't remember if it was the CO but I think it was my petty officer of the watch [rostered time on duty], he tore off that tape and I have it now, still have kept that tape, in all those years, that signal that I sent, and I've got it in my little box with my medals,

15:30 and I'm going to pass it on to my grandson.

He was obviously enormously proud of you and the other girls...

Very proud, very proud.

but was there sexism in regard to the other officers, towards you ladies that'd joined?

Well we didn't have, no, no the, no, we had a very proud reputation everywhere. That's why when I did go down

16:00 to Flinders to the signal station there, I met quite a lot of sea-going men coming through there, and what were petty officers, chief petty officers and warrant officers. And I don't know if you have ever heard of it or aware of it but the navy is run a lot on its non-commissioned officers, its non-commissioned officers.

16:30 Just the same as a lot in the army, how sergeants are so important in the army. So these warrant officers

and chief petty officers and petty officers were starting to get a little bit annoyed because up at Harman, this was, by this time, this was the end of 1943, they were getting rather

17:00 astounded that some of the WRANS that were left at Harman had been made petty officers and one had been made a chief petty officer. And they maintained, they started to get annoyed at that, because they maintained they should have done exams set for them by the signal school at Flinders.

17:30 They therefore enticed me into, “Will you be our guinea pig?” more or less and “Will you do your exams?” So I did three exams there between November and May 1945, I did three exams. And this was mainly because, proud as they were, the men of what the work the

18:00 WRANS did, they still felt this little bit of regret that these young women up there at Harman, good and all as they were, were being given promotions that were being denied to male, male personnel because they weren’t, didn’t have the opportunity to do the exams at

18:30 the signal school, which was set by the signal school. So that’s how I came to do, and so when I returned to Harman, there was a little bit of, things weren’t, a little bit uneasy when I arrived back there because the, because naval headquarters or it’s from signal, from down at

19:00 Flinders had told them up at Harman that they had to do exams. And when Harman said, “Oh well we’ll set the exams, we’ll do it, they’ll do it,” Flinders said, “No, all you will do is transmitting and receiving, we will set the other exam.” And the exam’s where you had to learn all about the

19:30 conditions of naval procedure, all naval communications procedure, quite a big book it was, learn to read all these things. You had to learn how to code and de-code a signal and Flinders said, “We set the exams, you don’t do it.” So it caused a little bit of antipathy when I arrived back there, they sort of more or less regarded me as the...

20:00 I had been unwittingly, you know, it was very unwittingly that I did these exams, I studied very hard to do them, and I was just unwittingly used. But however I settled back in and had quite a happy year there.

So just at the first time that you’re at Harman, when you and the girls had arrived, was there any form of chauvinism amongst just the, even the non-commissioned

20:30 **officers?**

No, not amongst the non-commissioned officers, and we didn’t, the CO at that time when we first arrived was the only commissioned officer there, he was the only one. A little bit later on, particularly by 1942 we got a first lieutenant, he was just a lieutenant, he became what we called our first lieutenant. And that’s all we had for a long, long

21:00 long time. It was only when I returned in 1944 that I found we had a couple of warrant officers. And of course by that time they had made a couple, few WRAN officers, a few of them had become WRAN officers and a couple of them were stationed at Harman. I personally was very pleased that I never got the opportunity to do an officer’s course, maybe it was because I

21:30 was so young, I don’t know. But even I think if I had of been offered it, I would’ve refused because I didn’t want to leave communications, I wanted to where I knew I was in the conflict. I didn’t want to be doing administrative work.

In regards to pay, how much were you being paid compared to when you were working at Universal?

I can’t remember what we got before,

22:00 before when we first, when I was just a leading telegraphist. All I can remember is that when I became a petty officer I got five pound a week.

And that was a big jump up was it?

A big jump up, yes.

Do you know what you were getting at Universal?

I think it was five pound a week, couldn’t be five pound a month, could it? Could have been five pound a month, I don’t know. But I know that that’s the most we got, we never got

22:30 very, very much, we got very poor pay. But there was nothing much to spend money on, see, you had hardly anything to spend money on, just was to go to a movie perhaps. We had a service hut in Canberra, the Manuka Service Hut, that was a great voluntary organisation at Harman. That’s where we all met, we used to go there with, we’d

23:00 have singsongs and dances and we could always get a, some fried, a bit of a dinner would consist of fried sausages and an egg, it was a bit of a change from naval food. But oh we used to met, I met quite a few young cadets there too, Duntroon cadets. I was very

23:30 very, quite friendly, one young man I can always remember after the Sydney… we finally, when it was announced that the Sydney was lost, I was very saddened to find that his young brother had been a sub lieutenant on it, he was training to be a lieutenant you see. But they were great fun those young cadets from the, course they were all older than me, you know, I

24:00 was still only twenty, most of them were twenty, by the time they were graduated they were twenty-two. I was there actually end of 1941 just before war broke out with the Japanese, I was invited by one of the cadets to go to their graduation ceremony, it was the end of November and I had to get permission from

24:30 the CO. And then he, the cadet kindly, from the Duntroon, the invitation was then given to my two colleagues that I worked with, three WRANS were on watch together you see, so the three of us were then asked. We were also given permission by the CO that we could wear a civilian frock to that, my mother made me a beautiful frock for that night.

25:00 And I remember it was the most beautiful event, it was the last time the cadets, because we weren't at war with Japan, it was the last time the cadets wore full ceremonial uniform for their graduation ball and it was a beautiful evening. It was so sad to realise that in a matter of possibly a week or two weeks we would be at

25:30 war with Japan. I don't know if any of the, I know one survived that I knew, the one that I told you, his brother was lost in the, was a sub lieutenant and the lieutenant in the, on the Sydney. He survived the war, I know that because he married a, he married a WRAN as a matter of fact. But the others too, that I knew, that had invited me to the graduation

26:00 were both New Zealanders, were New, I knew three New Zealanders, because the New Zealanders used to come to Duntroon to do their training then. And so I never know what happened to any of those, I don't know whether they were sent to, whether they were sent to the middle east to be part of the troops there or whether they, they could've even been sent up to join the 8th Division at that time.

Can

26:30 **you share with me what happened on the graduation night? You were picked up, just talk me through what happened in the night.**

Well we were driven over there by car, we danced and enjoyed ourselves, it was wonderful, and I think this young, the young cadet that had sent me the invitation, he was the senior cadet of the graduating class. I don't know whether he

27:00 received some kind of a something-or-other on the graduation, I'm not sure. But it just was a wonderful evening, so little knowing that we were so close to war with Japan, it was such a, I'm pretty certain though that the authorities knew that we were very, very close to war. Because it has been subsequently...

27:30 the ten WRANS that joined us in June, there were fourteen of us in April, two of them had very gallantly offered to be, to cook for us, they were operators but they had gallantly offered to cook for us, so there were only twelve operating at the communication office. In June, ten more WRAN were enlisted

28:00 but these WRANS were put into what we were called at the time, "special services," it was kept very hush, hush even though we worked and lived amongst them, they wouldn't talk about their work, and we didn't do anything. And it took forty years before it has all out in the open, completely, what they did do, we had a pretty, we knew what they were doing but we didn't ever discuss with them what they were

28:30 doing, they kept their thing. But in that book that's been written recently, everything has come out. These girls were then trained in Japanese Morse because Japanese didn't do international Morse, they had their own Morse, so these girls were specially trained in Japanese Morse and they were put to doing interception. And

29:00 they, together with others, the ones that joined later on, they were very much, did a great deal towards the Battle of the Coral Sea, the information that they found out about it, and the Battle of Midway, even the Kokoda Trail, knowing what the Japanese were sending troops there, was all done through espionage.

29:30 And then it turns out that in 1940 the Americans had broken the Japanese code, so here it was 1940 the Americans were already getting very suspicious of what Japan was going to do. So 1940, and the British navy, [who] were already at Harman,

30:00 had this, we used to call it there the 'wire work', we call it wire work', and they were already, the sailors were already intercepting Japanese signals. These WRANS, eight of them, were at Harman, eight were at Harman and two were down in, at headquarters in Melbourne.

And these girls arrived before Pearl Harbour?

30:30 Oh yes they, in June 1941 so they were the beginnings of a very, very powerful interception. And then finally the Americans arrived en masse and they took over a place called Moorabbin down in Victoria as a headquarters. And we subsequently oh, I think we finally ever had, probably about, they had about

31:00 twenty-four WRANS down there eventually, working with the Americans, and they had a commander in charge of them. But the work they did was absolutely amazing what they did, the intelligence they found out, what the Japanese were doing, that's why we were prepared for them at the Coral Sea Battle, why we were prepared for them at Midway. And even in the amount of troops that they were sending to

31:30 New Guinea prior to the Kokoda Trail, it has all come out now since it's been revealed after those many, many years, facts have been revealed.

You sort of mentioned or inferred that you knew what the girls were doing, but didn't know what they were doing. How much did you know of their work at the time?

Well we knew that they were doing, they wouldn't talk, they wouldn't do, all we knew that they were

32:00 intercepting Japanese signals and they had to learn Japanese Morse. But we never discussed with them what they were doing or what they weren't doing. We actually didn't even discuss ourselves in our own communications, we'd hand over our watch to the other watch that would come on, we'd come off duty, we wouldn't even... it was only when the Sydney was lost that there was great drama in the whole of the,

32:30 whole of the station, a lot of drama went on at the loss of the Sydney.

What securities were there at Harman so that information they were gathering or even you were broadcasting wouldn't get out to the enemy's hands?

Well nobody talked for one thing. That was something that was really quite astounding, nobody ever talked about their,

33:00 their work, what they were doing. Even when I came home to my family, once a month I came home, they never discussed the war with me, we didn't discuss, "What were you doing Daphne?" It was just sort of, something we just didn't discuss. And the wire girls particularly were, we communicators used to think that they were,

33:30 you know, they kept their mouth shut so much that it almost became a bit of a humour to us. They could be so, you know, consider them so wrapped up in this intelligence work they were doing you know. So but we didn't bother, we didn't really, that's another odd thing too is we, even socially, we didn't seem to mix much, we didn't seem

34:00 to even socially mix much. Although no, we did, one of my best friends was in the wire work, much older than me, several years older than me, she almost treated me like a little sister. But no, yes we did socialise to some degree and our, but to a great extent the communicators socialised amongst themselves and the wire people socialised amongst

34:30 themselves too. Sometimes their watches were a little bit different to us too and they kept different watches to what we kept you see. Ours were mostly six hours on, six hours off, four hours on, four hours off, for forty-eight hours, going, doing that.

So you go six, four, oh, okay.

Yeah, except the, the navy, this was another thing, getting

35:00 used to naval lingo you might call it, wasn't very easy for a while. If you wanted to leave the "ship" you had to catch a "liberty boat." If you wanted to get out, go out, you had to go "ashore." If you wanted to come back in, you came "aboard" the ship. So this became a little bit strange getting,

35:30 getting used to this too but, what was I leading up to, what was the question you asked me about then?

Oh it was just six hours on, four hours on.

Oh that's right, on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, instead of going on at, coming off at four o'clock, you'd come off at four o'clock, instead of going back on again at eight p.m., four hours off,

36:00 we had what they call the Brit, the navy, call the 'dog watches'. I've never ever found out why they call them the dog watch. So in other words you came off at four o'clock, you went back on again at six o'clock, they split those four hours into two, two-hour watches you see, on a Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. And this is what happened when the Sydney was lost, we'd been doing two

36:30 dog watches, then a first watch eight o'clock at night and a two a.m. watch, and that's what happened. I never knew what, why they called them dog watches, one thing I never found out in the navy why they call them dog watches, they do it right throughout the navy, even onboard ship and that, they do it.

Before we find out more about the Sydney and the situation there, let me ask or enquire, part of the Archive is interested in social history and what happens.

37:00 **Young men and going out on dates, these days there's so much sex education and kids are taught so much, what was said to you back then in respect to relationships?**

I must admit to you when I arrived there at nineteen, what I knew about sex would've fitted into one

little paragraph. So I came from

37:30 a family where they just didn't talk about those things and when I arrived up there I thought, I've got to know more about what goes on in life. So in the Women's Weekly I saw this advertisement for a book by a minister [of religion], written, so I said, I've gotta learn a lot about more, more about life. So I sent for that book and

38:00 it was very illuminating for me, I can tell you. But no, I must tell you that the activities of the sailors and the WRANS particularly, I don't know what the sailors did when they were off duty, they had girlfriends elsewhere or what have you, but as far as any activity between us and the sailors,

38:30 it was not on. I don't, I can't speak for all the, everybody else, but I know that for myself right throughout my four and a half years of meeting people from all services, I, my behaviour was always very, I behaved

39:00 as I had been taught to behave and I will tell you one thing, I was respected for that. No-one would ever take any advantage of you if they knew just how far they, their romantic, little romance with you would go. That's what I found out in that era which I'm afraid, it's unfortunate, it doesn't happen today. They

39:30 respected the young woman's, her attitude, if they knew they couldn't step a foot further than they could, they didn't, they respected it and accepted that. And they continued honest friends, in a romantic way or phtt, just, your association just was dropped. So a lot depended upon

40:00 the young woman's attitude.

Given that that was sort of the response of young men towards you at the time, what about the other girls, were they much the same as you or were there differing circumstances?

Well I don't know that, as far as I know, we never ever had any pregnancies up there so I don't think anything untowards ever happened in that way. So

40:30 but I can't speak, I can only speak for the very close friends that I knew of myself. My roommate, my first roommate Jess Prain, she had been brought up quite strictly as a, I don't know if she was an Anglican or a Presbyterian, just didn't worry me. We were wonderful mates in our, sharing our room, she was on a

41:00 completely opposite watch to me. Matter of fact, I wrote in the, in one of the books there that Lawrence has just edited, that I wrote, when she died, I wrote in an obituary to her, the fact that what wonderful mates we were, even though we were on completely opposite watches. We respected each other, she was a very tidy person,

41:30 neat, tidy, I was the same in our room, we'd even put a hot water bottle in our beds, you know, for the other one that was coming off duty at two a.m. And in no way did religion ever come into our lives. And she, I know that in her behaviour she acted with great decorum.

We're just gonna stop there.

Tape 5

00:38 **Just for the Archive, the Archive's really interested in details and little details about your conditions and where you worked and who you worked with. Can you explain the set up at HMAS Harman, where you lived and where you worked and how that was all set up?**

Well we shared cottages to start with, the cottages

01:00 we had, had two bedrooms, a lounge room, a kitchen, which we naturally didn't need to use, a laundry and a bathroom. So we, at that – to start off with – there were two in the front bedroom, and two in the second bedroom. The lounge room we were allowed to put a fire on occasionally and sit in there and enjoy ourselves. One room,

01:30 one cottage was turned into a mess, what we called our mess, and that's where they did our cooking for us, we went to the mess there. The sailors had their own mess of course, they had a separate mess, we didn't socialise with the sailors at all in anyway. And so then, this was a funny thing that happened.

02:00 Apparently in war, in sailors at sea, when they have to change watch, the old story was that you pull the sailor's, came and pulled his foot, you see, time for him to go on watch. It was a big, our commanding officer then, "How are these WRANS going to be, know when to go on watch?" So we all had to be supplied with alarm clocks, so we had these alarm

02:30 clocks of course in our room that would tell us when to go on watch and when to go on watch. So if we were due to go on to, our watches were made up of, normally, if you forget about the dog watches, you'd go on duty say on Monday, one watch would go on, say, A Watch would go on at twelve o'clock and they would work until four o'clock. Then B Watch would take over at four o'clock

03:00 and work till eight p.m. Then at eight p.m., A Watch would come back on and work from eight p.m. to two a.m. Then at two a.m. B Watch, which I belonged to, would come on at two a.m. and work till eight a.m. Then at eight a.m., since you'd be doing a forty-eight hours watch this time, that eight a.m. the, it would proceed on until you finished up at

03:30 eight o'clock in the morning on Tuesday morning, you'd finish up. Then you would be off for forty-eight hours you see, you'd be off for forty-eight hours. No, that, no you wouldn't I'm sorry, you'd be off for twenty-four hours. You only did forty-eight watches from Saturday to Monday and from Monday to Wednesday, they were the only two forty-eight hour watches that you did. The other watches were twenty-four hours, but they still

04:00 consisted of six hours on, four hours off, four hours on...

How did you adapt to those new working conditions?

It was very hard, very hard, particularly our first winter. It wasn't so bad cause we more or less starting there in April we went into, we were in autumn and winter is very vicious in Canberra, very vicious. So as you can imagine getting up at, struggling out of bed at one thirty in the morning

04:30 and dressing yourself and getting up on watch was a bit hard to do, and then trying to stay awake. Particularly, it wasn't so much when you were working, or if you were working one of the, working on, either on the intercept or working on, working with one of the land stations somewhere. You could be working with Darwin or New Zealand or,

05:00 we even worked with Batavia [Jakarta today] and Singapore, that was all right, but you always had a two hour watch on what we called "ship shore," we took it in turns, we never spent more than two hours on ship shore, you take it in turns to go onto ship shore. And that was where you listen in to a special frequency, where, if the ships were being attacked, they would come up if they hadn't lost their,

05:30 their wireless apparatus, they would send an emergency signal. All you would hear when you're searching on this frequency, you'd hear, daa, daa, daa... daa, daa, daa... which was 'O', 'O' for emergency you see, and you'd hear, immediately hear this three, daa, daa, daa... daa, daa, daa... you'd call out to your petty officer, "Please give me a transmitter, I want to answer this signal."

06:00 You'd then answer the signal, whatever it was, you'd reply, and all you were interested in getting, was their position, they'd give you their position, because, particularly once 1942 came, I think the Germans were quite good at it too actually, but we didn't find it so bad in 1941. But immediately 1942 came, as soon as the ship came up, the Japanese would jam you, try to jam you, you

06:30 see. But all you needed to get was the position where the ship was and if possible they would try to send planes out or if there were ships in the vicinity, would try to rescue them. But people didn't realise, it wasn't until I learned later on when I saw the statistics, the number of ships we lost on the east coast of Australia. There must've been a tremendous amount

07:00 of Japanese subs along the coast.

Why was that job on ship to shore more difficult, or the one you didn't like so much?

Oh it wasn't that you didn't like it but it was very hard to stay awake. You'd be sitting there poised with your pencil in your hand and your pad in front of you, and searching, you know, kept on your frequency, and suddenly your pen'd drop, your pencil'd drop.

07:30 And suddenly the pencil dropping would make you realise, and four o'clock in the morning was about the worst you know, three and four o'clock in the morning was the worst time, five o'clock in the morning.

What were the penalties for falling asleep at your post?

Well nobody ever fell asleep but it was a pretty high penalty. That is why when the Sydney was lost, that it caused so much assertions,

08:00 assertions were made and everything like that, and that is why I got so angry about, and why I was, gave my testimony in my submission.

Well we'll come to the Sydney in just a moment, but while we're on the subject of discipline, what was your introduction to naval discipline and how did that extend to the WRANS?

Oh I think the hardest part was to know that we were only allowed to go "ashore" when we were definitely off duty, we couldn't ever

08:30 go ashore during that forty-eight hours we were working. If there was something special on somewhere we were badly disciplined, I'm afraid once or twice I might've broken the rules and gone ashore but it very rarely happened. And during 1941 they weren't as rigid about control, I mean we,

09:00 we weren't at war, but once we were at war with Japan everything was very rigid. As a matter of fact we had to build war trenches at Harman eventually. And even the Japanese had, which I only learned by

reading books myself, I'd never heard about it myself at the time, but I believe that the Japanese had claimed they were going

09:30 to bomb HMAS Belconnen which is what we were known as, Belconnen. But all, we also, we used to laugh about that Tokyo Rose, sometimes the Americans, somebody used to, when we were on watch and they'd put on to the Japanese and listen to Tokyo Rose. We regarded it with great humour and there, one of the most humorous things we ever heard was that

10:00 HMAS Harman had been torpedoed. It was so ridiculous wasn't it...

Well it's a very good point,

the propaganda that they went on with

it's a good point we should sort out for people watching, listening to the Archive in the future who might be a bit confused. Harman is nowhere near the sea, it's a land locked naval base, but, and yet there was this terminology about talking about it as a ship. Where did the ship extend to when you say you were going ashore, where, can you just explain for the archive a bit more about what you meant by that?

10:30 Well when we first arrived there it was HMA Naval WT Station, when we arrived there in '41. But in 1942 it was commissioned as a ship and it became HMAS Harman, His Majesty's Australian Ship Harman, so therefore it became officially a ship, and that's the way it was.

What are the reasons

11:00 **for that, do you think, why was the...?**

Well it was to give it the prominence that it was due, it was to give it the prominence that it was due. Even though, as I put in my, that article I wrote, particularly when June took that last signal from General Wainwright, and Corregidor [US defeat in the Philippines].

11:30 The Americans had hung out for three months, absolutely, Japanese were quite unaware that the Americans were going to hold on that long, put the Amer… put the Japanese agenda quite a bit back. In fact, I think I have read in subsequent times that the Japanese knew that if the war [was] prolonged that they would lose it.

12:00 They knew that if it was too prolonged and the Americans were given time to recover, they [Japan] would eventually, they would lose the war. So the Japan, contrary to what the Japanese expected, the Americans hung on at Corregidor for three months, that was until March. And when June took this last signal, she was brought in and asked to sit on this frequency,

12:30 the Americans were trying to get the signal, but she had acute hearing, she was, she had a wonderful sense of hearing, maybe it was because she was a flautist, she trained a lot in music, but she had the keenest ear. And she was brought on, back on duty and she picked up this signal, this last signal, very quick signal from General Wainwright to be passed on to General MacArthur, that they could no longer hang on,

13:00 that the siege was, they had no more ammunition, food or anything like that, they were forced to surrender. It was rather a sad, sad signal. And as I said there, it made us feel that even though we were hundreds of miles away from what was happening, nevertheless we were in the midst of the conflict. And it gave you

13:30 a feeling of being part of the whole, how important HMAS Harman was to the way, the conduct of the war was, particularly at sea, at sea.

We'll come back to that point a bit later. Just one point about your article that you keep mentioning, it'll be a bit confusing for people in the future to refer to that because they may not have read it, so if you want to give us some more background about that a bit later, we'd love to hear it,

14:00 **about what you're talking about when you mention that. Just before we get onto what happened in 1941 with your job, can you explain a bit about the physical set up, the different jobs you did, you mentioned there were a couple of different jobs, your interceptions, ship to shore. Where were these housed and what were the rooms you were in, can you just describe them?**

It was one big communications room, one big communications room, then you had another room where the coders were and the teleprinter operators. But

14:30 the petty officer of the watch sat in the middle of the room and he could watch what, everything was going on. He was the one who, when the signals came up from Victoria, from headquarters, from naval headquarters, he was the one who would code the signals out in the manner to which, he'd know if he was told what ships they had to go to,

15:00 he would be able to put in the preface of the signal, what ship that signal is meant for. So that the people at sea, when they're taking the signal would be able to immediately recognise that this signal is

meant for you, HMAS so-and-so, or HMAS so-and-so or whatever, what ship it was meant for.

And what were the other WRANS doing in that room and what equipment were they using?

Well they'd be,

15:30 we used to be continually on Whitehall [street of British government], we'd be communicating with Whitehall all the time, taking message from Whitehall, in England, they'd be people on that. Everybody would be on a set, nobody would be free to wander around, you never had anybody free, we never had enough operators to be free.

To someone watching this today or in the future, who's never seen this wireless equipment, could you describe what it looked like and how you used it?

16:00 Well it was just a large receiver, had your transmitter and you, you're, we were some miles away from the transmitting station. We had a landline going between us and Belconnen, which is now a suburb of Canberra, but that is where the big, huge antennas were, where they did the

16:30 transmitting from, but from us to them it was a landline going between us. So the big antennas and everything like that were several miles away from us. So all we were concerned with was our reception, receiver, frequencies we were on, we knew what frequencies we had to get on to, we knew we had,

17:00 we used to do Greenwich Mean Time, so that all our times were put down at GMT time. As soon as you took, we took our signals by hand, when a signal came in, we'd write all our signals by hand, then when the Americans arrived they had special typewriters which, when you hit the typewriter it, you'd get a double figure, you see, capital figure.

17:30 So when the Americans arrived they very kindly said, "Any of you who can type, you can use our typewriters." Well this was a great, great help when you could, for us that could type. And to show you the determination of what they could be like, June McLeod, the one I told you had been training to be a harpist. I think as a matter of fact her father was the managing director of the Bulletin [magazine] at the time,

18:00 he died very suddenly, the end of 1942, which was very tragic for her. But she was such a determined little lass that she taught herself to type, she couldn't type, but she taught herself to type. So it showed that a determination that could be in people that wanted to do it. I know at least several others of our,

18:30 of our WRANS, much older than we... matter of fact there were three friends joined the navy together, they'd been in the Signalling Corps together, they were very friends, they were quite, like, socially well placed I think in Sydney. And we called them, because they were such close friends, we called them the Three Graces. It was the only,

19:00 only little thing we had but these three friends were called the Three Graces. Well they couldn't type but I know they never ever tried, they never tried. So this was, but the Americans were so good, they'd share anything they could with us, you know, anything at all. The funny part was they were very, very devoted to their coffee making and

19:30 in those days they had those glass coffee makers, you know, the way they were. And it always amazed me that in the midst of war that if they broke their coffee maker, within hours they'd have a new coffee maker. Here we were in the midst of war, the Americans lost their coffee maker, they'd have one replaced immediately. Oh there's

20:00 no doubt about them, but a lot of them became tea drinkers, they became great confirmed tea drinkers by the end of the war.

Before the Americans entered, the original group of girls you were with, there were fourteen of you originally, were there any other personalities that stand out in your mind from that group that, you mentioned June a couple of times, anyone else that you'd like to tell us about?

Well I suppose, no, just the

20:30 the three friends that I worked with, were important to me. We're off duty, we'd always go, the three friends that we're off duty with and also our watch. See A and B Watch would, we'd work together, we'd relieve one another, then we'd go off

21:00 duty for forty-eight hours or twenty-four hours and then C and D Watch would come on, they'd take over. So in other words we never socialised in any with C and D Watch, cause they were always on duty, we were off duty and vice versa. So you found that you spent a great deal of your time with the girls that you were off duty with. In my case it was the three on,

21:30 that I worked with, we had a very good relationship with each other. We played tennis with each other and also played with the sailors, they joined us in playing tennis. We'd go, I had never ridden a bike in my life, I arrived up there, I was a good horseback rider but I'd never ridden a bike in my life. Suddenly we arrive at Harman and we've got no means of transport. The little bus that went between Canberra and Queanbeyan

22:00 hardly ever went and then when it did, finally ever did, it had a gas thing on it, so we had no transportation. So those girls that did have bikes, very soon got their bikes sent up to Harman, so I said, “Oh well I’ve got to learn to ride a bike somehow.” So there’s a few hilarious experiences while I tried to learn to ride a bike. Eventually I did ride a bike and I,

22:30 my family got me a second-hand bike here, had it sent up to Canberra, and this was our, became our main means of transport. So we three girls, we’d even join the boys too, we’d go to, down to the Murrumbidgee River, ride our bikes down to the Murrumbidgee River and to the, and swim there, we’d drive, ride our bikes all over the place.

23:00 Many a time I’d ride my bike over and watch the young cadets playing cricket over on the, at Duntroon. We’d, we had met some friends in Canberra that invited us to their home, so the transport by bike became a very important part of our lives there.

I imagine

23:30 **you also were sort of family in a way, sense of support for each other?**

Yes, yes, we were very supportive of each other in any way that we can. I can even remember that we even had a little, eventually got a little bank there, you know, we could put our money into this, on the station. And I can often remember that I was, just said to my family recently, they’d always,

24:00 if girls were a little bit short of money they’d say, “Oh go and see Daph Wright, she’ll lend you ten shillings.” So I had a bit of reputation for saving my money. But this is the way we were with quite, you know, without any hesitation, if anybody wanted ten shillings or bit of money, well you pass it over.

What other problems or issues came up that the girls might have needed a bit of support for, away from home?

Well

24:30 I think the important thing was that if you had the kind of disposition that it was friendly, you did find that you, and of course we got home once a month, every month we got home. We’d leave Harman at Friday afternoon, our friends would double watch for us in order for... and we’d do the same, everybody’d do the same for one another. We’d leave Harman

25:00 at, on Friday afternoon, we get home to Sydney about seven o’clock Friday night and we’d have all Saturday, all Sunday home in Sydney and we’d go back to Canberra on the eight thirty train on Monday morning. So this was a great relief to us, to get home once a month, it was a great, great relief to us. It helped a lot in,

25:30 in keeping us, keeping us happy and also I can always remember that nothing used to make me happier than to go across the bridge in the train and look out on Sydney Harbour, I’m a great lover of Sydney. Sydney and its harbour, it was a great thrill to come back to it.

How homesick were you and the other girls at

26:00 **first?**

No, I didn’t, because we could keep in contact with home and because we were home every week, every month, you, I think that it was all a new experience to us, it was a new and challenging experience in our life, and I think that’s the way we regarded it. Just the same as the same thing happened to all the men who joined up in the services, it was a

26:30 new and challenging part of their lives, and you’d willingly gone into it, you’d been a volunteer, you weren’t forced into it, so that’s the way you accepted things.

You talked a bit before about how you were very much involved in the war effort, you gave an example of there at Corregidor. What was the first moment for you that you realised that, the responsibility

27:00 **of your position and that lives essentially were at risk, the job you were doing, and how central to the war effort you were?**

Well it’s, I suppose it took a while for us to realise the whole procedure of naval procedure. We arrived there quite unaware of what, excuse me, of what naval procedure was.

27:30 That ships at sea were absolutely dependent upon those signals in wartime and a ship never ever broke WT silence unless they were in a desperate situation, so this was all new to us, it took us a while to learn the facts. And I can remember at one stage when I

28:00 learned that ships, if they were attacked, one of the first duties of the captain was to dispose of his coding signals and everything like that. And different other things that, we used to follow on a huge map we had in our communications office, things that were happening over in England, particularly when British ships were being,

28:30 when they were, I think they were chasing the Graf, not the Graf Spee it was another, the Graf Spee was

before we joined up. But there was a big, big battleship [Bismarck] in the Atlantic that the British were trying to get and it ended up in Trondheim, I think you've seen films on it, in it, they've made films of it. How the ship ended up in Trondheim

29:00 up in Norway, right in the top of Norway. Well whenever there was anything going on and we were getting it from Whitehall, we would, my, our commanding officer would put pins in the thing, up there, so that you knew what was going on up in the Atlantic. And even when, you know, the, when we were, ships were fighting in the Mediterranean during the,

29:30 during the Greece and Crete [campaigns] , we always kept a, he'd keep putting pins in where the ships were. So in that way we were kept aware of what was happening.

What did you know about the content of the coded signals you were sending?

We never knew anything that was, we never knew anything that, everything was in code and cipher. And

30:00 commissioned officers had to decipher ciphers, but coders could do codes. We had a coder on watch, always on the watch, there was a coder on watch, coder. Apart from the, three, three, there'd probably be about six operators working

30:30 a watch, every watch, six wireless operators would be working a watch, petty officer in charge of the watch. The chief petty officer would be, have daylight hours, he wouldn't be there in the night hours, he might be there `till eight o'clock at night or something like that. But he was the chief petty officer and he would be the next one under Commander McLoughlin which was our commanding officer. And then in the outer end of the

31:00 communications room, you had a coder and a teleprinter operator, the teleprinter was in direct contact with naval headquarters in Melbourne. That's our...

Can you give us an example of the codes that you used, I mean, you mentioned there were prefixes for ships, did they always follow the same sequences of letters or numbers, or what were you using?

Well sometimes the

31:30 codes would be in letters, four letters, a-b-c-d, something like that, some letters would be five figures, just depended on what the code was. But we were quite unaware of what anything was, all we knew was that there were special little code words for saying, we'd hear this code for, three letter code word to say, from

32:00 Darwin we'd have, which meant, 'air raid in progress,' and Darwin would immediately go off the air. That happened many, many times, more times than people ever knew, that Darwin was being bombed as much as it was, we were well aware of how often Darwin was being bombed. And of course they were trying to take Coonawarra, which was the name of the wireless station at,

32:30 at Darwin, but the Japanese never did hit the station, the wireless station, they never ever hit it. But they had to go off the air when an air raid was in progress. So there'd be special little signals sent to determine, we'd know as soon as we got a-b-c-d or whatever it was, that air raid is in progress. Or we might get a signal to say, some

33:00 unfortunate ones, which thankfully it never happened to any WRANS, "Your Morse is bad." "Your Morse is bad." Then another one, "Your Morse is good," and things like that, that just were in, just were, we knew automatically, but as far as the signals were concerned, we never knew what they were. Some

33:30 times they might have had a, I think they might have had a, shown that, there might have been a signal to say that this is an emergency signal or something like that. Particularly when we were trying to get, trying to reach the Sydney.

Well maybe you could take us through what happened when the Sydney was lost, you hadn't been working at Harman for that long, it was November and you'd only been there a few months?

No, what, April, may, June, July... seven months.

Seven months, so it wasn't,

34:00 **it was the first time anything like this had happened I'm sure or you...?**

Yes that was, Sydney was the first big loss we had.

And what happened on that night or couple of days?

Well it was very strange, what happened later on was, unfortunately when they did make an, start to make an inquiry was that it happened nineteen days before we were at war with Japan. We'd just

34:30 got a new Prime Minister, Curtin had not been long as Prime Minister. What happened though on that occasion as far as I can remember now when I look back at, when I look back on the period, but when I was asked to give testimony, the accusations that would've been made, had been made more or less

35:00 from oral point of view, because no logs were left, nothing was left to show what happened on that night. But I went on duty at six o'clock Queanbeyan time, Canberra time, it was six p.m. I went on duty as a member of B Watch. We had a wonderful

35:30 petty officer of the watch, the calmest, quietest, most responsible man you can imagine, probably only about forty-eight he would have been, and we went on watch at six o'clock. That means it would have been three o'clock over in West Australia off the West Australian coast, three o'clock. Okay, we went on at six and we came off at eight, so that meant, that would

36:00 have been five o'clock over on the West Australian coast. We changed watches with A and B, B Watch, my watch went off and A Watch went on at eight p.m., that would've been around about five o'clock. According to later on testimony, according to the German survivors the

36:30 Kormoran, the raider Kormoran and Sydney sighted each other at approximately about four o'clock. So that means it could have been when we were changing watch, you see. However, eight o'clock the B, A Watch went on under Petty Officer Hamilton and it proceeded quite

37:00 normally as far as we know, nothing happened. I can't remember at that time but I can, I do know that if anything had happened, it would have been logged, everything would've been logged, they were responsible people. So we came on at two a.m. and I can, one of the things that I was able to prove with David Kennedy, he was a journalist with The

37:30 Australian newspaper, and it had been through his article, or a couple of articles he wrote in the [Daily] Telegraph which I have out there, about the assertions that had been made that signals had come and the navy had covered up, made all kinds of terrible assertions. And I remember when I went on duty at two a.m. we were allowed to wear our

38:00 overalls, we were issued with blue overalls, and we were allowed, if we wanted to, to go on at two a.m. in overalls. Well naturally most of us preferred to do this because, instead of putting a collar and tie on and everything like that, you could wear overalls, so I remember I went on at two a.m. And I know now that my memories of the, of my testimony that

38:30 I gave, when I gave my testimony originally when they asked for me. I could only say at the period of when the Sydney was missing, I can remember coming on duty and being told by the CO, I must have been going on to ship shore because I could remember distinctly, I put in my submission, that it came through my petty officer of the watch. But I

39:00 can remember myself, the CO standing there and said to me, "Listen out for the signal from the Sydney ," there was all drama in the whole room. And as I told David Kennedy, I can distinctly remember I was in full dress uniform, full uniform, the sun was shining through the windows of the communication office. And I remembered,

39:30 and it proved out, I was able to prove when I found a 1941 calendar, and when I couldn't remember, that on the second of October I distinctly remembered because it was my birthday on the second of October 1941, I came off duty at four p.m., having done the afternoon watch, I came off duty at four p.m. feeling very unhappy with myself because I'd just turned twenty, I was

40:00 away from home, I'd always been, made [a] big [fuss of]. Walked down the station, walked into our mess and our cooks had cooked me a birthday cake and all the rest of my friends were around and we had a little celebration. That stuck in my memory, I never forgot it, the second of October I came off at four p.m. I was able to then work out, later on,

40:30 after I'd given my testimony, because I didn't know at that time, I didn't have the calendar, I hadn't awakened to these things. I was able to work out quite definitely every watch from the second of October to the nineteenth of November. And I was able to conclusively determine that we were on watch at two a.m. and from six, what watches were on duty, without

41:00 this, without having just oral determination, I was able to [say] that. And he wrote in a testimony, one of his submissions into the, he wrote a lot of submissions into the, he even went to Germany and spoke to a lot of the German survivors. But he put in a submission that Petty Off… that WRAN Wright had been able to conclusively determine

41:30 what were on. And the whole point was the Sydney was lost on the Wednesday the nineteenth of November, she was not due in Fremantle until Friday the twentieth, she was due in Fremantle. When a ship is, doesn't arrive on due time, they don't get terribly worried about it. So by Saturday the twenty-second they weren't very worried that they

42:00 hadn't heard...

Tape 6

00:45 **Daphne, thanks again. Where we left off before lunchtime was with the sinking of the Sydney. Now just coming back to understand the story, was HMAS Harman where you were working, was**

01:00 **that blamed for not hearing any signals?**

Yes, this person, I won't use his name, but he had been the CO's, what we call him, his writer, or a clerk, or he did the work for the commanding officer. He had nothing whatever to do with communications, I don't ever remember him ever being in the communications room. And

01:30 for quite a long time after the war he apparently made these assertions as to gossip and things that he'd heard, it was all orally relayed to him. Things that he'd maintained: that he'd come into the, into the wireless station and the CO was in a great flurry, in a hurry, and there was quite some drama around and

02:00 he said, "Not now," you know, "get away, I've got things…" And he had made these assertions to the Historical Society of Canberra who had asked him to give them, give a rendition about Harman. And he made these assertions, wrong assertions that, "Oh," he said, "I went in there and the chief petty officer had said, 'Oh they've just had a signal,

02:30 they're opening fire, they're going to shoot,'" or something or other. And anyway, something or other, oh, the something or other, quite amazing assertions, as if it was by radio, which was something we never used in the war, it was all by signals. And this was ridiculous, these assertions he made. And then he spoke to the, some of the, our colleagues, the sailors

03:00 that'd come off duty, supposedly on the morning of my watch when we'd come off at eight a.m. and they had said, "Oh, yes, a signal came through. The Sydney's lost." This was on the morning of the twentieth, the morning after the Sydney, nobody had known anything about this encounter really. But what they were, didn't realise was, this was happening days later,

03:30 when we had resumed, they didn't find out until Sunday night that there had been a conflict, when they picked up these German survivors, they found out there was a conflict. It took quite a while before navy office found out, when they were able to interrogate these prisoners and find out that, all right, there'd been an encounter with the Sydney. This was late Sunday night. By Monday morning

04:00 it'd got through to Harman, "Can't you get in touch with the Sydney? There's no, we've gotta get in touch with the Sydney." That's when they started all the drama of sending out signals on the intercept I told you, to Sydney, "Report back in Sydney, break WT silence, report back in," this was on Monday morning, the twenty-fourth. I came back from Sydney, came on

04:30 duty at four p.m. that day, and that is why I put in my first testimony that I came on duty, the CO… and I can remember, as I said, I told David Kennedy because he'd been arguing about this signal business and everything. I said to David Kennedy, "I remember distinctly coming on watch, I was in full uniform, even my brass buttons,

05:00 I still had them, the sun was shining at four o'clock through the windows of the wireless room because the sun was starting to get further down. The sun was shining, it was bright, the CO, I must've been going to plug in and take over from the ship shore because the CO stood right beside me and he said, "Listen out for signal from the Sydney, listen out for a signal

05:30 from the Sydney." And that is what I put in my testimony before I had found out what others had put their testimonies in, you see. Then I worked out that when I went on at four o'clock in full uniform, the CO came to me, this was Monday the twenty-fourth when they knew definitely the Sydney had been in a conflict with the Kormoran. We went on to the, exactly the same

06:00 watch as we went onto on Wednesday the nineteenth, went on at four o'clock, but that time I didn't have a dog watch, I came off at eight o'clock. We went back on at two a.m. and came off at eight a.m. and we happened to have two sailors on the watch with us. And they had said, when they went to breakfast, "Oh, I believe the Sydney's been lost, the Sydney's lost." In other words

06:30 he was think, he, when he got all this gossip about this happening, several days later, he's interpreting it that it happened on the twentieth, the day after the Sydney was really lost, when we didn't know anything about the Sydney, nobody knew that she'd been in a conflict, she hadn't sent any signals.

So what you're saying to me, if I understand correctly, is the Sydney was sunk on the Wednesday but you didn't

07:00 **really find out information until the Monday?**

They never found out till Sunday night,

The Sunday night.

when they picked up the German survivors.

These particular assertions that you talk about, when did they come out, years later or weeks

later?

Oh years later, years later. When he was asked to make a, the Historical Society asked him, because I think he lived in Canberra, this specific person, and they asked him

07:30 to make a, give them information about Harman for their Historical Society, and this is when he made these assertions. I hadn't heard about them but other couple of WRANS had heard about them, particularly that one I told you, Marion Stevens, who became a chief petty officer, she was most indignant. And at that time, they just put it off as rubbish, you know, oh just silly rubbish this fella's going on with.

08:00 And it wasn't until the Howard Government decided to make an inquiry because of all the pressure that'd been building up for years, about, from the historical societies, particularly in West Australia, the HMAS Sydney Historical Society, they even got onto the relatives of the six hundred and fifty men that lost their lives. And this'd been building up for years until finally, Keating

08:30 refused to have an inquiry, but when Mr Howard came to Government he decided, all right, we'll have an official parliamentary inquiry. They had all parliamentarians there on the Board and you have no idea, there were hundreds of those books come out, it must have cost thousands upon thousands of dollars. Because people were writing in submissions who'd only been

09:00 on board the ship prior to Captain Burnett taking over it, taking over the ship. Everybody that even had a whisper of knowing Captain Burnett, or didn't know anything about it, there were submissions coming in from everybody, trying to determine why was the Sydney lost, why did she get lost, and signals only became part of the thing.

09:30 **So just in respect to this fellow who spoke to the historical society, he was also the fellow that wrote the newspaper article was he?**

No, no, no, he didn't write anything, but it was when David Kennedy found out that there was a chance that there would be an inquiry, he wrote those two articles about the loss of the Sydney. Querying, always, always querying why

10:00 did a big cruiser like the Sydney get sunk by a raider, a German raider. They, and as the final inquiry said, "This is something we will never know, nobody will ever know why." There are no survivors from the Sydney, nothing at all to show it, and the Kormoran, that's another thing, that went

10:30 wrong too… They, they didn't realise that there was a raider in the Indian Ocean, they had a suspicion there was a raider in the Pacific, a German raider. Because, with their intelligence and following things, they had, they knew that a German supply ship had left Japan, had left Tokyo, and it come down the Pacific and was

11:00 in the Pacific, and they knew that if there's a German supply ship there are sure to be raiders around. But they assumed wrongly that the raider was in the Pacific. But what the raider, the Kormoran was doing, she was full of, what are those round things they use for... mines, mines. She'd been mining our ports, putting mines around our ports,

11:30 around Sydney, around Australia. And also, she had, underneath in the body of her ship, she had terrible lot of wireless operators who were doing a lot of interception. I think that at that time, there had even been accusations that a Japanese submarine had entered the fray, nineteen days before

12:00 Pearl Harbour. There had been accusations made that a German submarine had finally sunk Sydney. But after all the investigations that they made, they found that this was absolutely quite improbable, that any Japanese would have even put a ship, put a submarine into the Pacific or taken part in anything like that, at that very, very crucial stage of things, nineteen

12:30 days before the attack on Pearl Harbour. And then they found out, which is something they didn't know before that, the raiders, the German raiders had been given underwater torpedoes. And that is what he did, in the interim, in the business between Burnett and on the cruiser Sydney, he probably was a little bit over confident, over confident, because he was a big cruiser,

13:00 this was just to him, it was a merchant ship, he didn't even know what it was. There hadn't been, he really should have, he should have called us to get proper identification of this merchant ship because he wasn't able to identify himself properly. So at that time, I have read since, that at that time in 1941 there still was a lot of, not too much communication

13:30 between merchant ships as to identification codes and things like that. So Burnett may have been lulled into a position of being a little bit sure of himself, and Detmers, Captain Detmers on the Kormoran had just taken advantage of Sydney and phtt, put the torpedoes straight into him, and it probably hit

14:00 directly onto the bridge.

So what you're sharing with me is, from your perspective of where you were working, you and the organisation there didn't receive any signal from the Sydney that she was going down?

No signal whatever, nothing from the Sydney no, we never received anything from the Sydney. Under no

conditions, even the most mutilated signal that you'd receive, would always be put in your log, you'd always put it in your log, you'd always,

14:30 always call your petty officer of the watch immediately as soon as there's any garbled signal of any kind. I can't ever remember even getting a garbled signal, any signals that I ever got on ship shore were, always came through quite clearly and we're able to at least... There weren't many ships that, if they were torpedoed they'd, most important thing they'd lose

15:00 was their wireless apparatus and that's what would've happened to the Sydney. And that's what different, well observed people who wrote in their testimony to the parliamentary inquiry, they had said, that if, once the

15:30 signal apparatus was gone, they wouldn't even be able to set up anything at all. And as far as the, and then of course there was a barrage, Sydney did answer the, she wasn't completely put out of action, she might have lost her captain and the bridge and lost her wireless operators , but her guns were still able to be used. And she certainly fired into the Kormoran and the Kormoran

16:00 was absolutely shattered too, but they finally scuttled their ship, they finally scuttled their ship. And one of the things, there weren't many people on top of the ship, because nobody knows really what Detmers got up to, he could've even, there were, there was evidence even from some of the Germans that the Sydney was lowering a boat. We don't know what,

16:30 what the captain of the Kormoran, he might have intimated to Captain Burnett that he had sick people on board, that he'd been, that he wanted help, they were putting a ship down and they were taken in. Nobody knows what went on, there weren't very many people on board the, top of the Kormoran so most of them were underneath. And when they were

17:00 interrogated, I think there were about four ships got away, two of them landed on the west coast of Australia, the other two were picked up by two ships, two ships. And they didn't have any, no word until Sunday night. But one of the things that did go against this, Detmers was that he did have quite a number of wounded men, quite a number of them.

17:30 And it went against him that he put the wounded men, all the wounded men into the most sinkable ship, it was a, sort of a rubber ship. They all lost their lives. The only ones that survived, and there were about, over three hundred of them, were all fit and able men, none of them were wounded. What came against him was, it had been

18:00 accused, that he knew that these men might not survive and if they did survive, if they were under interrogation, if they were put under interrogation, under anaesthetic or anything like that, they might give the truth of what happened. Whereas all the rest of his crew being Germans and being under discipline, they gave the same story as their captain. They never deviated

18:30 ever, from the story that their captain gave.

So now again, just coming back to that time when you were working at HMAS Harman, there was no inquiry...?

No, no, nothing, no.

at that time?

It wasn't even announced that the Sydney [was lost] wasn't announced until about ten days later.

So only what you heard...?

We were the only ones that knew the Sydney was lost but we didn't talk about it, we didn't go outside and talk about the Sydney

19:00 was lost, or that we was calling the Sydney. It was over a week I think, it's written down how long it was before it was announced that the Sydney was lost.

And just from the navy point of view, there was no aspersions obviously placed upon...?

They did have an inquiry but it wasn't much of an inquiry, very poor inquiry, because ten days, nine days, nineteen days later we were at war with Japan, and it was very, very hard to set in motion

19:30 things like this when we were in such a desperate state. We were, Australia was in a desperate state in 1942, desperate. You can't, that is why I will never, ever, ever be able to forget the contribution of the United States, without that, we would undoubtedly have been lost.

20:00 **Just coming back though to the brief inquiry that the navy did have, What did that entail?**

Well I've only read about it in the different books that I got, they sent me out every book that was published, with all the things. And it's only, I've only come to my conclusions by reading all that I have read about what happened, so I don't know when, I think that the inquiry might have been, mightn't have taken back,

20:30 taken part until about two or three months later.

You've also referred to giving your testimony, was that for the Howard Government's inquiry?

Yes it was the Howard Government that set up the inquiry into the loss of the Sydney, finally into the loss of the Sydney. Oh, all, I could show you in the front of the, into front of that yellow book, all the different parliamentarians, [Hon. Laurie] Brereton was one of them, oh,

21:00 many of our leading parliamentarians that were on the Board of Inquiry. Then they would go off and someone else would come on. And I had so many of those yellow books, I had a plastic bag full of them, I had to throw them out for, I couldn't keep them, nobody wanted them as, I offered them to HMAS, the,

21:30 at the Garden Island. I offered them to the Historical Society there, they wanted them, at one stage they said they'd like to have them but I never heard any word from them and I couldn't have all this big bag full of books from... I only kept the one which had my own submission in it.

Just putting aside the future allegations that were made, at the time when you were working there, and you heard

22:00 **the news or the rumour about the loss of the Sydney, was there any feeling amongst you and the girls, or amongst you and your colleagues working there, that maybe you had missed something, was there any feeling...?**

No, no, never ever, ever any time. There was never any, never ever, ever given, any consideration was given to it. These aspersions and assertions that this man had made, I think he must have gone a little bit cracked in the head,

22:30 something must have gone wrong, or he wanted to project himself. I don't know, maybe people will do anything in order to get themselves projected won't they? But I think that in the first inquiry, what happened was that a lot of blame was put on Captain Burnett, the first inquiry,

23:00 they put a lot of blame on Captain Burnett which was very, very unfair. And it then, one of his sons was in the navy, he was a commodore, his other son was a commander, and you've got, I've read their submissions about their father, and apart from him being, he'd only been six months in charge of the Sydney you see. The great Captain Collins had,

23:30 who'd had success in the Mediterranean with the Sydney, he had, he'd left the Sydney and Captain Burnett took over from him. Also on the bridge of the Sydney were several commanders who had been with Captain Collins, so any decisions that Captain Burnett made, he wouldn't have been entirely, he wasn't the kind of man that just decisively made his own decisions.

24:00 He would turn to his commanders, you know, his gunnery commander, his navigational commander and operational commander and different ones like that, that'd been with Captain Collins, so whatever decisions he made would've been taken from all concerned. I, personally, in my view, from reading all the submissions, he was just outwitted by a very, very experienced

24:30 and very cunning man, because that's what Detmers was. He'd already received an Iron Cross, he was supposed to have not be a member of the Nazi Party, but some of his men underneath that were wireless operators, they were members of the Nazi Party. He was supposed to have had received the Iron Cross, and after his sinking of the Sydney, you wouldn't believe it, but over there in

25:00 Germany he was awarded a bar to his Iron Cross, even though he was a prisoner in Australia. So it shows you what we were up against.

Just now, we've looked at the Sydney and you said nineteen days after, we were sort of thrown into desperation with the Japanese. Can you talk me through sort of the events from the announcement of the

25:30 **news that the Sydney was sunk up to that point...?**

Well I wasn't on, I wasn't on duty, but I understand that my roommate Jess was the one who sent the signal out on the intercept, "We are now at war with Japan." She sent the very decisive signal out to the fleet that we were at war with Japan. Course that would've meant that they would've had to really take stock of themselves, out, stuck out there in the Pacific

26:00 with Japanese submarines around. Look how, what they did in Sydney Harbour in, when did that happen, that happened in March didn't it, or May, May. Oh no, that was the Coral Sea Battle. When did they come into Sydney Harbour, was very early in 1942, and they had a mother ship outside, outside Newcastle too, they bombed Newcastle.

26:30 They were very, very assertive those Japanese, and we were taken absolutely by, sitting ducks we were, just sitting ducks.

And no warnings had been sent out from where you were to the ships preceding Pearl Harbour to warn...?

Not preceding, no, no, there'd been no warning of any... well after the Sydney of course was attacked

and the conflict with

27:00 Sydney, that was only nineteen days before. We certainly became more aware that there were German raiders around, but it didn't occur to them that there were Japanese lurking around too, that they were about to attack Pearl Harbour and the Philippines and Hong Kong. It was all done so... when you look back now and realise that three hundred and fifty thousand prisoners were taken

27:30 in Malaya, three hundred and fifty thousand! It just seems incredible, that we crumbled like we did. All because of unpreparedness, we weren't prepared. Churchill thought that oh, we had all those guns in Singapore. Where were the guns heading, they were heading all out to sea, but the Japanese came by land. We were taken by surprise everywhere.

So how did the fact that Japan entered

28:00 **the war actually change your job and what you were doing?**

Well it made you oh, it made you almost frightened when you knew how fast things were happening. Here were your friends up in Coonawarra sending you 'Air raid in progress'. Darwin was really mutilated. Was never ever, didn't come out for years and years later,

28:30 how badly we had been attacked. We withstood worse attacks in Darwin than they did in Pearl Harbour really.

Were you working at the time Darwin was first attacked?

I don't know, can't remember whether I was on duty or not but she was bombed so many times that it just became almost a ritual after a while. We'd get the signal, 'Air raid in progress', and you'd know it was that.

29:00 But it, it made you, when we had the Americans arrived there too, and they were then, they set up in different, they were in touch with Hawaii mostly, the Americans, in touch with Hawaii and Guam, and Hawaii. San Diego was their main base, but we worked separately to the Americans. But I'll tell you one thing,

29:30 I've worked with Americans, I've worked with British and I've worked with Australians, and I mean Australian sailors as well as WRAN. And I can tell you just like in our army and our air force, they left the British and the Americans cold, when it came to ability, responsibility and discipline. That's what

30:00 I found.

Can you give me an example?

Oh well, one of the examples I found, the Americans were a little bit too sure of themselves in their work habit. They, we always used a hand signalling, hand signalling, you know, on what we called the buzz in our hand, hand thing. The Americans used something we were not allowed

30:30 to use, our sailors, we WRANS never used them. They were called a ba... I forget what the name was but it was a sort of thing that you, back and forth, and you could send Morse very quickly. Too quickly for the poor sailor at sea to be able to re-read it. So consequently we were seemed, the Americans seemed to be forever getting what we call 'IMIs' a repeat signal,

31:00 'please repeat such and such a signal,' 'please repeat such and such and such and such in the signal,' because the poor ciphers and coders weren't able to decipher the signal. Because these... and that's another habit that the Americans would do, if they missed out a signal, instead of like us, leaving a space, they missed out, you know, dots and dots and dashes, mightn't, lost 'A'

31:30 and 'C' or 'D' or a '1' or a '3' or something that, the Americans would put something in. They wouldn't, didn't want to send a signal in with too many spaces in it, you know what I mean. And this was wrong, this was wrong to do this, it was wrong.

Wrong because it confused...?

Well it was causing too much confusion, taking too much long to get the right signal through. This was, this was wrong to do this.

32:00 However I still had great regard for American technology and their ability to do things. But in regard to the British, the only British, I had great admiration for the way the British navy ran, behaved, but many of their personnel never had much chance to be trained properly, very ill trained. I can remember one, this would have been about

32:30 oh around about, I suppose about middle of March or April, something like that, in 1945. We had this young English telegraphist joined our watch and I can remember sitting next to him one day. I was, I didn't have to be communicating all the time, I was petty officer of the watch

33:00 more or less, I'd go around seeing everything was all right. I remember talking to him one day, he would've been about twenty-two, something like that, and in the conversation with him I learned that

he'd spent six hours in the Atlantic Ocean. He'd been on the Murmansk Run, you know taking armaments from Britain to, round to Russia, they called it the Murmansk Run and he had been torpedoed,

33:30 but fortunately he was saved, but he spent six hours in the cold Atlantic. And sitting next to that young man, you know, I thought how extraordinary that here you are in Australia now and you've gone through such misery. That's was when the British Fleet came out here in 1945 you see, the British Fleet joined us here in 1945.

34:00 They weren't needed over in Europe, it was just before Amer… before Germany gave in, they sent out the British Fleet out here. So and the big, I had the good fortune to be home on leave and the weekend I went home on leave, I was given a pass to go over the King George V battleship, was moored at Circular Quay, that big King George V battleship.

34:30 But that brings me then into 1945, probably turned into one of the most interesting part of fun, career part of my service life.

Before we actually go into that particular area, may I ask you a few more questions just about the time of Japan entering into the war? Just in respect to the sending and receiving of signals, when Japan entered the war, I take it your

35:00 **department sort of would've increased and been having to listen and send more signals during that time?**

Yes, yes, we, by the time I got back there particularly in 1944, the whole communications had been enlarged to the fact that we then had a couple of warrant officers and we had, instead of the intercept, they had what they call the 'Bell's

35:30 Broadcast'. They sent out tape signals, tape signals went out, instead of hand signals by the intercept, they called it the Bell's Broadcast and that was still an intercept thing but instead of that, they were sending out tape signals, you know.

Tape signals meaning tape signals of Morse?

Yes, tape signals would be going through and would be transmitting out and in other words it was perfect Morse, perfect Morse was going

36:00 out. So I found, and I found we had, well we'd lost a lot of our, we used to be in touch with Batavia, that was lost. We used to be in touch with the Philippines and Singapore, they were all lost, we didn't have any contact with any of those people. So our actual contact was mainly then with Whitehall a lot, we did a lot

36:30 with Whitehall, British Whitehall. So, and also listening in, particularly in 1942 and early '43, you found that your ship shore was very important, our ship shore, trying to get any signals for ships that were being attacked by the... But a lot of the work then

37:00 was being done, a great deal of work was being done by the wire work, the intelligence work, that had come into its own as a very, very important, the inception, the interception and the fact of that they were able to break the Japanese signals, you see.

Can you share with me a couple of examples where you received

37:30 **a message from a sinking ship?**

Well I wouldn't know, you wouldn't know whether they were sinking or what was happening. All you'd know is suddenly get the 'OOO' you know, or when the, when it, Americans came in they turned it to 'OP', daa, daa, daa... di, daa, daa, dit. Daa, daa, daa... di, daa, daa, dit. And then you'd immediately answer it. I can't imagine, I can't

38:00 remember how many, I suppose I wouldn't have had a lot in my career but I can remember it was always a very, rather a nervous, you felt rather nervous about it and how important it was that you... And the trust that your, that your petty officer had in you, he didn't come over and stick his, put his headphones on, he trusted you to be able to

38:30 take the signal.

So just take me through it, you receive one of these signals, what was your immediate response?

Well you'd immediately say, "VHP, VHP," was what our, that was our call sign you see. "VHP, VHP, calling from VHP, VHP." And then they'd go straight away and give you their latitude and longitude of where they were, that's all they were interested in giving you, latitude and longitude. They never told you, no other signals about

39:00 what condition they were in or anything like that.

Or ship, or anything?

The most important thing was to get that, because they wanted to get off the air, they wanted to get off the air themselves, they'd broken WT silence in order to let you know that they'd been attacked. They didn't know whether they were gonna be attacked again. So the most important thing was to get their latitude and their longitude which was immediately sent to naval headquarters. And if there were any ships in the area, they'd know where that was,

39:30 or any planes that could go out and spot them, well this is what could be done. But our facilities at that stage were very bad, our facilities were so bad, we had such poor facilities. Planes, we had very little in the way of planes, very little in the way of ships too. The ships were, few ships we had were, well the Battle of the Coral Sea took place in May and then the

40:00 Battle of Midway took place in June, the following month. So that, we lost ships in those, in the Battle of Midway, we lost ships, I think it was the Australia we lost or practically lost, the Canberra or the Australia.

So after the ship, in responding to you, sent its latitude and longitude, what was your response, to send out a general position or nothing?

No, it had nothing to do with us, nothing to do with us.

40:30 It was then in the hands of navy office in Melbourne to do whatever. If they wanted to send a signal up to us for the, to send out a signal on the intercept to look out for this coded signal, sent out to all ships to look out for this ship, well that was up to them, nothing to do with us. We didn't control anything, we were just the interceptors, we just did the work.

We'll just

41:00 **stop there cause we're gonna change tapes.**

Okay.

Terrific.

Tape 7

00:40 **Yeah just as Michael [interviewer] just said, we'd like to get to the Archive as many details as we can about your technical aspect of your job and the ship to shore and the intercepting and the work you did. You mentioned that not many people know how many ships were lost around the eastern coast of Australia…?**

Well I think that,

01:00 I've, I have read, I've torn out at one stage the number of ships that we did lose and what we lost and where they were. I tear out these statistics and things and I have them, have it put away in amongst my things, but when I read it I was astounded that we had lost so many ships, mostly merchant ships, not so much our

01:30 naval ships.

Although Australia lost its fair share of naval ships, I mean…?

Yes we did, yes. We lost the Perth, that was a terrible occasion.

Well I'm interested to know how, within the naval community, which you were part of at the time, how those losses affected the naval personnel?

Well it, I think it, it made us aware of the disastrous position we

02:00 were in, we were well aware of that, very well aware of the disastrous position that we were in at that time, possibly even more so than our civilian counterparts would've realised.

What did you know that the civilians didn't, through the job you did?

Well it's just that we knew from the amount of signals that were going on, we were, tremendous amounts of signals going through. And also we'd

02:30 we'd listen in to, you'd put in and listen in to Tokyo Rose sometimes, listen to some of the absurd propaganda that was being put forward. We'd mostly have a good laugh about it more than anything. But I, what I can remember more than anything was the constant

03:00 heavy work of it, the load of work that seemed to consume you, particularly at Harman, not so much when I was down at Cerberus, that was much lighter down there, but back at Harman the load was very heavy. And I can distinctly remember in 1945 as I was telling you, 1945 proved to be one of the best times of my career insofar

03:30 as that in November 1944, we put on a, in, on our station, we put on an event which we asked a different service people to attend. And stationed at Fairburn was the Netherlands East Indies Air Force had, were flying Mitchell bombers, B-25

04:00 bombers, from Darwin and Bundaberg on trips over to Timor in, at that time, ’44 and ’45, attacking the Japanese. Anyway I happened to meet a young lieutenant and he asked me, he was made a, I met him that night. And he phoned me up later on,

04:30 and he was a second lieutenant and he asked me would I go out with him to help him celebrate his promotion to lieutenant, which I did. This began a very good significant association with the Netherlands East Indies Air Force [NEIAF] who were, brought their planes to Fairburn for, to be,

05:00 to be, for the engineers to go over their planes. They had also taken over a hotel in Queanbeyan which was their, were their officers, their pilots, navigation and all, used to come down and have R&R [Rest and Recreation], and this was this young pilot had asked me. So anyway he subsequently was sent back to Darwin, he had to go to Darwin. But in the meantime, through him,

05:30 I got to know the civilian secretary to the commander, Colonel, who was in charge of the NE, of that section of the NEIAF. Through them, through her and also the other woman, civilian woman, an English woman, who was in charge of the whole

06:00 hotel, you know, for the, it was really their barracks, it was their barracks, it became their barracks. Anyway, they became very friendly with me, very kind to me, they used to ask me to come up and have lunch and afternoon tea, dinner. If they put on a party for the Red Cross or anything like that, I was always invited there and I got to know several of the pilots. Subsequently then they

06:30 knew I’d never been on a plane and about, must have been about February, March, 1944 or ’5 this Major Nimmo, the colonel was down in Melbourne, so this major was in charge of the barracks. He said, “Would you like to have a plane trip?” Well this was great excitement to me to get on to a plane. So subsequently, this was a short weekend I had off from Sydney,

07:00 on a short weekend you couldn’t get a train home to Sydney. So I duly, they picked me up in a jeep, took me over to the plane, and Daphne climbed up into the B-25 bomber and I sat in the middle of the, where the air gun and the mid air gunner sat and Major Nimmo was flying, one of the pilots flying the plane. Flew straight out

07:30 to the Pacific, out to the, went right out the Pacific, he flew that plane parallel with the cliffs, we were that close to the ocean you could almost throw a stone into it. He flew that plane all the way up to Sydney then he had to bring it right up to its proper altitude and instead of going straight to Mascot he flew that plane for me

08:00 all around Sydney Harbour which was crammed with naval vessels, I have never seen such a sight in all my life in Sydney Harbour, it was wonderful to see that. So that was the first of about five trips I did, so that was a, it was great experience that to me.

We will talk a little bit more about the experience of going in a B-25 and those trips towards the end. There’s just so much to fill in between, I don’t want to jump there

08:30 **now cause I’ll miss out on a lot. Just one technical point, if you’re leaning too far forward I’ll let you know just not to lean forward, cause if you lean forward you lean out of the light and it looks a bit bad on camera so I’ll just, if you do that again, I’ll just let you know. The first time, this is the second time you came back to Harman, we were just talking about then, but the first time there, what was your social life like in Canberra, what did you, what were you able to do, you mentioned Duntroon cadets, what else was there…**

Oh well…

09:00 **…when you went ashore?**

very little social life, we had very little social life. We just, well even from those photographs you can see I’ve got a whole series of photographs where we’d go on picnics. And I’d go horse riding or I’d go, we’d play tennis, we’d go into Canberra pool. And I remember outside Queanbeyan there was a

09:30 very, I can remember, I don’t know what it was, very rocky and outside Queanbeyan at, I forget the name of the place, there was this massive big pool, you know, pool of water, was like encased with boulders and it was absolutely blue water, it was beautiful. And I look back now and I remember as my four children grew

10:00 up, how I used to admonish them so much about, “Don’t do this and don’t do that and be careful of this.” And I can look back now on us when we used to ride our bikes to this big pool, we’d get up on the top of the boulders and we’d dive into that pool without any fear of, we just didn’t have fear, we didn’t have anyone to admonish us, you see, that we shouldn’t be doing that. It was dangerous

10:30 really. These were the kind of things that we did, we went out and found whatever pleasure we could find.

What was there in the small city of Canberra in the early '40's, what...?

Oh it was very, very, yeah, it wasn't really very interesting at all, Canberra, it was a very uninteresting place.

11:00 I can even remember, looking back now, I can remember going to Kingston was one of the few shopping centres that they had. Manuka didn't have very much in those days, very big place now. I can still remember looking at the hotel where [PM] Mr Chifley later on used to live at Kingston. Also, this was a funny episode

11:30 that I had, we used to hitchhike sometimes if we didn't go in with our bike. I was walking along the road between Harman and Canberra and this big limousine pulled up, and I thought oh, gosh, you know. "Would you like a lift?" I got in and it turned out it was only, I think it was the ambassador for the Russian

12:00 Legation. And I felt very, very uneasy, until I got out of that car. I'm afraid I was never very, very, I'm afraid you could always say that I was a very, very, anti communist. And having a ride in that, if he wasn't the ambassador, he was a very high legation person. But he dropped me off very, very, he was very courteous, he dropped me off at

12:30 Kingston and then went along. They had a huge legation there, the Russians had built in Canberra, so that was one little episode. But I didn't, oh yes, I was in the gallery in Canberra, I don't know if it was the exact day but it was around about the very period when Mr Menzies lost to Mr Curtin. I was in the

13:00 gallery in Canberra. I don't know if it was the exact day when it happened or whether it was just the lead up to it happening, but that was rather traumatic to be in the Canberra parliament, in the gallery, at a period, such a really exciting period then.

Well what were you doing in the gallery that day?

I don't know why I went, why we went, I can't even remember why I was there at that time. Whether or not we knew that

13:30 things were happening or whether or not I'd never been so far at that time. Cause this would've happened soon after we went up there, you see. So I don't know, when did Curtin take over, he took over, wasn't long before the Sydney was lost, so it would've been around about a very early period. So it might've been just that I

14:00 happened to want to go to, into Parliament House and see it, opportunity. So, but Canberra was a very insipid place at that time of our lives, very insipid.

You mentioned going to Saint Christopher's church as it was then, now where did you go to church, while you were at Harman?

At Harman I either went in to church at Queanbeyan but more times than enough I went to church

14:30 in a, Father Casey used to have an eight thirty a.m. mass at a, in a wool shed, between Harman and Queanbeyan. There was an old wood shed sort of halfway between us and Queanbeyan and he used to put on an eight thirty a.m. mass there. And oh, I used to get on my bike and go in on the Saturday that I... see I was excused going to mass on the two

15:00 Saturdays that I, Sundays that I was on duty because that, I couldn't get to mass. But sometimes, I was quite devout in my Catholic faith and there were occasions when you probably were thinking how difficult times were. I can remember coming off eight a.m., on my

15:30 light weekend when I was on duty and for some reason or other, if I didn't feel tired enough, I'd get permission to go ashore, because you always had to get permission to go ashore between, for any reason between watches, you weren't supposed to go ashore between watches. But I'd get permission and get on my bike and ride to the wool shed, go to eight thirty mass and I'd resume duty at twelve noon.

16:00 I can still remember Commander McLoughlin stopping me one day, and he said, "WRAN Wright, why are you going in to church, you know you don't have to?" And I can still remember saying to him, "I'm going because I want to, sir." That was just the end of it. It didn't happen all the time, if I was terribly tired if I came off duty at eight a.m. or I badly needed those few hours sleep before I resumed duty.

16:30 But that was just the, but that, going to mass at that little old wood shed was, wood shed, wool shed was... sometimes in the middle of winter the frost would get on the top of the wool shed and it would drip through the holes in the roof. So I suppose we went through pretty tough

17:00 times. We even had a, one, came off duty one night at two a.m. in the middle of winter and it'd been snowing, we actually had snow on the station. There we were coming down off the station picking up snow, it was mostly dirt, and throwing it at one another. But these were occasions that broke the monotony.

What other occasions, you mentioned briefly before that perhaps you

17:30 **might've gone ashore without permission one or two times. Why would you have done that?**

Well something might have been on, it might've been a Saturday night you see, and there might've been something special on perhaps at the Manuka Hut or something like that, a special celebration might've been on. And you'd come off duty at eight o'clock you see, you'd have to resume duty at two a.m. so you'd probably sneak out. But that

18:00 might've only happened once or twice, I might've done that, and that was in 1941, certainly not once 1942 came.

How hard was it to sneak out, what did you have to sneak past or...?

Oh well it wasn't hard to sneak out, they didn't have too many guards around, we didn't have too many guards around. In fact I don't think we even had a guard at the gate at that stage. We, later on in 1942, they had a guard at the gate way but

18:30 I think in 1941 we didn't have a guard at the gate. We only had a guard before you went up to the wireless station, they had guards there on duty.

What was at the Manuka Hut, you haven't told us about that, what...?

That was a large hut that had been erected for service personnel to be entertained, and it was a wonderful entertainment. They, we used to dance,

19:00 we used to, as I say, we used to, you'd get cups of tea, magnificent log fire in the middle of winter, huge big fire, you know. It was a wonderful place to relax amongst all kinds of service personnel that wanted to go in there. Volunteers served tea and coffee or toast or little meal, well mostly would only be sausage and egg, but

19:30 still it was a change, it was a change. And it was nice to mingle with people from other services too.

Where were they coming from, I know Duntroon had cadets, what other services were in Canberra?

Oh we had quite a few at Fairburn in the air force, we didn't have any other army, but mostly it was mostly all naval personnel or air force

20:00 personnel or the cadets from Duntroon. That was a great haven for the cadets from Duntroon because their life was pretty tough I can tell you, they had a tough life those Duntroon cadets that came through there. I've even witnessed, been gone over there to see a cricket match, and you'd see a Duntroon cadet on the parade ground going around with

20:30 his full pack on him doing a, being a, having to be, he was being reprimanded for something or other. It always just seemed, just seemed rather harsh, they were, they had a tough life those Duntroon cadets. I don't know what the ADF [Australian Defence Force] is like now at Duntroon whether they're as tough as they were in those days. They were certainly, those lieutenants that came

21:00 out of there were certainly very, very well trained and well disciplined.

What, you mentioned before that you were working very, very hard once the war got going and at Harman, you were working physically hard, how did that work take its toll on you, do you think?

Well it didn't, I was all right

21:30 until 1945 then for some reason or other, must have been caused by stress, but I then got itchy eyes, I couldn't stop itching my eyes, which was, it was a form of eczema you see, sort of form of eczema. But personally I think it was, I don't think it was brought

22:00 on by anything around about Harman because I'd spent so much time there I couldn't suddenly be happening then. I personally think it was bought on by stress, just the stress and trauma of four years of intense watch keeping, continual watch keeping. I'd never been off watch keeping. So they decided to take me off watch keeping for a while, sent me to Sydney to have my eyes tested. The doctor didn't know what

22:30 was wrong, "Oh, your eyes are a little bit weak," gave me glasses which did no help whatsoever. I think the only thing that did help me then was the, my contact with the NEI Air Force and the number of plane trips I was able to get down [to] Sydney. And that, a couple of my friends I got, they had plane trips too. I asked if I could,

23:00 I think altogether I must have had about six plane trips.

As I said, we'll come back to that as well. You mentioned the guards went on the gate in '42 at Harman, the atmosphere at Harman changed, what other physical changes took place at when the Americans came and when the Japanese were in the war?

Oh just the, oh I don't know, I think they also set up what they call, it's also in that book that I've got there, which I didn't even know so much about

23:30 it myself, they set up what they call the ‘Z Force’, I don’t know if you’ve ever heard of the Z Force. So that was set up at Harman too, which necessitated more people. They had a young lieutenant came and took charge there, or two I think came and took charge. So in other words the place did expand, it expanded in what it was doing, between the wire work and the Z

24:00 work, it had expanded. I can visibly remember when you were, I was saying how you were feeling about the work. Up until the loss of Germany, when it was quite obvious that Germany was going to lose the war and then when the news came through in May, 19...

24:30 ...’45, I can remember I went out to the movies with these friends in the NEI Air Force. And I can remember coming back and I, all I can remember saying was that, “When’s it going to end, when’s it going to end in the Pacific? I’m so tired of it, I’m so tired.” I, it was the first time I ever felt a feeling of,

25:00 of feeling that there’s just going to be no end to it in the Pacific. And I can remember this lieutenant in particular, whether or not he had any idea that... Cause Okinawa was going on, it was still terrible, they were still fighting down in the lower part of the Philippines and I, he said, “Don’t worry Daphne, it’s going to end, it’ll be ending.” So that

25:30 was only about May, so within three months the war was ended. But I, it was the first time I felt a feeling of futility that, “Where’s this all going to? When’s it ever going to end?”

What about fear, what frightened you in working on a naval base?

Oh I don’t think I felt any more fear than anybody else of the, of what our,

26:00 what had happened in New Guinea and what was, and the terror that was still happening in the, the reports you would get of the fighting in Okinawa and the terrible loss of life that was going on. It just seemed to be endless loss of life, it just didn’t seem to be, going to be any end to it, that Japan was just going to keep on going on until thousands

26:30 of lives were lost in order to have to... nobody liked the idea of having to attack, being forced to attack Japan. And I can remember when the atom bomb went, I never felt any feeling of, that this is a terrible thing.

I’ll take you back, you mentioned the threat of an air raid or the threat of Harman being torpedoed as you said.

27:00 **What fears were there around the base as that?**

Well we didn’t place too much fact on it, we didn’t take too much notice of it, it was only PR trying to drop your morale that’s all, that was all they were trying to do all the time. That was the, it was the same as what the Germans did,

27:30 the Japanese were doing exactly the same, trying to work on your morale.

What was morale like over the time you were at Harman the first time?

Very good, always very good, we never had any, we were typically Australians I think, typically Australians that just never let the, I don’t think you could ever make Australians feel that they’re being

28:00 that they’re, lose their morale. Morale to a great extent amongst Australians is always very strong.

What friends or relatives or boyfriends did you have that were overseas at that time?

Well the one in the number 10 Squadron, he came back in ’43 to, in order to do, train people

28:30 for the Pacific war, he’d been away three years. My own brother was up in Tarakan, he was serving in Tarakan. I had other friends too that, nobody very close to me lost their life except one young man I met. I actually met him on a troop train returning from Sydney to Melbourne. I’d been given

29:00 very short weekend leave and I managed to get home to Sydney, and on the troop train coming back, just like all Australians are, we all, I think we used to have to get out at Seymour and have our breakfast, and those were the days when you had to change trains too. So I can remember this young soldier, returning from New Guinea, must have been late 1943,

29:30 no, perhaps November 1943. And course he was absolutely astounded to see women in uniform, just like, curiously. And bit of a larrikin Australian and he, naturally, you’re talking and they’re having breakfast. He finds out my name, you know, finds out then, he is coming back from army service

30:00 in New Guinea and he was changing over to the air force, he wanted to go into the air force. So he finds out my name, finds out where I’m stationed at Flinders and it so happened that he was going to do his preliminary training just around the corner from Crib Point where they did their preliminary training. Well just typically like many young Australians, he finally

30:30 got on to me at my signal station where I was. I get a telephone call and he wants to know if it can be worked out that they were putting on a celebration at this initial training school where he was, and

could some of the WRANS be able to attend it. Anyway it so happened we did, we went around and we attended this celebration. From then on Frank became, we became

31:00 good friends, we became good friends. I think I only ever met him a few times in my life. I met him in Melbourne that's right, we went to lunch, he introduced me to his sister, one of his sisters. And he had gone to Saint Ignatius at, in Melbourne and we found we had a lot in common, we were good friends. And Frank then moved around, he went to this school and that school and other

31:30 school and he kept in touch with me, we wrote lots of letters, I've still got piles of letters that he used to write to me. And I think in his way, I'd like to think, "Oh this is, she's my girlfriend." And I remember one stage he was, he went to Sydney, sent to Sydney to Bradfield, and I happened to go home on leave for the weekend. And I met up with him and of course I met him at

32:00 Wynyard Station and his other boy friends are around you know, there's the usual banter went on, "Oh," you know, "I see you're with your girlfriend," sort of business. Not that it was at that stage but I think Frank was very fond of me. Anyway I think I saw him a couple of times in Sydney, while he was there. And eventually he

32:30 was sent to Perth, over to West Australia into his final stage of training. Sends, writes me a long letter on the trip over in the Nullarbor Plain, train, Plain. And he wrote to me from Cairns and he was in the final stage of training, desperate to get into the war in the Pacific, like they, young men were. And I think he was on Lancasters and they had a crew of about

33:00 eleven. And the next thing I know, he'd written me a letter, I've got the letter in there, he'd written me a letter only a day or two before he was killed. The, they were taking off, the plane was taking off and it crashed, and five out of the eleven lost their life and he was one of the five, and six escaped.

33:30 So it, and it so happened that it was the fourteenth of February, which was my father's birthday, Valentine's Day. And I received a letter from his sister to tell me that he was, they had found a lot of my letters you see. And it was a shock to find out that such a bright, larrikin, young Australian like that, his life could just be...

34:00 particularly after he'd served in New Guinea and gone through all that training, so anxious to get back into the war. February 1945 his life was just, went away. So that was a, quite a shock to me to find that life can... And I learned later on from this friend of mine who was in the first WAAAF, she said

34:30 to me, "Daphne," she said, "You would be amazed how many lives we lost in training, how many lives we lost in training." Cause she became a, finally became a WAAAF officer and in, but she kept into communications and ciphering work. But yeah, these are lots of things that you, you never realised happened in...

Well it's a great shock to, the death of a

35:00 **friend under any circumstances but in, during the war, that was happening frequently I imagine, how did you deal with that in those circumstances?**

But it didn't happen to me closely, that's the astonishing part.

What about the people around you, were their husbands or boyfriends lost?

Well they'd already lost them earlier, not so much in 19... but

35:30 I, none of my very closest friends lost anyone, ones that I knew of but, nobody that I knew of while we were, I was serving, I heard that they'd, anyone had been killed. Except as I say, the young Duntroon cadet when he lost his brother on the Sydney it was rather sad to discuss that with him, he lost his brother, young sub lieutenant.

36:00 But other than that I didn't have any close, people close to me or any friends that I'd grown up with and been with, none of them lost their lives, no.

How much contact did you have with your own brother?

By letter, not much except by letter, while he was away in the air force. And then of course he was discharged with very,

36:30 very severe malaria, end of 1944, and so he was very sick for quite a while. And then of course he got the fungus growth in the ears which was very detrimental to him later on. But he resumed his civilian life okay.

What was happening in your own family home when you went home on leave during those months?

Well life was very, very

37:00 quiet for them, very quiet for my family, very quiet. They just, they were very, very attached to me. I was very important to them, their youngest child, big gap in our lives. And I, they looked forward to me

coming home every month but otherwise their lives went along pretty,

37:30 just straight forward. Blackouts and coupons for this and coupons for that. So this didn't worry us too much in the navy, although I can't say our food was the very best. This is another thing why I enjoyed going to the NEI Barracks, they had Indonesian cooks and their nasi goreng was the

38:00 main dish that was always on, so I became a firm, firmly fond of rice, which was fried rice but In..., the Indonesians always called it nasi goreng.

When you went home to your parents, do you think they talked to you about whether they were proud of you, or what was their feelings about you being a WRAN and being among...?

I think they were, and I can remember my mother, I always went to mass when I was home of a

38:30 Sunday with my parents. And I could tell that going into church, their local church, my mother was very proud of me, going in with her daughter in uniform. Particularly when I became a petty officer and became more... And you'd see then more, I'd notice, particularly young air force officers

39:00 home on leave, this is during, this is 1945, you'd notice them at mass, they used to go to Saint Aloysius. And I can still remember when I used to travel into Saint Patrick's by train, the boys used to get on at Milsons Point from Saint Aloysius and you'd get to know them by seeing them at mass at Chatswood, you see. And I can remember

39:30 in 1945 going to mass and seeing one of these young men, he was by then a pilot officer in the air force and it just made you feel how different it is. Here I am, twenty-three and he probably might have been only about twenty-four or so, he'd probably be a little older than me. Here we are going to mass in Our Lady of Dolours church and

40:00 there we were just only a few years ago we were school children, school boy and school girl going to school, so it's, life's strange, changed. But yes my mother was very proud of her daughter. I don't think my brother ever, can't ever remember seeing my brother in uniform, because I was always away when he was, when he finally got home on leave, got back.

All right

40:30 **well we'll stop there cause we have to change tape so we'll do that and we'll do another one before we...**

Tape 8

00:48 **Daphne can we just start off at Cerberus. Why were you sent down there, what was the circumstances?**

Because they needed

01:00 wireless operators in the signal station there. There was a signal station at Cerberus and they had a chief there and I think they needed three wireless operators on duty, so I was sent down in, the senior WRAN in... and we had about six teleprinter operators. But I,

01:30 I, it says in the books that twelve telegraphists went down and six teleprinter operators, but from what I remember, the teleprinter operators were Victorians, already there, they didn't go from Harman. The twelve telegraphists went from Harman but I don't recall any teleprinter operators going down. I think these books when they write them,

02:00 they don't get the right facts, they don't get the right facts. I think the teleprinter operators were already there, had been trained at Flinders to be teleprinter operators. There was only one on each watch you see.

What was the purpose of going, like Cerberus, I mean Harman was send and receive signals, Cerberus was...?

You had signal stations around the whole coast, we had signal stations everywhere.

02:30 And that was in quite a good spot down there on Crib Point because it meant that ships going across the [Great Australian] Bight, you know, across there, if they sent out a distress signal, there's just a chance that we'd get it when Harman wouldn't get it, you see. That was the main reason for being down there. Also they, because

03:00 Flinders was a, Flinders was the place where all, everybody came to be, before they were re-drafted to other ships, you see. Nearly everybody was sent back to Flinders, even if they were on one certain ship 'A', they'd be sent back to Flinders before they were drafted to ship 'B' or something like that. Or sent back to Flinders before they were drafted to a land station or something. This is no matter what they

03:30 were, whether they were a gunnery person or whether they were a mechanic or whether they were a supplier, supplies. Or no matter what field they were in, they'd be sent to Flinders because Flinders was the re-drafting. So therefore, it might have been necessary to send signals to Flinders for the commanding officer about the drafting of a certain person, you see. So

04:00 that is why, what we, our signal station was at Flinders, was necessary for.

Just so I understand, Harman received signals from all over the place, whereas Cerberus at Flinders, did it just receive signals from down south or all over the place as well?

Well the signals might even have been sent to us from Harman, see the signals might have been sent to us

04:30 from Harman, who knows where, the signals might have been sent to us from Harman or a teleprinter operator might get a signal that we are supposed to send to Harman or something like that. This is what, it was all inter woven, you see.

Therefore coming back, sorry to bring you back to the Sydney, the Sydney could have sent a signal to someone else other than Harman?

That's right, this is what I always

05:00 maintained in my, in my submission. I said that there was no signal received at HMAS Harman, in other words I wasn't speaking for whether Perth or Darwin or somebody else, where there had been, there had been assertions made that some air force people or other had picked up some kind of a signal, a mutilated signal.

05:30 So I wasn't, I wasn't saying that Sydney didn't send a signal, all I was declaring was Harman was not responsible for covering up the loss of the signal.

Thanks for clearing that up for me. Just in respect to signals, the sending of signals, are we talking different types of frequencies that

06:00 **they're sending the signal? How do the signals get differentiated?**

On a particular frequency, it's just like radio stations now, they have their particular frequency that they're on, well it's the same with us, we had particular frequencies that we'd transmit signals on, to certain people.

So therefore Harman would listen to all frequencies whereas somewhere like Cerberus would only

06:30 **listen to a few frequencies, was that the case and the difference?**

Well Cerberus we'd only listen to what Bell's would be sending out, you know the, or the intercept would be sending out. And we'd probably, I don't know, I'm, I can't remember a great deal of my service in… all I know that it wasn't, it wasn't terribly significant

07:00 to, it was necessary but it wasn't terribly significant to the whole perspective of everything. But…

But Harman was a bigger station?

Oh yes, it was the centre. From what I've read in books there, it was the world's biggest wireless receiving station, Harman was, receiving and transmitting station. It said in the books that I've read

07:30 there that they declared it was the [biggest in the] world. I never looked upon it as that but I knew that it was most important one in the south west Pacific.

You used a phrase just earlier when you were talking about Cerberus, Bell's, could you just talk me through what that is?

Well our big antennas were at Belconnen you see, so at the end of 1942, instead of sending out the signals by the intercept method, they

08:00 sent it out by tapes and they called it the Bell's Broadcast, just short for Belconnen you see, the Bell's Broadcast.

And what sort of things were those tapes broadcasting, what sort of information?

They'd be the signals, the same signals that we would have sent by hand, exactly the same.

And the reason they taped it, because was it more reliable?

It was perfect Morse, they could send it at whatever speed they wanted to send

08:30 it, you see.

You mentioned earlier how the, you had Japanese Morse interpreters to find out what the Japanese were

09:00 **saying. What sort of codes did you have in Morse so that the Japanese wouldn't know what messages you were sending?**

Well the Japanese intercepted our signals, yes, but I think that they, I don't think they were as clever at breaking our codes, as we had, as the

09:30 Americans were at breaking their codes. Apparently the Americans had broken their codes in 1940, well before we were at war with them, so the Americans must have been anticipating the conflict with them, with Japan.

One more question just about the Americans. When a ship was in danger or stress it would send out a message, before the Americans joined the war, of 'OOO,'

10:00 **is that right?**

Yes.

Then they changed it to OP?

OP, yeah.

Why the change to OP?

I don't know, this was just meant Operational, Operational Priority, OP meant Operational Priority, that was what it meant, Operational Priority, OP.

So when the Americans joined the war, did many things change like that?

No they,

10:30 they seemed to almost conduct their war separate to us. The American, they'd have about, oh, I suppose they'd never have more than about four operators on duty at a time, they'd have about four operators on duty. And they just seemed to be, almost working separate to us but they were always in continual touch with Hawaii, and Guam too I think later on.

11:00 But we, by that stage, but nevertheless any signals that they wanted to go out to their fleet would have to go out on our intercept, on our intercept, they didn't do it, a separate one. That would incorporate their fleet too.

Excellent. How was HMAS Cerberus different from Harman, what sort of things were different about it?

Oh it was enormous, Flinders is enormous, it's a whole town, it's almost a town. It's, all the schools are there, all the, and at the time when I was there, the young midshipmen were trained there, they'd go there at the age of, what, fourteen. And you'd see these young midshipmen running round and round,

11:30 oh it was pathetic really. But no, Flinders is huge, all the schools there, gunnery school, signal school, navigational school, all the schools, they were all there. It was the, it sowed the heartthrob of the navy there, for training, for training.

So the naval depot was huge, but the actual area where you worked, Cerberus, was that large as well?

Well the actual

12:00 area where we worked was a fair distance from where our accommodation was, we had the, this was the hardest thing to go from Harman in the beautiful little cottages that we lived in, to go to these huts that accommodated about twenty people, and this was the hardest thing to have to do. And you'd go to a shower and the showers would be

12:30 sort of wooden places where you'd go in, the air would flow in to the shower. And I still remember coming off duty one morning at about eight a.m. after twenty, forty-eight hours or twenty-four hours on duty, we came off duty, all we ever wanted to do was to get up to Melbourne, I spent every bit of twenty-four hours leave, forty-eight hours leave up in Melbourne . And

13:00 we'd usually, there was a hostel that we'd go to and you could stay the night there for about two and six or something like that, bed and breakfast. And also the Moorabbin crowd were up there in Melbourne you see, Moorabbin was just a suburb of Melbourne and all the WRANS were there you see, and therefore a lot of Americans were there. And

13:30 my very particular friend was there whom I'd known at Universal Pictures, she joined up twelve months after I did, she left Universal, she's still my friend sixty-five years, she lives in Adelaide. And so I'd meet up with Irene and Irene and, we'd always have a couple of the Americans with her, two in particular, Otto Leinhardt and

14:00 Charles Chicka Russell. And we used to have the most wonderful time, we'd go to lunch, we'd go to pictures, we'd go on picnics, we'd do all kinds of things together. I've still got stacks of letters that, as they went, they left, as they left Moorabbin, their first trip was to Exmouth Gulf, then they went right up

the Pacific and ended up in the lower

14:30 part of the Philippine Islands. But nevertheless over the few months that when I knew them in Melbourne we had the, a wonderful time together. And one interesting fact, only goes to show, people used to talk about hospitality. But we always found, I found one of the strange things about Australians is that Victorians are not as

15:00 hospitable and, as much as say New South Wales people or Queenslanders, there's a bit more, they're a little bit colder than Australians. So up until this stage we had received no hospitality whatsoever in any way from homes in there, neither had the Americans. And I went up to,

15:30 in Collins Street, I went upstairs. They had an afternoon tea place run by volunteers where you could leave your bag or whatever it was and you could have a cup of tea. And I went up there this day and this lovely elderly lady was at the door, to take your name. And I was talking to her, Mrs Boardman was her name,

16:00 most delightful lady, she was the widow of a minister. And she said, "Have you ever had any hospitality, Daphne?" I said, "No, no, we've never been to anywhere." She said, "I would, would you like to come to my home?" "Oh," I said, "I'd be, love to, that'd be wonderful." They lived out at Balwyn in Melbourne. Sure enough she asked me out to dinner.

16:30 That started a wonderful friendship with that family. She had, her son was an army doctor, her daughter was a nurse, one daughter was a nurse in the RAAF, and the other two daughters, she had two other daughters who, one was a librarian, and I forget which, what Agnes was, Agnes and Anne. And I became, that became almost a second home to be, I could pop out there, they'd

17:00 invite me out. They even, I spent a Christmas out there with them and Mrs Balwyn, Boardman, would get me up, send me off to church, if I was there on a Sunday you know, if I stayed the night, "Off to church Daphne, you get off to your church." So anyway I was telling her about the Americans, they never had any hospitality. She said, "Oh Daphne, you must bring them over here,

17:30 bring them over for dinner one night." So I spoke to Irene and to the two Americans, Otto and Russell, and they said, "Oh yes, that'd be wonderful, let's go," you know. So we all met one another in town, and at that time, just like in Sydney in Martin Place, there used to be flower sellers and they, these used to be down, outside Flinders Railway Station. Big lines

18:00 of flower sellers. And there happened to be, must have been about spring time, this time of the year. So when we all met, Russell and Otto said, "We've gotta take flowers with us, we've gotta take flowers." So here we go to the flower sellers, they couldn't be, couldn't just get one or two bunches, they had to get, Irene and I had bunches of flowers stuck against us. And Otto goes up to a confectionery shop

18:30 in Collins Street, gets the biggest box of chocolates he could possibly get. We get on to a tram and we're on the end of the tram, I can still remember it as clear as anything. Irene and I with flowers, clutching these bunches and bunches of flowers, the both of us, Otto's got his big packet of chocolates. We land at Mrs Boardman's door and that poor lady nearly died

19:00 of shock. But the whole point was these boys just wanted to do what they hadn't been able to do for months and months and months. They just wanted to buy flowers, they wanted to, and the fact that they overdid it so much, that didn't worry them, they were getting so much enjoyment out of it. And it was a time I'll never forget that time. And that, one of them,

19:30 Agnes, Russell was a great writer, he was quite a, rather an intellectual type Russell was, even though they were just telegraphists. But, he used to then start writing to one of the, they were older than us, quite a bit older, these two other women, two other daughters. But they kept up, used to write funny letters to Russell, and he used to love to get them as they went north. I learned years later

20:00 that Russell, from Otto, that I used to write to Otto's sister too, and I learned later on that Russell, they both had come from Arkansas of all places, that's where they came from, Arkansas. If you were talking to Otto sometimes you could hardly, need an interpreter to know what he was saying, his southern accent was so thick. Any anyway Russell wasn't so bad, but I learned that he

20:30 became a teacher and he became quite a philosopher. And I learned from Otto, I received a letter some years ago now, that just as they were all planning to make a trip to Australia, Russell died. But as Otto told me, he was the most wonderful friend that anybody could ever have. And he really was a

21:00 very, very fine American, very fine. They both were. So this is where I have had close, very close associations with the, what I always consider the real Americans, the Americans that people don't know really exist.

During your time, did you notice much antagonism between the Americans and some of the Australian men?

Not that I know of

21:30 no, no, the Americans that we had at Harman they never ever had any problems with the, with any service, other service men of any kind, no, no. I never had any, never experienced any of that. The whole

of the American, even when you received letters from Otto's sister, there was nothing but

22:00 praise and thankfulness for the way their brother was being treated. He came from a family of six, his two other brothers were in the navy and when I wrote to Ethel, his sister, their was nothing but praise for the period that their brother was spending in Australia and the treatment they'd received, and the friendships they had and everything, there was no,

22:30 never anything ulterior at all about the Americans.

Now you've also mentioned just in sharing about Cerberus, the accommodation wasn't up to what you expected. What other differences, I mean you would have left some good friends up from Canberra where you were, what other changes sort of happened when you went down to Cerberus?

To Cerberus? Well I found the Victorians

23:00 the ones I worked, the rest of the ones in the, on the, all the other WRANS, that were doing all kinds of other things then. At Cerberus they were drivers or they were clerks or they were stewardesses and things like that. We were the only ones doing more or less important work, you might say.

23:30 They were doing just odd work around the place. But I found that they were, weren't very friendly, weren't very friendly. We, as I said, we New South Wales ones, when we were off duty we got out, we just got out of Flinders, never were there. As a matter of fact too, I'm afraid that, because I was in charge of the hut, the

24:00 senior one, they were always very keen on inspections, inspections were something that I think was, it was something that was part of their life, particularly the administrative officer that we had. And I'm afraid some of my WRAN telegraphists, particularly the ones that were on the opposite watch to me were anything but co-operative when it came to getting food.

24:30 They'd get their friends to bring them in food and you'd be finding plates of food under their bed or plates of food up on the you know, little wardrobe things that we had which separated each section where we were. And this was getting too much for me, because down in my section where we were, we were pretty clean, pretty tidy, pretty clean. But up the other end,

25:00 which was my opposite, they were very, very untidy and they had been getting into a bit of strife with the... I was trying to get them, "You've gotta be clean, you've gotta tidy up for an inspection." So after a while it got so much for me, I went to the, went to this WRAN officer, I said, "Take it out of my hands," I said, "I can't be expected to be responsible for those WRANS

25:30 if they're breaking the rules and bringing food into their hut and leaving them, not sweeping their flats out and not cleaning things, it's your responsibility I'm not going to take it." So that was it, I more or less said, "Okay, I'm not gonna be responsible, I'm getting out." So I don't know, they just kept off my back after that, I don't know.

You don't know what happened to the girls, were they disciplined?

Oh I think they just continued their own, continued being dirty, and they just

26:00 didn't bother inspecting the huts, that's the way it was. But my period at Flinders, that part of it, as far as living there, wasn't happy at all, I didn't enjoy it at all. Except when I was studying, doing my studying for my exam, I had a very, very good rapport with the warrant officers and chief petty officers and the, and even with Ian McDonald the,

26:30 who was the commander of the signal school, another Englishman. Very handsome Englishman, that most of the WRANS used to get into all of a tizz over, over Commander McDonald. Poor man, he was married too. But oh, it's amazing how these girls used to get all of a twitter over somebody. Anyway as I said, I'd get out of there as fast as I could. But one funny thing was happened,

27:00 I got my GC stripe as I told you, when I was at Flinders, you had to go before the captain and then you receive your GC stripe And it was quite an event too, going before the captain, and him bestowing you, amongst others and men, we got a GC stripe, it was pretty unusual for a WRAN, nobody knew a WRAN had a GC stripe, you see. So I can remember distinctly one day when I was riding my bike through

27:30 Flinders, straight after, soon after I got my GC stripe up, there were a group of sailors walking along. And suddenly I heard them say, "Gee, a WRAN with a GC stripe!" Just the sheer amazement of them, gave me more of a thrill than anything else, just for these sailors to say, "Gosh, a WRAN with a GC stripe!" It gave me much more pleasure than getting it off the

28:00 captain or even going to, being guest of honour at the Third Anniversary of the WRANS. That exclamation from those sailors gave me more of a thrill than anything did.

So was there an occasion when you had to order round a man, that you were above in rank?

Oh yes I found this more so down at Flinders. We, there was an

28:30 occasion at Flinders when we had naval men personnel but they were mainly training, they were being, they were on watch to be trained you see. But I never found, I had a personality where I got along with most people, I got along with most people very well. I really, I can say that I went

29:00 through with very few enemies I made, I just never seemed to make enemies amongst people. I had a, quite a happy personality and even these two blokes when they were training, we, there was no such thing as me being the boss, or the senior one, never came into it. I never ever imposed my rank

29:30 on anyone. The only time I ever was really careful, was when I was on duty, particularly at Harman, I made certain that everything was, if I was in charge of anything that everything was done to the letter, everything was. I was, there was, you didn't give way in anything then, I wasn't unpleasant

30:00 But I just made certain that things were done correctly, everything was done correctly. But as far as having problems with this one or that one, I never did, I had a fairly happy, agreeable personality that I didn't find it difficult to get along with most people.

30:30 **I mean you don't strike me as someone who would impose your rank or position on anyone, but what about, given the time, we're talking the 1940s of men showing chauvinism towards you and not actually respecting the rank you held?**

No I only ever struck one, one warrant officer who, he had been a petty officer or a chief at Townsville

31:00 and was heartily disliked there. When I came back to Harman in 1944 he was a warrant officer there and I do know that there was, I found antipathy with him. And on one occasion something went wrong, there was, I can't even recall what it was but our

31:30 watch was blamed and I knew that it was not responsible. I knew perfectly well and I was able to prove it that our watch was not responsible for this discrepancy that'd happened, whatever it was. Well the antipathy between this warrant officer and I was the only thing I ever really struck in my whole period of four and a half

32:00 years. It was really very, very strong and that just continued on until, I think he was, I think he was, eventually he was drafted somewhere else and it was more or less a case of good riddance to bad rubbish. He wasn't a liked man at all, very officious. And when I had this

32:30 antagonism with him over my watch or our operators being blamed for something that was not their... and I was able to prove that they were not responsible. So he didn't like that, he didn't like being... but he was the only one in all my whole period of service that I ever had any disturbance

33:00 with, the only one.

Finally, at Cerberus, given that there's so many girls crowded into the accommodation, was their theft among each other?

No, not that I know of, no, I've known of any. Never at any time known, even at Harman, never ever known of any kind of... What could they possibly thieve, there's nothing they could thieve, we hardly had any money any of us, what money we did

33:30 have we'd put in the bank, so there was nothing they could thieve.

But there were characters that weren't completely honest that were...?

Well, I don't know, I don't, can't say I ever struck any dishonesty. I did strike, with some of the, there might have been one or two that I can think of who had rather unpleasant personalities, very,

34:00 very difficult to get on with. And one in particular, when I returned to Harman as a petty officer, I went into what we call the "Petty Officer's House," you see. And this was the first time I'd ever come in contact with this one because she was in wire work, she'd always been on opposite watch to me.

34:30 But when I found she was in the same cottage as me, she became very officious, she was one of those officious people. If you went out and you didn't put your, might have been middle of winter, I can remember one night, I was going to the movies with one of my girlfriends. And I had a greatcoat, a very heavy greatcoat and I refused to, I had a nice, lovely white scarf and I was

35:00 getting dressed to go out and I wasn't going to put my tie and starched collar and tie on. I was just going to put my white scarf on with the rest of my uniform and my greatcoat, you see. Oh, she was most astounded that I dare to go out of, go ashore in such a rig. Of course we had words, very nice

35:30 words, I had to tell her to mind her own so-and-so business and get out of my bedroom, "Don't be, what right had you to be in my bedroom and telling me what I can put on and what I can't put on." So she was a very officious, unpleasant person and it did make the stay in the cottage... but as I say, said, even then I'd get out as much as I could from, that I could,

36:00 particularly when I had the barracks, the NEI Barracks to go to, have lunch or dinner or anything there. It was a great haven for me, became a haven for me to get to. So, but as I say these occasions were so

rare, when you look over four and a half years, you can only speak of one occasion when you had someone officious like that, that's pretty fair going I think.

36:30 **How did you actually get a transfer from Cerberus back to Harman, what was the situation there, why...?**

Well they had to send me back because they knew they had to make me a petty officer. It was all so embarrassing, the warrant officers and the chiefs and all the ones at Flinders had embarrassed Harman by the fact that here they had a WRAN who was officially a WT1

37:00 and she wasn't even a petty officer, so they had no alternative they had to send me back to Harman. Cause they couldn't make me a petty officer at Flinders, there was no point, nowhere they could make me a petty officer at Flinders, nothing I could do down there that warranted a petty officer or even anywhere for a, petty officer could live. You had to keep to, everything had to be kept in the right order you know.

37:30 A petty officer had to, a petty officer had to live in a petty officer's barracks, a petty officer got certain, a lot more privileges than the ordinary sailor got and therefore they had to send me back to Harman in order to give me my promotion.

Oh I see, which pleased you no end because you didn't necessarily enjoy life at Flinders.

That's right, I was quite happy to go back to Harman, quite happy. My friends had

38:00 moved on, the Americans had moved on, they'd gone on to Exmouth Gulf and they were in the Pacific, and my girlfriend was still there. But I found Melbourne was getting very dull, Melbourne's a dull place, so I was quite happy to go back to Harman and know that I'd be getting home every month, you see, down at Flinders I couldn't get home.

38:30 So that was good, that, I was quite happy to go back there.

Are we at, or...? Sorry. How did your job change then once you got back to Harman and you were now a petty officer?

You wouldn't believe this, this is astounding thing, I went back to the B Watch that I started off in. Back to

39:00 Petty Officer Liddy's watch that'd I'd started off on in 1941, he was still at Harman he was still petty officer of the watch. I went back there, I went back to the same cottage that I'd started off in, was now a petty officer's cottage. I went back to the same cottage, I went into the same bedroom and I went into the same bed. I don't know if it was the same bed and mattress but it was in the same

39:30 position under the front window. Isn't that extraordinary, co-incidence, after four and a half years after arriving there in 1941 I went into number eighteen cottage. We flipped a coin, Jess and I, with Frances Proven who was Number One WRAN and thought she was going to go into the front bedroom, you know, because she was the senior one. But little Jess and I thought, "Okay,

40:00 we're not gonna, you're not gonna get away with it." "We better flip a coin, Frances." So we flipped a penny, Jess and I got the front bedroom, much to the unhappiness of Frances, but she moved out later on. But anyhow I went, was put in a bed under the front window, my bed in number eighteen cottage. I left there when I went to Cerberus, came back there, what,

40:30 1944, and it was then a petty officer's cottage, I was given the same spot in the same room.

Nothing had changed.

No, nothing had changed in the room, the beds looked the same, the wardrobe is the same, dressing table was the same. But I couldn't believe that, it was, just seemed such an unusual co-incidence that this could happen.

I'll just pause you there because we're gonna change...

Tape 9

00:46 **When you came back to Harman as a petty officer, you had a visit to the Hotel Canberra, can you tell us about that?**

Oh yes, that was when the young

01:00 Lieutenant John Blau asked me to go to the Hotel Canberra and celebrate his promotion to first lieutenant.

Can you tell us a bit more background about what your relationship was with John Blau and where he came from?

We were just friends, just friends, I think I only went out with him two or three times, that's all, and we went horseback riding, I only went twice. And then he was sent to

01:30 Darwin and that's how I then became friendly with the civilian employees and through them I got to know quite a few of the pilots, you see.

What was so impressive about the Hotel Canberra, what do you remember about that evening?

Well I tell you what I do remember about it. We're sitting there enjoying a lovely dinner, feeling very, very distinguished, very,

02:00 very nice young man he was too. Dutch, they were all Dutch you know, the NEI pilots, they were all Dutch. And he actually he had been in Australia many years before, his father had been in the diplomatic service. So anyway we're enjoying dinner and of course I'd never been a drinker, I'd never, in my home, a bottle of sherry would be unusual if we had a bottle of sherry, Christmas time there'd be a little beer and that.

02:30 So anyway along comes the waiter and they had these large glasses and he's pouring out wine. And silly Daphne of course doesn't realise as I'm eating away and talking and everything, drinking the wine, sipping it down, everything seems quite nice, it's very palatable. And the waiter'd come along, tip out some more, and foolishly I was just enjoying it as a, as nice liquid you see. So anyway the end of

03:00 the dinner came and then time to go now with, getting on, quite a bit. Daphne stands up and suddenly the floor starts to go like that, the floor was starting to recede from me. And I said to the young man with me, I said, "Heaven's sake, I must have had too much to drink!" And I was feeling so terribly obvious, you know, there

03:30 in uniform, in the middle of the restaurant in the VIP Hotel Canberra. I said, "Oh for heaven's sake John, get me to the foyer, somewhere or other, where I can get some black coffee or something or other." So he takes my arm thankfully and guides me out to the foyer or the entrance part where they... That taught me the best lesson I've ever had in my life.

04:00 I have never, I've never ever drank more than a mouthful of this or a mouthful of that, never ever, taught me a very, very rigid lesson. But it certainly was an embarrassing moment, I'll never forget it. You're so much aware of the fact that you're in uniform and here you are and the floor is just receding from you. Oh, how difficult, how easy it was to be just sitting there talking and the waiter filling up your

04:30 glass. That was my one and only real experience with Canberra, Canberra Hotel.

What were the civilian people like at the NEI...

Oh, the civilians, two civilians that worked there.

the air force there, who were they?

Oh, Betty Hunter was the secretary to the commanding officer

05:00 and the other one, Gertrude, or we called her 'Gussie', she was the, in charge of the barracks you know, to see that the maids change the linen and had the linen cleaned, she was, in other words, she was the house keeper. So their life was pretty boring, pretty boring. She fin…, actually she finally married one of the Dutch officers, this Betty Hunter

05:30 did. But life for them was fairly boring for them, They quite used to enjoy my company, just the change of person, coming from service. We'd talk about the life in service and different things like that and they quite enjoyed, and they got a particular thrill out of the fact that I could get these, could hitchhike these plane

06:00 trips down to Sydney.

You told us about...?

In fact they envied me, this is what happened on VP [Victory in the Pacific] Day, you see, what led up to VP Day.

Well you told us about the first one of those flights, are there any others, you said you took a handful, were there any others that still hold out in your memory?

That was the most, the first one was the most important one when Major Nimmo was in the plane and he was the one that had asked me if I'd like to have a fly.

06:30 And that was the, the other flights were just plane flights, no...

What did your own CO or anyone at Harman know about this?

They never knew, never knew, nobody knew, I kept it absolutely, except my friends knew. And two of them asked me if they could, "Can you get us a plane trip too?" Which I did. A funny episode happened with one of them, Marge, we used to laugh after it, years

later. She asked me if she could go and I said, “Oh all right, I’ll see whether I can get you on the plane.” So she was the second one, my first one was my dear friend Irene who’d been also transferred from Moorabbin back to Harman and I’d taken Irene down on a trip. So anyway this one was named Marge, was her name and so okay we got on the plane and we’re heading for Sydney and as we’re approaching

Mascot, Marge says to me, of course we were only, we’re practically standing up, I think we’d take turns in sitting in the mid gunner’s seat, you know, the mid gunner’s seat. And we’re about to, getting close to Sydney and circling around and she says to me, “Daphne, I think I’m going to be sick, I think I’m going to be sick!” And I said to her, “You can’t be sick in their plane!

You can’t be sick in their plane!” I grabbed her hat off her head and I held it out in front of her and I said, “If you’re going to be sick, you be sick in your hat.” Poor thing, we landed safely without her being sick. But I looked upon it, we, both of us had many a laugh for years afterwards when we used to meet over that silly incident, how I grabbed her hat off her head and said, “You can’t be sick in their

plane.” So that was one experience, I didn’t take any more WRANS. But apart from those couple of friends, I don’t think anybody knew, my CO certainly didn’t know, not to my knowledge. Maybe he knew a lot more things that we ever realised he knew.

What was your CO, was it the same CO you had the first time you were in Harman?

He continued on, yes he...

Can you tell us any more about him, you haven’t mentioned a lot about him?

He became a commander.

As a person,

what sort of a person was he?

Well he was wonderful at his job, I think the only thing, his wife lived on the station and his one daughter. But he was a man who had come up from the lower deck, a very rare thing in the navy to happen, to become a commander and start off as an ordinary seaman, but he was

so brilliant at his job. But unfortunately when he did attain, he was first a lieutenant commander, lieutenant commander, and then he became a commander at the very end. But we always found when the other ranking officers visited Harman, for some reason or other he felt inferior

because he could never get over the fact that he came up from the ranks. And he, it used to, in some ways used to upset us because we’d see that our commanding officer, him, we had great respect for in his job, more or less making himself inferior to these other commanders or

captains or whatever they were, that might visit the station. He subject himself a little bit downwards and it rather, it offended us to think that a man that we respected as much as we did. But possibly much more important in a way than the people who were visiting the station, so that was the only thing that was,

troubled him. He was a man who didn’t realise, or didn’t quite realise how important he was, how important he was. But he was very good to us, very, always saw that we got anything that we needed, never any, very, very proud of his WRANS as he called, his ‘girls’ as he called us.

So...

What happened to him after the war, do you know?

He continued on, he was in command until he retired and then he died very, he died suddenly. I never, I lost track of Harman after I left there and got married, I just didn’t, it was only through ex WRANS that when we associated together, we’d meet, we’d all

meet together, quite a while, until 1963 we formed the ex WRANS Association.

I do want to talk about VP Day, but perhaps just on to lead us up to that, you talked before about being physically and mentally exhausted by the end of the war.

That’s right, yeah, that’s right.

What were the events that led up to the end of the war for you, and what was the last six months like?

Well I think that these itchy eyes that I was getting, was having a very bad affect on me.

In fact they had to put me on day duties for a while because it was, I, it was really worrying me a great deal these terribly itchy eyes that I was getting. And strangely enough when war ended, I had a certain amount of leave over, due to me, when war ended in August.

And I had leave due to me and I think I must have had about two or three week’s leave, and I prepared to go on leave. And I had these Tasmanians on my watch and they were really, really a humorous bunch

they were. And they said to,

13:30 I said, “Oh, go home on leave, I suppose I’ll go home on leave, I’d like to have a....” They said, “Why don’t you go over to Tasmania Daph, why don’t you go over to Tasmania?” I said, “How am I going to go over to Tasmania?” I said, “Here I am in Canberra,” and you weren’t, you’re only supposed, when you went on leave, only supposed to go to your home port, you see. I said, “How am I going to?” However the war was over and I said, anyway they started really getting at me,

14:00 “Why don’t you go over?” They get on touch with their family over in Tasmania, okay, they talked me into it. I got a free pass down to Melbourne, managed to acquire a free pass by train down to Melbourne, then by stint of, all this was done without the authorities knowing about it. Then I managed to get myself onto a troopship, because there were still troopships,

14:30 because they were in fear of any submarines that might still not know the war was over. So these troopships had to be in blackout on the troopship, I got myself on a troop ship across to Tasmania. Then I got on a train, this time I had, I don’t think I paid my fare on the train, no, I think I managed to get a free pass on the train. Headed down from where we landed

15:00 by ship. Went, headed for Hobart and then I was met by one of their, my Tasmanian friend’s sisters or cousins, they booked me into a very, very classy hotel in Hobart which I thoroughly enjoyed. In fact one of the photographs you’ve got out there is one of the newspapers found out I was in Hobart in

15:30 uniform. I don’t think they’d seen too many women in uniform in Tasmania and they came to the hotel and got me to, take a photograph of me, and that’s the photograph of me there where I’m supposed to be writing a letter home, you see. So I had a wonderful week, met a young naval lieutenant who was also on leave. He’d been up in New Guinea and

16:00 he was from Melbourne but he also had taken a week’s leave in, over in Tasmania. So we got together and we went everywhere. Went out to the, out to where the convict’s place, went over the university because he had been studying in Melbourne University. Went over the university, we went to the casino, we went everywhere for the week that I was in Hobart. Anyway I left, then I left, then I proceeded

16:30 to go, have a tour of, I went up to Launceston, met one of the girl’s mothers there. And then I went over to, oh that terrible mining town, what is it, oh, it’s a terrible place, it’s about ninety, I’d got on a bus and it’s about ninety curves going down to, what’s it called, Geraldtown or Queenstown or whatever it is, an old mining town

17:00 in Tasmania. And it was a, they mined for, what’s that mineral, whatever that mineral is that they used to mine for. All around the hills, it struck me, all the hills getting down there, were bare and there was an odd tree here and there amongst it. And it made you think of a fowl,

17:30 a WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK , when it’s been plucked, you know, and a few feathers had been still sticking in the WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK . Anyway we arrived in this, oh, down there in the town and it was as cold and bleak as can be, I think I only stayed one night. Then we went across that king’s river, I went across the king’s river, went right over to the western side of Tasmania and circled right around, came back to get the

18:00 ship back to Melbourne and that’s when we had the big waterside strike was on, waterside strike, no ships were running. So, I had to talk myself on to a plane, which I did, happened to do.

How does one talk their way on to a plane?

I don’t know, it’s surprising what a uniform can do.

Was there batting of eyelashes or...?

I talked myself on to a Douglas plane, a troop train, a troop plane

18:30 and got back to Melbourne on the troop plane, got on a train and went home to Sydney. All the time none of the authorities knew where I was, or what I was doing. So I rather enjoyed doing things like that, getting away with it.

Did that trip to Tasmania happen just after the war had been declared over, is that right?

It was October.

October. Do you remember where you were when you

19:00 **heard the news on VP Day itself?**

I was on duty, on duty when, when VP day was announced, I was on duty.

And what happened at Harman?

I can, well, it was as dead as a door nail, dead as a door nail. Here it was, the war was over, we were still flat out with work, you know, a lot of signals going and coming and backwards and forwards and that. But everything was so

19:30 dead, there was no bright, you'd expect fire crackers to be going off, everything to be happening, the war was over! I came off duty at twelve o'clock noon, what did I do, got on my bike, I went up to the NEI Barracks. There I found Betty and Gussie miserable as anything because the war's over, everything is as dead as a door nail. There's

20:00 hardly any pilots around, nobody around, they'd taken off and probably enjoying themselves somewhere. And they're sitting there as miserable as can be and then they said to me, "Do you know Daphne, there's a plane going down to Melbourne at five o'clock, why don't you go on it?" I said, "I can't go on a plane down to Melbourne." I was off at midday, it was a Friday,

20:30 I was off at midday, I had to go back on duty, the next day, Saturday at midday. Officially I was on twenty-four hour's leave, you see. And they said, "Huh, we'd be going down if we could but we haven't got a uniform on, we can't do it." The plane is going down, it wasn't a bomber, it was a troop-carrying Dutch plane. And they were going down to pick up diplomats in Melbourne

21:00 to come back for the celebrations that were going to take place the next day, you see, in Canberra. And I'm sitting there and they're talking, they said, "Why don't you go, we dare you to do." I'm saying, "Look, I haven't even got a tooth brush, I'm just gotta..." you know, this was August and it was pretty cold. I think I had my greatcoat on, that, oh, might have only had my Burberry on, you know, that thing, coat. I said, "I can't go down." They said, "I dare you."

21:30 "All right, I'll go." So sure enough the jeep came, I got on the jeep, out I go to Fairburn airport, got on the plane. Again the pilots were very, very nice people and we flew at five o'clock over Kosciusko, and this was August the fifteenth as you know. And the sight was absolutely beautiful, the sun was

22:00 setting in the west and the snow was bare, absolutely, there were no chalets or anything like that, hotels or anything, but it was covered in snow. And he took the plane as low as he could so I could get a really beautiful sight of this snowfield. So we landed in Melbourne and then the shock. I had intended to go over and stay the night with my friends

22:30 at, that I had over in Balwyn you see, the Minister's lady, I had intended to go there, but then the horrible thought struck me when we drove in, in the jeep into Melbourne. I thought, they've got to leave tomorrow morning about eight thirty a.m. and I'm going to be stuck out at Balwyn, how am I going to know how to be, get these pilots.

23:00 So I said to them then, I thought now I gotta think quickly, something's got to be done. I said, "Where do you stay in Melbourne?" They said, "Oh we stay at a little private hotel in Little Lonsdale Street," I think it was a little lane off Lonsdale Street. I said, "Do you think I can get a room there too?" So they said, "Sure, you come along, see what you can." So along I go with them, very embarrassed I was, I can tell

23:30 you when I walked in with these two Dutch pilots and asked the receptionist if she had a spare room for me. I did feel embarrassed because I thought well the wrong ideas could be put on to it. But she was very nice, she gave me a room and I settled in, went out and had the time of my life in Melbourne, VP night. It was

24:00 wonderful to see the way everybody celebrated and I felt as though I was amongst it, finally I'd really come to the, I really was enjoying something that we'd worked for. So sure enough I went back to the hotel, she woke us up in the morning, gave us a little bit of breakfast and got on a jeep. Back I went to Canberra, went back to the barracks,

24:30 picked up my bike, went back on duty at twelve o'clock and nobody knew where I'd been. I never told anyone for years, what I did.

You've told everyone now.

Yeah I've told everyone now, oh well I have told them since then. But it just gave me such a thrill to think that, well, what you can inoffensively do, I didn't offend anyone,

25:00 I just felt I'd earned it, I felt I'd earned it.

You got away with quite a lot, by the sound of things.

Oh well, it was, it, I did my duty, that was the main thing and I carried out my duties very efficiently, so that was the most important thing.

We'll pause for a second there. ... questions to round off the interview now cause we're getting near the end, we have to finish at some point, so we'll go on from the end of the war. We're rolling?

25:30 **What was the period after the war like, you mentioned it was a bit depressing not having your discharge come up immediately, what was that period of waiting like for you?**

I didn't have to wait long, the compassionate discharge came through very quickly.

You didn't know that to begin with though, what, can you take us through the process of you

getting your discharge again?

Well

26:00 it was a shock when we found out that, when the war ended and you found out that you were thinking, you know, after four and a half years of, particularly watch keeping duties, that you could get out. And I had always kept in touch with Universal Pictures, when I was home on leave,

26:30 I'd quite periodically call in to the office and I knew that they were anxious for me to come back there, they wanted me to come back with open arms, they were welcoming me back. And then to suddenly find that here I was, because I was only, I turned twenty-four actually in October 1945 and here I was, but prior to that, I was only

27:00 twenty-three when the war ended. And I was very, hugely disappointed to find out that I was going to have to wait, if it, could be even as far as April 1946 before I'd get out, if it followed its normal course, according to the point system, it's what, you got out on point system. So that's when I,

27:30 I didn't know how I was going to get out, I approached Third Officer Pat Ross, who had been one of the WRANS, original WRANS, and I expressed to her my disappointment that I wasn't going to get out, and I wasn't well. And so she was the one who immediately said, "Well try compassionate grounds, have you got any grounds for

28:00 compassionate." I said, "Yes, of course, my mother's getting on in years, she's got very, very high blood pressure, course they want me home if they can get me home." So she said, "All right, see your family doctor," whom we'd had for many, many years, and he unhesitatingly gave me a letter to say that I was needed home.

28:30 And that was, that was it, I became... as a matter of fact it was funny, his daughter had joined the navy too, I don't think she had joined in a very good, I think she had never got beyond being a stewardess. So when I told Doctor Gunning that I was successful in getting out, he said, "My word," he said, "I'm going to try this to get my daughter out of the navy."

29:00 **What were your emotions on leaving the navy after the four years you'd spent?**

It wasn't so much leaving the navy, I don't think I, that worried me, but I did find it very hard to re-adjust myself to life back home. Not so much my home life but re-adjust myself to the society that we

29:30 suddenly became. I was very happy at Universal, I was completely happy in my work there, that part of it. But I found my friends had all scattered, all my friends had scattered, it was very hard to find a friend that was around. I found the adjustment was very, very hard, quite hard.

How had the experience of the war and your service in

30:00 **the WRANS changed you as a person, do you think, how were you different then to when you came out?**

Well I don't know if it, it taught me what friendship and camaraderie can be, because that kept on, that's one part of it that did keep on. The, it taught me

30:30 the value of friendship and how you can be not just friends but you can be comrades, real comrades, team mates, you were mates. And that has kept up for years, right up until, up until now even, the few that are left. I have one friend that's, she's up, lives up at Banoon Point now, up in Toowoomba. Actually

31:00 I mentioned her name to one of your ladies that spoke to me, I told you that, her name had been Judy Alley, she was a WRAN Eleven or something like that. And I said, "She would be delighted to talk to you if you wanted to," lovely personality she had. Well she lost her husband last year, he died, he had served in the army, her husband, so, and she would be slightly older than me.

31:30 So you, it is hard to feel that you are losing your friends, I've lost a lot of friends, I've lost a lot of friends.

What does having been a WRAN and indeed WRAN Number Seven as you were, what does that mean to you today?

It means a lot to me, it means a lot to me. As a matter of fact even on my, in my obituary, I want that to be put in my

32:00 obituary, that I was an ex-WRAN, WR Seven. I'm always very pleased to read the obituaries up, any of our soldiers that've died, I'm always very pleased to read in the paper, different ones, I like to read it. I have, haven't found of late any, sometimes you'll find somebody who's served in the women's service or put down,

32:30 who they were or what they were. But I have instructed my family that I want this in my obituary, that I was WR Seven, just the same as many soldiers put in their number and where they served, ex-prisoner of war or whatever they were. I think this is most important that it is something that you want to be the last

33:00 little message you leave. So yes it is, I am very grateful and thankful to Mrs McKenzie for the way she taught us to be responsible, disciplined and to be, realise that the work we were doing was very important to our country. So...

33:30 **How do you feel...?**

they're the things that have, that I have found have been of great help to me through my... and I always, through my whole married life, even with my four children, I always tried to encourage my children to do the best they could in whatever they did. And my second son, he, my, the one you met

34:00 today, he's a nurse, he only works night duties, he works night duties at... Unfortunately his marriage broke up about twenty years ago, which has left him rather unhappy in life. But he's a nurse and he works mostly night duty, that's why he happened to be here today. And my eldest daughter, she did very, very well, she

34:30 spent five years in Los Angeles, representing Michael Gudinsky as representative of his record label, she spent five years in America as a public relations... did very, very well in public relations she did. That was my eldest daughter. My second son has two degrees, he got his

35:00 first degree in science and then he decided, after teaching for sixteen years at Lismore Trinity Grammar, that he'd like to study law. So he did law long distance, you know what I mean. He'd come down about every three months and go to Sydney University, so he's been a lawyer, practising lawyer now for six years in Port Macquarie. Lovely wife who's a,

35:30 does part time teaching and three beautiful children.

What values do you think that your life experience has let you impart to your children?

Well I think this is what I imparted to them, they, the, they are all still very conscious of their Christian faith, they still, it's very important to them. And standards and

36:00 values, I've tried to instil that in them. And I feel very pleased that they have all responded very well. And I, it hasn't been easy, they've gone through peer pressure and all different things like that, but they've all come through very, very well.

Okay we're coming to the end of the interview. Just a couple more questions, one is just leading

36:30 **on from what we were talking about a moment ago about how you'd like the WRANS to be remembered. How do you feel about the way women in war and the women's role in the Second World War has been remembered in the last sixty years?**

Well I don't know, all I can say is what I wrote in this article, when I wrote this article for `Ditty Box'. I just said in there, I think I had

37:00 responded to an article that had been written by one of our members and she had written the article to 'The Way We Were,' and she spoke about what it was like, she hadn't joined up, about twelve months after me. But when I wrote this one, I wrote, `The Way It Was,' what it was like to be one of those fourteen and how you

37:30 felt to go up to Canberra. And then I concluded it by saying that, "World War II is long past, but because out country was attacked by a determined and relentless enemy, historically it will rank in the foremost position of having supplied a conspicuous number of service personnel who ably and selflessly

38:00 contributed to securing Australia's survival as a secure and free nation. Together with the men who served, regardless of whether in the navy, army or air force, I trust the servicewomen will be remembered, for they carried on with distinction through those worst of times, yet undoubtedly they encountered never-to-

38:30 be-forgotten best of times." So that's all I can say as regards servicewomen, that's all.

That's a very good point to end it. I guess the last question then if the Archive will be put away for fifty or a hundred years, if someone was coming across this interview in the distant future, is there any last words you might have to them, to someone watching this in the...?

What, about Australia or...?

Any personal message, any words at

39:00 **all, you can say whatever you like, but usually just a personal message, advice, something that you've learned in your life?**

Well I just hope that in a hundred years time that they are free, democratic and a tolerant people, that's all I hope, because that's the most important thing that you've gotta have, you've gotta have tolerance, for those that are different to you. You

39:30 can’t... I just hope that they will be free and accept the fact that every individual has to accept responsibilities. You can’t be always making excuses for yourself, you’ve got to accept responsibilities, it’s a very important part of life.

40:00 So I just hope in a hundred years time that they are lucky enough to be living in as good a country as I’m living in at the moment. That’s all I can wish for.

Well here, here. On that point, thank you very much for taking part in this interview today Daphne, it’s been a real pleasure talking to you.

My pleasure, thank you.

You’re welcome and thank you.