Australians at War Film Archive

John Kenneally (Paddy) - Transcript of interview

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Tape 1

00:31 **Okay, if you could start please with your life in bullet points?**

Well I was born in Ireland on the 7th of February, 1916 and two months after I was born the rebellion broke out in Dublin and that rebellion and the aftermath had a great bearing on my life and how I looked at things. I know that sounds ridiculous when you're

01:00 only two months old but I can remember the British soldiers raiding our house, looking for my father because they thought my father was in the IRA [Irish Republican Army]. His two brothers were in the IRA, two of his brothers were in the IRA but my father was seaman and we were very fortunate that the man in charge of the raid that came to our house was a

01:30 Captain McIntyre and he, there was no abuse of anyone in the houses that he raided and furniture wasn't broken and women weren't molested or abused, anything like that with Captain McIntyre but he'd shoot you at the drop of a hat. But he was, I only know this from what my mother said about that but I can remember the British soldiers and pounding on the door with the rifle butts, yelling, "Open the door, open the door," and coming

02:00 in. And everyone in the house, my mother had to have a list of who lived in that house and of course my father's name wasn't on it and she had four children so they wanted to know where my father was and they just wouldn't believe that he was a seaman. In fact when they were raiding our house my father was sailing between Newcastle and Valparaiso in South America, he was on a sailing ship and that was on two years articles to Australia.

02:30 So all during that period my mother bore the brunt of all that on her own and then following that there was a civil war, after the 1921 Treaty, in Ireland there was a civil war when the Republicans would not agree to the treaty that Michael Collins signed in London and civil war erupted and we Irish did to ourselves what the British Army wasn't able to do. We tore ourselves apart,

03:00 families was divided. One of my uncles was fighting with the Free State Army and another of my uncles was still with the Irish Republican Army and that was what Ireland was like in that period, from 1916 to 1923, but we had a very good childhood just the same. We had a wonderful life and we got the

03:30 harvest, I lived on the outskirts of the town. It was only a small town, about four thousand people and it was a very important port in the Middle Ages but we really had a great life because when the school holidays came in August, they get them over there, the long holidays, my mother wouldn't see us until we came in for a meal. We were gone all day and there was the harvest, farms roundabout and they were

04:00 harvesting and there was the docks along the beach, the rocks climbing, everything. We really had a wonderful life. We had no money. The only time I ever saw any money my grandmother would give us a penny or twopence. How she got the penny or twopence I don't know because she had a lot of grandchildren but she managed to do it and that's what life was like. My father came to Ireland about 1921 and of course the troubles were

04:30 at their height at that particular period. The centre of Cork City had been burnt down the British Auxiliaries in reprisal and bridges were down, trees across the road, telegraph wires and everything else so it was a very troublesome period in Ireland.

Tell me about arriving

05:00 **in Australia because we'll go back to the details of your childhood in Ireland but then what happened next?**

Well immigration did not apply to Australia for the people in the south of Ireland after the 1921 Treaty and my father had no chance of saving the fares for bringing us to out to Australia so he said if we went over to England and lived for three months in England, we'd be eligible for the ten pound passage for the family. So my mother packed up and went over to London and

05:30 gets out of the train at Paddington and bundles us into a taxi and tells the taxi driver to take us to a lodging house. Well he drove us all over London and she could not find one accommodation, couldn't find anything. Couldn't find any help either from anyone and that included priests and nuns and the taxi driver said to her, "Look lady, go back to Ireland to your own people." He said, "You can catch the boat train at Paddington at six o'clock,

06:00 you've got plenty of time to get to that." That was about four o'clock in the afternoon and when we got back to Paddington and I only know this from my mother, she said, "How much do I owe you?" And he said, "Eight shillings will do me lady," and my mother said, "I know nothing about taxis but I know you can't drive me all over London all day for eight shillings." He said, "That will do me lady. That will pay for my petrol. You've got enough troubles as it is."

06:30 'Course I only know that from my mother too but say we left Ireland on Wednesday, we were back the following Friday. We went from Ireland to London and back to where we lived in Ireland again in two days. No house, no nothing and we got back and we had to go and live with my grandmother until we got a house ourselves. But my father came home again in 1925 and

07:00 he and my mother had a big, long talk and he said he thought he'd be able to negotiate with the Australian Government that we come to Australia and we'd pay them back and that's what really happened. But that 1925 when he mooted that idea and it was 1927 before we were able to come to Australia. Now all of this was great. It mightn't have been great for my mother but it was great for us. We were

07:30 in taxis, we were travelling in trains and we saw down Tilbury Docks in London and my eyes just popped out like that when I saw all the shipping and Tilbury Docks and huge ocean liners and I thought it was great. But this time when we went to London we had accommodation arranged and we spent four or five days in London before we got aboard the ship and we had a fair look around London, Hyde Park mostly because it gave us plenty of room to

08:00 play in and Rotten Row. And I remember seeing the English ladies and gentlemen with their top hats and scarves and riding a horse and I thought, "My God, they get into an awful lot of gear to ride a horse."

Can we jump forward a minute Paddy to why you decided to join the army, when you decided in Australia?

Actually I had no intention of going to the war at all, absolutely none. I mentioned the Irish Rebellion and what happened in Ireland after it and I had no intention

08:30 of going to any war that England was fighting in and I make no bones about it and if they don't like it that's their bad luck. But I was working on a ship down at East Circular Quay, that sounds ridiculous today but right near where the Opera House is now, was Number Two Wharf Circular Quay and I was working on a little French trader there that went over to Noumea and the foreman on the job was a man named Tommy Ryan. He'd known me since I was a bare foot kid at Miller's Point

09:00 and he poked his head over the hatch and he said, "The Japs have bombed Pearl Harbour." I said, "What?" He said, "The Japs have bombed Pearl Harbour," and I just put my hook on my belt, climbed the ladder and I said, "Get yourself another man." And he said, "Where are you going?" I said, "I'm going up to join the army." He said, "You can't, wharf labourers were a reserved occupation, essential industry," and I said, "I'll get over that alright," and then he said to me, "You're Irish you know?" I said, "I know that

09:30 Tom but this is Australia now." I said, "This is no British Empire job." I said, "This is Australia," and that was it. It took me three days to get into the army, mainly because of Manpower. I think the last man I saw before they finally took me in was a detective and I'm going through my conscious, "Well I haven't been knocking off any cargo, haven't been getting into any trouble, what's this bloke up to?" And he just said to me,

10:00 he said, "You're a wharf labourer," and I thought, "He knows this so what the good of?" And I said, "That's right," and he said, "You know you can't join the army, you're up for a hundred pound fine or six months gaol or both," and that's as true I'm here. He said, "What are you doing joining the army?" And I thought, "I better make this bloke laugh," and I thought, "I pay taxes for all the other people to have a trip and I thought I'd have one and let someone else pay for my trip." He just looked at me and gave a bit of a

10:30 grin and he said to the Manpower bloke, "Some mistake, he's right, you can have him," and when I turned to walk away he said, "Digger, I hope you enjoy your trip." I had to spend three months doing training. I didn't have to go in but I said nothing, and just went in and did it. Took one look at what, the training was with the militia in those days and I thought, "Well this wasn't much good," and when I was

11:00 supposed to report for training a couple of night a week or something like that I just produced the Waterside Workers Federation medal, working for the shipping companies, essential industry and that was it I was finished but any military training I had I got there and that was nothing really there. They were real amateurs not that I was a judge of military.

11:30 Anyway I was in Dubbo camp on, the day they took me into the army was on the 10th of December, 1941 and that day the unit that I joined sailed from Darwin for Timor, the 2/2nd Independent Company, or Number Two Independent Company as they were known then and that was, the day they took me into the army they left Darwin to go to Timor. I was in Dubbo camp for a week and

12:00 all I did was pack my gear and go from one place to the next and they shifted me around.

Okay.

And then I volunteered for the Independent Companies. A man named Dan O'Connor, Captain Dan O'Connor was looking for volunteers from the AIF [Australian Imperial Force] to go into the independent companies and I thought, "Yeah, I'll be in that," so I went down to Wilson's Promontory.

Sorry to interrupt you, let's go back to the beginning and then we'll cover the war, so could you please tell us about your childhood in Ireland, you're early memories?

12:30 Early Ireland? Actually the first thing I can remember about Ireland I can remember my father beating, giving the dog a kick up the tail because he pulled, the dog was under the bed in the house. And the next time I remember my father with the sea kit and that was 1919 and I was only three years of age but I can remember this man with a black moustache and a sea kit like that with him and my mother was crying and

13:00 he was saying something to my mother and I didn't see him again then for another couple of years. He was gone and that was when he joined the sailing ship to come to Australia but as I said all through those troubles and everything else my mother was rearing us. There was a lot of industrial trouble at this time and he got into trouble on the sailing ship because of the troubles in Ireland. The mate was English and the captain was English but the crew were

13:30 Irish and I'd say myself they'd all been ashore at Newcastle and had a few to drink and one word led to another coming back and the (UNCLEAR) got back and the sailing ship was standing off Nobby's Head off Newcastle and one word lead to another between my mate and my father and he called him a Sinn Fein [Republican political party] bastard so

14:00 the fisticuffs started and I think he broke the mate's jaw and threw him over the side. Naturally that finished him with the crew because he was charged with assault. I think they tried to charge him with mutiny but he wasn't aboard the ship anyway so they couldn't. He wasn't disobeying any laws or any lawful orders or anything else and he had to stand trial and he got out of that because the

14:30 skipper had left a statutory declaration behind him, behind when he sailed from Newcastle admitting that Able Seaman Kenneally had assaulted the mate but it was under the most severe provocation. But when you sign two year articles and that's what my father had signed, that's a contract and to make sure you keep your contract only half his pay, which he designated for my mother and she got what she got, the half pay every month.

15:00 The other half pay was kept on the ship until the contract was finished, your two year articles were up so of course I don't know how much money my father had on the ship at that time but the magistrate up at Newcastle awarded the mate whatever he did have to go to him in damages. And my mother's back in Ireland and there's no money coming in and she couldn't get the half pay, not that no-one told her anything and she didn't know where

15:30 my father was. All she knew he was on this sailing ship alright but when no money turned up she couldn't understand it and when he, he went straight down, he had no money and he had nothing and he went straight down and he joined the Australian Seamen's Union and he got a job right away. This is what I was talking about, this would have been about 1920, sometime into 1920 and as soon as he signed on he made

16:00 a sub on his wages that he drew in advance and he cabled that straight back to my mother in Ireland. But my mother still didn't know what had happened or what was on or sort of thing. All she knew was some money came and we had money to carry on. But there was another man from the same town, they were all from that town practically and he broke his leg on the ship or something and they repatriated him back to Ireland and that's when my mother found out what had happened

16:30 to my father on the ship and he was working out here and there was a lot of industrial trouble on the Australian coast at that time. I know the history of it because Tom Walsh of the Seamen's Union and Jacob Johansson and [Prime Minister] Billy Hughes tried to deport them out of the country because they hadn't been born here and they were the heads of the Seamen's Union at that time and Billy wanted to get rid of them. It's all rigmarole but there

17:00 was an awful lot of industrial trouble and of course naturally when my father was out on strike there was no money coming home but my mother as I said was this wonderful woman and she never spent every penny she got as it came into the house. She always made sure she had savings so when the strike periods came along my mother was still able to carry on. She did that all her life.

17:30 **Tell us about the English looking for your father?**

Well they weren't, when they raided the houses they'd put on these spot raids. It happens in every

country that's occupied and in come the soldiers and they try to frighten hell out of the inhabitants but as I said Captain

18:00 McIntyre, as my mother said, he was a very decent man. But my young brother woke up and this was true, he woke up and Captain McIntyre had a big Webley revolver in his hand and I know what a Webley looks like and you don't. It's got a muzzle on it like that (demonstrates), it's a 445 and my brother was sleeping with my mother and he was only about, he'd only be about two years old

18:30 and he woke up and he was crying when he saw the men and Captain McIntyre said, "Don't worry son, I won't hurt you," but my mother said, "But if he was eighteen years old you'd blow his brains out." That's the kind of woman she was. She wasn't overawed by rank or anything else and she knew quite well that we'd have to expect raids because her only brother was also in the

19:00 Republican Army and when my grandmother was raided the soldiers had no intention of putting a bayonet into her but my uncle was sitting there and they were trying to break his nerve. They were questioning him and they couldn't get anything out of him and so they started to prick my grandmother with the bayonets. Now he knew quite well that none of those soldiers were going to bayonet an old woman and so of course it had no result.

19:30 But it wasn't a good time for the country and the country was very divided then on that particular issue. All around the, see there was fifty thousand Irishmen died in France in World War I and you'd never know it. You can go into Edinburgh Castle in Scotland and you'll get the name of every Scotsman that died in World War I and World War II

20:00 but no-one ever says anything about the Irishmen that died in World War I, none of them. But see a lot of those men came back from the war and some of them were very, very pro-English because England was their bread and butter in the army and a lot more was very anti and that was what Ireland was like. But as I said our boyhood was, childhood was good. We had a very good childhood and you're

20:30 extended families, you knew your cousins and your aunties and your uncles and as I said it was only a small town and pretty well everyone knew everybody else and everyone, you were quite safe really. I remember a standing patrol of the British soldiers one time and it was about two hundred yards from our house and I can remember my brother Joe picked up a stick and he pointed it like that (demonstrates) at the soldiers.

21:00 One of the soldiers only shyacking, he grabbed his rifle and he pointed it like that (demonstrates), well as soon as he pointed the rifle I took off but Joe stood there with his stick. We used to sing a song, "Scotch Highlander dressed in blue, lost his petticoat at half past two," because some of the soldiers garrisoned in the town were from one of the Scotch regiments and in fact as a reprisal there

21:30 was an ambush just outside of the town and as a reprisal it was the Hampshire regiment, it was soldiers of the Hampshire that was ambushed but it was the Scotch that came in and did the reprisal and they just broke every window in the shops all along the town but they never killed anyone. But there was a chemist there named Owen and his wife put a Union Jack out the window and she said, "We're loyal to His Majesty, we're loyal to his Majesty"

22:00 and this is how I heard the story. I wouldn't have known anything about it and apparently one of Scotchmen went bang and put a bullet through the flag alright. He wasn't worrying about her or anything and, "Get you're f-ing head or I'll blow it off," and I suppose you can get the picture of what it was like. Whatever happened to us happened to everybody else there too, particularly they

22:30 knew quite well which families were Nationalist and Republican and they knew quite well they had relatives, brothers and uncles and who'd be tied up with the Republican movement even if they weren't on active service. The IRA was a funny kind of army. They had their active service units and most of those blokes were living in the hills because they were on what they called, "The run," and that's what Captain McIntyre thought our father was, he was on the run as they say.

23:00 And that's why anytime he came to the house it was my father he was always looking for and he wouldn't believe my mother that he was a seaman.

And can you tell us about arriving in Australia?

Oh yes, God can I. We had a great time coming out on the ship, six weeks no school, no nothing. We roamed everywhere all over the ship, except up into the first class passengers. We were steerage but the,

23:30 we came into Sydney Harbour on St Patrick's Day 1927, believe it or not and even I can remember the harbour sparkling in the sunlight, beautiful autumn day it was and my mother fell in love with Sydney. She took one look and she loved Sydney from the day she got here to the day she died and it looked absolutely beautiful. And we had seen it, we'd called in at Fremantle, Adelaide and Melbourne and by this time we were used to all the

24:00 men and kids wearing hats. Everyone wore hats and the men had, they didn't have hats as broad as brims as big as the Akubra is now but they had very broad brim hats. And another thing I remember about the wharfies, because it's easy to remember, they all wore collarless shirts and a vest and I looked

down at the wharf and my father he's helping to put the gangway aboard, onto the ship and I guarantee he was the first man up the gangway.

24:30 And we looked down and we go down through the customs and clear and go down and we get into a taxi and I saw trams, I had seen trams in Melbourne but nothing like the Sydney trams. They used to couple two trams together and to me they looked as long as a train. Well I was to learn an awful lot about those trams later on but we came up through the Domain when we were going down to Miller's Point and everything was that different.

25:00 It was absolutely amazing and we go down to some friends of my father, some Australian people and the McCodden's and we had some lunch there and they gave us some bottles and I thought, "What am I going to do with bottles?" Beer bottles and lemonade bottles and there was a little shop across the street and they said, "Take them over there and you'll get some lollies," and we didn't know what lollies were. Sweets we used to call them, "Lollies, what's lollies?," "Oh you'll get them over there, get lollies over there,

25:30 take the bottles over there," so we took the bottles over and sure enough a lemonade bottle was worth a penny and a beer bottle was worth a halfpenny and you got two lollies for a halfpenny and four lollies for a penny. We soon started to pick up an awful lot of bad habits, my brother and I, I can tell you. And the first night we were in Sydney we were standing in that park in Argyle Place now, still there as it was in those days, except there was a horse trough down one end

26:00 of it in those days and the Australian kids they've got the back of a chair that's hooked like that (demonstrates) and they were using it as a toboggan with a long rope tied onto it and one would take his turn squatting on the chair and the others would drag him along. And Joe said to me, "Oh it would be lovely if they'd ask us to play with them, wouldn't it?" They asked us to play alright. The next time they went past one of them went bang and he slapped Joe right across the kiss

26:30 with the back of his hand and he was unfortunate that boy because Joe would use the first thing that got into his hand and the men used to drink beer in the park in those days because the pubs closed at six o'clock and they'd sit around and have a drink and a talk and they'd leave the bottles for the kids to take. At any rate Joe hit the grass and his hand touched a bottle, he grabbed the bottle, jumped up and let fly and he hit the kid in the head with it and that was the first night we were in Australia.

27:00 And within a week we'd had three more fights, that's as true as I'm here. Another kid hit Joe over the head with his school bag, Flagstaff Steps, that's still there today. We were going up to play on the swings and they're coming out of Fort Street school and they're coming down the steps and Joe was up in front of me and as one of them went passed Joe he went bang with his school bag and hit him in the head.

27:30 But he was unlucky because I was down below Joe so I blocked him from coming down, so they ran back up into the park and one went one way and one went the other and I chased one bloke and Joe chased the other but by the time I finished with the bloke I chased and I went around to see how Joe was going and the young fellow was lying on the ground and wouldn't get up so Joe got down on top of him and just carried on punching him. And he was only nine years of age and he was a holy terror.

28:00 There was a family down there and they were a Dutch family, Australians, Dutch descent, the Stigs and anyway they kidnapped three of us on day onto the Harbour Bridge, near the Harbour View Hotel and Joe de Lois was with us, he was an Australian Italian boy and his father had a shop. It's selling antiques and everything there and they were selling ice-cream and vegetables and soft drinks and cigarettes

28:30 and the Stigs said to Joe, "You go down to the shop and bring us back some curls." Curls were a chocolate about that long (demonstrates), very hard and, "Don't forget to bring us some cigarettes too." And Joe promised faithfully that he'd go down and he'd get them and he'd come back and we were being held to ransom. Joe got home and was safe and stayed there and I don't blame him for that either. Anyway the Stigs turned around

29:00 and looked and there was a young fellow there. Pansy we called him, Pansy Liniment. I don't know why we called him Pansy because he was anything but and I didn't know what a pansy was anyway and they said to me, "If you fight Pansy and beat him, we'll let you go," and I fought Pansy and beat him and I wish to God I'd let Pansy beat me, because they belted us black and blue. That's true. I never hurt my mother. No matter what scrapes we got into, no matter what happened my mother would never

29:30 interfere. But when we came home we looked like the 'Wreck of the Hesperus'. She never did anything then and she said, "Who did it?" And we said, "The Stigs," but the next time the Stigs did anything it was my young sister. They twisted her arm up her back. Well Mother went down to Merriman Street, that's where they lived, and she didn't know where they lived but she soon found out and she got, she told Mrs Stig, "What your boys did to my boys"

30:00 she said, "I said nothing about." She said, "That's their business, they're old enough and they've got to look after themselves." She said, "But when they pick on my little daughter," and Mary was only about seven and what they did, she said, "If they don't watch themselves I'll get them put in a place where they won't be able to do anything to anyone, so now you make sure you keep those boys of yours where they are." And I worked on the wharves with them for years and years, the Stigs. I worked with their father, the whole lot

30:30 but I can remember one incident with them and you're talking about Miller's Point. It was a great place to live although we got into all those fights. Once we got to know the kids they were great but I remember the Stigs one day they were running to catch the tram, not to pay their fare to school. They were going up to the Children's Court and one bloke yelled out to his brother that was lagging behind a bit, he said, "Come on, hurry up or you'll be late for the court," but they grew up, they grew up good

31:00 citizens. I mean they were wild youngsters and I knew the three of them after I worked on the wharves with them and knew them pretty well too. Well I knew them pretty well when I was a kid too, too well that day under the Harbour Bridge, but it was absolutely great living down there. Nearly every street tons of kids to play with, every street had a cricket team.

31:30 The High Street, Kent Street, Merriman Street, Windmill Street, Frank Hyde the bloke who used to broadcast the football, he lived down there and I couldn't get into any of them. I could only get into Napoleon Street. There was only five houses in Napoleon Street and they were short of manpower, so I could get a game of cricket with them but I couldn't get into High Street or Kent Street or any of the other streets. I could never get into any of those teams but Joe could, Joe was a very good cricketer.

Tell us about your

32:00 **early working life?**

Well when I left school I was going to be a Marist Brother and the first couple of years everything went well, the third year everything was going bad and I was getting into strife with everyone really and I thought to myself, "John, I'll get kicked out of here for sure," so I said, "I'm leaving." I wouldn't have made a Marist Brother anyway, I know that quite well

32:30 and so I left the Marist Brothers and I was out of work in Sydney and Joe was two years younger than me and by that time I was seventeen and I'd done about, by the time I went to school in Ireland to I left school in Australia I suppose I did about fifteen subjects and I reckon the only thing I ever graduated in was manual labour. I had an awful broad education, that's honest but there was a job

33:00 there advertised carrying typewriters, delivering typewriters, ten shillings a week, that's one dollar per week and Joe said, "You might get that," and I said, "I'm not going for that." I was a bit snobbish after the three years in the Marist Brothers Junior ranks. I had ideas about myself. I used to wear a collar and tie down to breakfast and everything else and Joe said, "You'd better go for it." He said, "You won't get it but you'll learn something," and he was right, I didn't get it and I did learn a lot and

33:30 at any rate never looked like getting a job, 1933 that was and Joe got another job and he made sure I got his job. He took me in and dropped me, told the boss I was a year younger than I was and I got the job. And it was actually on a weekly newspaper, The New Era. It was the official organ of the Douglas Social Credit and something and you've probably never heard about. It was an economic system

34:00 Major Douglas had founded in the 1930's and mainly based on credit. He maintained that credit was what the country ran on and the banks controlled the credit and they still control the credit today. Now I've got a son that worked in the banks for years. He worked in the merchant banks after coming out of the Treasury

34:30 Department and I know in the 1930's the amount of legal tender circulating in Australia was sixty million pounds. That was the amount of pounds, shillings and pence that was circulating amongst the seven million people that populated this country. For every pound that was deposited in the bank the banks loaned out ten pounds worth of credit, loan money and

35:00 that's what they reckoned they could do safely and stay viable if there was a run on the bank or anything else. But Major Douglas said that the private banks had taken over the right of the Government. As far as he was concerned the only one that should be able to issue credit was a government bank, a Commonwealth Bank and that was part of the theory. There was another thing they called the A plus B theorem, which I could never

35:30 make head or tail of. They tended to expound it a bit and by the time they were finished it certainly wasn't like a geometric theory and but they did win government in Alberta in Canada but I don't think they carried out social credit principles. But any way that was where I was working on that paper, and about the only good thing about the job was I used to get a lot of foreign papers and magazines and

36:00 I used to have all the reading material in the world. I learnt an awful lot actually in that one while they were paying me the mammoth amount of ten shillings a week, one dollar a week and I was seventeen years of age. I stayed there for three years and then things weren't going that well and the boss, the editor decided, he owned the paper as well, it had gone bankrupt and he'd bought it and any

36:30 rate he'd decided he'd, I suppose in today's language you'd call it restructure. Same as restructuring anywhere else, it meant getting rid of someone and at any rate the man who was above me, he was sacked. He was getting four pound four a week and I was given his job and I was going to get two pound a week but when they got rid of

37:00 him and I was going to do both our work but when they got rid of him I never knew what it was all about at first but when I found out and I got my pay, I didn't get two pound, I got my old wages. I was

on a pound by that time and I didn't turn up for work the next day until ten o'clock and I came in all dressed up, suit, collar and tie and they said, "You're running late Paddy," and I said, "No I'm

37:30 not." I said, "What am I late for?," "You're late for work." I said, "I'm not. I don't work here anymore." "Since when?" I said, "Since last night." "Oh." So at any rate I said I want a reference and I can remember the girl secretary she typed the reference out and I can quote it to this day, "John Patrick Kenneally has worked here for three years and leaves here of his own accord." So you can just imagine what chance I, everyone had to have references in those days.

38:00 You can just imagine what chance I had of getting a job on that reference and I was out of work and it was just before my twenty first birthday. When my twenty first birthday came around I came down to breakfast this morning and there's an oblong box on my plate and I must have been in a sore mood and I wish to God I'd bitten my tongue. I looked at my mother and she said, "What's wrong?" I said, "Am I getting cardboard wheat because I'm out of work?" And this is as true as I'm

38:30 here and she said, "Have a look and see what's in the cardboard first," and she'd given me a watch. Now the money was very tight although at that time because there was another seamen's strike in 1935 and my father was out of work for a long, long time because he wouldn't go down. Menzies was Attorney General of Australia and seamen had to have a licence and my father was a bit

39:00 tardy in going down to get the licence and when he got down to get it the snotty nosed bastard behind the counter said to him, he said, "Strike finished six weeks ago." He said, "Why haven't you come down before now?" My father said, "I didn't think I'd have to get a licence to do something I've been doing all my life." He said, "Right, got none," and it was nearly two years before he got a ship and my mother and brother,

39:30 sister and brother and myself, the only money coming into the house was what we bought in.

Tape 2

00:32 **So tell us about your other early jobs please?**

The other early jobs as I said were casual. I remember shifting furniture, worked three days one time and the man gave me six bob, six shillings, sixty cents for three days work. This Toby Brown was the woman's name and she had a big sheep property down the Riverina

01:00 and she bought a mansion in New Guinea for their town house and we were shifting the furniture into it. It was way up Carabella Street and then you climbed up onto the verandah. I don't know whether you know Kirribilli or not? You do? Well you know what those old places in Carabella Street are like? Well I spent three days shifting furniture into one of those houses and when I went to get my pay he gave me six bob, and I said, "What's this for Phil?" And he said, "That's your pay," and I said, "I spent three days there."

01:30 "Oh," he said, "Things are tough," and I threw the three six bob on the table and said, "Keep it and you know what you can do with it," I said, "And don't come looking for me anymore." I never even took the six bob and I've done that twice in my life when I've walked out of work. One man owed two hundred and forty dollars for a job and I had an argument with him and I said, "Keep it, I don't want it, finished." He said, "What?" I said, "I'm

02:00 finished." "What about?" I said, "You know what you can do with the money, I don't want it," and that was it and that was what I was like. Strangely enough we've had a son did the same thing in the Northern Territory and he never even knew about what I had done but he did exactly the same thing, threw the money on the ground and told the bloke to keep it. Anyway that's a different story but it was terribly hard to pick up anything. I remember doing a fence out at Redfern one time. We carried the railings, we carried them from

02:30 right opposite Central Station there in Elizabeth Street, there was a second hand timber yard there and those railings were about eighteen feet long and three by two hardwood and we carried four of them, walked all the way to Redfern with them, in two trips and put up the fence. At the end of the day we got eight shillings each and they wondered like. I don't

03:00 know what things are like today, I've never been really, that was the only time I was ever out of work and I was always trying to get some but I can remember what they used to say about us in those days too, "They don't want work." It was always the story that comes out, "They don't want work." Quite a lot of people don't want work but there's an awful lot of people looking for work and can't get work and in particularly in our days, in that day and age, the bloke we were renting the house from in

03:30 Whaling Road in North Sydney, he came along and he wanted me to shift all the rubbish out of the yard from the previous tenants and they must have been the dirtiest people on the face of the earth. You should have seen the house when we moved into it and I said, "No, I'm not shifting it, it's your property," and of course I wasn't working and of course I was sitting in the sun reading a book and he said, "You're too lazy to live." And that's honest and anyway he had to get someone else to shift the

rubbish out of the yard.

04:00 I wasn't going to shift it out for him. It was his house, not mine and it was there, it was his property too and my mother was objecting to the state of the place but a lot of people had that attitude. I mean I went cleaning bricks one day and it cost me three and six for a tomahawk and it cost me one and four-pence for fares and at the end of the day I got three and six there and they said we didn't want work.

04:30 Anyway someone told me about the Forestry Commission and I was sitting in the Botanical Gardens mulling over it one day and there was a lot of cruise ships come into Sydney, about that time in the 1930s, '37, '38, and I can remember the ship the Franconia, I remember it well. It berths down at the overseas terminal at Circular Quay now but it never looked like that in those days I can tell you but anyway I was sitting there and up came a bloke. He was well dressed and

05:00 he spoke and he had an American accent but that don't mean to say he was an American either and he sat down and he started to talk and of course by that time I'd learnt a bit about Sydney. I was twenty one years old and I thought, "Hello, what does this bloke want?" And I think he was quite genuine actually; he said he was on the cruise ship and he spoke about his family in America and he used an expression, I'd never heard it

05:30 before and he was talking about money. He said, "Well in the States we've got a saying 'fortunes go from shirt sleeves to shirt sleeves," and I said, "Oh, what exactly do you mean?" He said, "Well one generation roll their sleeves up and work," and he says, "The next generation leaves them down and spends it." And I'd never heard that expression and I've never heard it since either, but he told me about his family life there. He told me straight out, he said, "The only

06:00 reason I know my sons are in the house," he says, "When I'm going to the office in the morning is if I see their hats in the hallstand," and he wasn't too enthused about the kind of life rich Americans were leading and funny he didn't have to worry about that. He wasn't talking to a rich American, he was talking to a broken Aussie. But it turned out I still believe he was what he said he was but at first I was a bit wary of him but I think then I was thinking

06:30 about tomorrow going into the Department of Labour and Industry and I'm going to apply for one of those jobs in the Forestry. And they only allowed you to work thirty hours a week. It was a forty four hour week in those days. They only allowed you to work thirty hours a week and you got the basic wage rate for that thirty hours. I was sent to a place out of Narrabri out along the Terrigal.

07:00 I was stuck, I don't know whether you know the north-west or not? We were out about the twenty one mile peak and they'd bring the water out to us and bring our groceries out once a week. Now before we started on the job they gave us a strong pair of trousers and a grey backed flannel shirt and a billycan, a tin plate, a mug and a knife, fork and spoon and a frying pan.

07:30 And one camp oven which we had to share between five men and because, and then the tent you had to sleep in. Well you were never owned the tent anyway but naturally you owned the rest because no-one would want them after you'd worn them and at any rate, a pair of boots, a pair of good strong Blucher boots. And for the first six weeks you only got one shilling per hour, for the first six weeks and they'd give you a week's groceries and that had to

08:00 pay for the groceries and the gear they give you and that's why, and after that you went on the basic wage rate which was round about one and ten-pence halfpenny an hour roughly in those days. The basic wage was only worth about one and eight-pence an hour. I think the basic wage in those days was only about three pounds, six and eight, so but it served us adequately. It was adequate for us because we were out in the bush. We didn't go into town.

08:30 We had a couple of rabbit traps and we stopped buying meat. We just trapped rabbits and ate them with bread. You're bread only came out once a week. By the end of the week you'd be cutting the mould out of it and you had to keep it in a kerosene tin, in a hessian bag, hang it up so the mice couldn't get into it because if the mice got in all you had was a whole heap of tunnels and beautiful tunnels too, perfect circles.

09:00 That's what life was like but I don't know we enjoyed it. There's a lot of paddy melons up there which are a kind of wild melon that grows and we put a stick down at each end and we'd use them for bowls. Stone the crows you'd think we were playing for the world championships sometimes the row that used to go on about how close one person was or wasn't. But the work was good. We were clearing fire breaks. They were

09:30 two chain wide, right round the perimeter of the forest and then we'd put a rabbit proof fence up and by that time I'd been on the cross cut saw, swinging the Kelly axe, grubbing trees out and we were really in good condition. The only thing we were drinking was, I never drank in those days anyway, I didn't drink and the life was really good and I didn't mind it. I went into town

10:00 and I had my first vote when I was up there and I went into town. I went in on the truck on the Friday afternoon when it bought the water out and I voted on the Saturday and I stayed in Narrabri that night and that was the first vote I had in 1937. And I was playing billiards or snooker and the bloke I was playing and he said, "What about having a bet? Two bob a game?" And I thought

10:30 “fair enough, two bob a game,” and I was playing very good. In fact I was surprised. I was playing a lot better than I’d ever played before and with the benefit of hindsight he was making sure I played better. He was putting the balls into position for me to get, I didn’t realise that at the time and anyway, at the evening I said, “I’d better go and have some tea,” and he said, “Are you coming back after tea?” I said, “Oh yeah”

11:00 and he said, “Oh well, I’ll see you after tea and we’ll carry on,” and I said, “Right you are.” And I was in the Greek, there were all Greek restaurants in the country towns in those days, in Narrabri and in comes a long, lean bloke, lean is right and he sat down opposite me. He said, “That was pretty good snooker you were playing in there today mate,” and I said, “Yeah, I’m surprised.” I said, “I’ve never played as well as that in my life,” and he said, “No, you really played well.” He said, “How did you finish up?” I said, “Oh I might be four bob in front,” and he said, “Well if I was you I’d stay

11:30 four bob in front,” and I said, “What do you mean?” He said, “Look,” he said, “If you go back there after tea,” he said, “He’ll want the stakes a bit higher.” I said, “Oh yeah.” He said, “And I’ll tell you now, God knows you were in there this afternoon,” he said, “And that bloke would give you five or six black starts and still beat you.” I said, “Thanks very much,” and he said, “There’s a dance over at West Narrabri,” and he said, “You go over there and it will only cost you two bob to go in,” and he said, “You’ll have a good time at the dance”

12:00 he said, “And you’ll still have your money.” I took his advice and in the country towns in those days there were lots of blokes made a good living playing billiards and playing snooker. I’ve never been in a country town where there wasn’t some bloke who could better than anyone else and never did anything else except play billiards or snooker. I saw it in Warwick in Queensland and Killarney, anywhere I’d ever been, I’d seen it happen. That’s

12:30 what life was like before the war but I got into trouble in the Forestry Department too. We found a bee’s nest in a tree and we had to fell the tree to get to the bees, plenty of green, light a fire and plenty of smoke but no-one would go up and fell the tree because we had to go up, it was a block mark, a block area in the forest and the markings

13:00 were a dead tree but the markings were down about four or five feet and we had to go above that to fell the tree and which meant going up about seven or eight feet, so we made our own kind of scaffold, which was very rough but no-one would go up on it except me. They talked me into going up in it so I got up in it and I fell the tree and everything was right, we got the honey, plenty of honey. We got out of it and the blokes down on the next eighteen mile peg we shared it with him and

13:30 the next week, the following week the ranger came out with the ganger and he said, “You fell a tree Paddy?” And I said, “Yeah.” I said, “I’ve fallen plenty of trees,” and he said, “Yes, but one particular tree for a bee’s nest?” And I said, “That’s right.” He said, “That was marking a block,” and I said, “Yeah, but it’s still marking the block.” I said, “It’s a dead tree and it’s not going to get any deader than it is now,” and I said, “It’s still got the block marks there,” and one word led to another and he said

14:00 “well that’s not what I heard.” And I immediately, I said, “Well the bloke that told you,” I said, “Should have gone down and had a look at the place first before he started carrying tales into Narrabri,” and I turned around and I looked at the ganger and I said, “Why didn’t you give them the right story? Why didn’t you find out about it first?” Anyway that blew over and I had been digging the trench, with rabbit proof fencing you’ve got to put

14:30 the mesh so far into the ground otherwise the rabbits dig down and go under it and anyway he’s measuring and he said, “That drench isn’t deep enough,” and I grabbed the shovel, you had a mark on your shovel and checked it with the wire on the fence that we’d put in and I said, “It looks good enough to me.” I said, “Everywhere I’ve tried it,” I said, “It’s down at the right depth,” and one word led to another and the language I used wasn’t very polite

15:00 and he said, “You’re sacked,” and I said, “Right.” And we were knocking off that, that weekend we were knocking off for Christmas to come home anyway and I said, “I’m telling you what Bill, you’re sacking me alright.” I said, “I’m staying on that payroll until we finish on Friday.” I said, “I’ll be working.” I said, ,” I don’t want to sit in me tent.” I said, “I’ll be working,” but I said, “If you don’t keep me on that payroll.” I said, “When I get paid on Saturday, oh Friday when we go into Narrabri to come home,” I said

15:30 “you won’t be going anywhere for Christmas.” Of course he lived in Narrabri anyway but he kept me on the payroll, I’ll give him that but it meant I was back in Sydney and out of work again and same old thing, bit here, bit there and a bit somewhere else. And I went into the Forestry and of course my record was there and at any rate I went back into the Forestry another time

16:00 and the bloke said, “Look, there it is, you’re dismissed,” and I said, “That’s right,” and he said, “What was it about?” I said, “Well it’s down there I was sacked isn’t it?” And he said, “That’s correct.” He said, “For insubordination or something like that,” and I said, “That’s right.” And he said, “Well righto, what’s your side of the story?” And I told him that then as I’ve told it to you and he said, “Righto, there’s always two sides to a story anyway,” and he said, “Right,” so I got a job. I went back on the Forestry up around the Queensland

16:30 border in the McPherson Ranges and I think it was one of the best times of my life. I went up there. It was far better than Narrabri because the cream truck would go in and in summertime they’d get their

groceries out three or four times a week, so the blokes that were wanting meat or anything else had plenty of fresh meat. I was saving money because of things at home,

17:00 so believe it or not for eighteen months I lived on potatoes, mashed potatoes for my tea, six Weet-bix for my breakfast, four thick slices of bread with marmalade for my lunch and I was never fitter in my life. That's as true as I am here. I, this sounds like boasting but I was probably the best man in the camp on an axe or a cross cut saw. I hated grubbing trees

17:30 and when it came to a cross cut saw or an axe I was probably one of the best men there. That sounds a bit like boasting. I stayed there for eighteen months. I played cricket with the local cricket team, Acacia Plateau and in 1939 I played football for Killarney and the friends I met and the people up there. There's one family there and I still

18:00 correspond with what's left of them, the Tyler family and that's sixty odd years ago when I first knew them, going on seventy years. And I always thought it was one of the best times of my life really up there. They were wonderful people, strangely enough. I'll never forget what Dick Tyler said to me once, I was down at his place, we taught their children how to swim and of course

18:30 that suited us fine because we were always invited up for afternoon tea and the Tyler girls were very easy to look at and they were all beautiful cooks. Like there'd be cakes they'd done for our afternoon tea and Dick said to me one day, "You know what Paddy? You're the only Catholic that has ever been in my house." And that's what the Acacia Plateau was like, they were nearly all Presbyterians, Scotch settlers,

19:00 the Wallace's, Tyler was north of Ireland actually but all the families up there were of Scottish or English descendant mostly. But now when I worked up there in 1938, '39 I can remember the Plateau and there

19:30 must have fifteen or twenty families supported on the dairy farms up there. That place was only thrown open for selection in 1917 and Mrs Tyler had been married about fifteen years in 1917, from what I can make out. And she went up there, she helped clear the property, she had fourteen children and any of the women up there had to go into the local hospital or go to the doctor in Killarney, it was only a cottage hospital and she'd harness

20:00 the sulky and she took them. They were the first family on the plateau to have a motor car and she learnt how to drive it and they were a marvellous family and all the people up there, they were very, they were fine people. Now I went back up there a few years ago, only about four years, five years ago I suppose. One man practically owns all the plateau.

20:30 There's no more families up there. They grow spuds, maybe a few fat cattle and an area of country that supported families and they were big families in 1938, support nothing now but one and to me I went up there and I thought, "God, it's not the same." Everything

21:00 was gone. I think when Mrs Tyler died I think the place died. She was a marvellous woman. She drove a car from up there to Newcastle when she was eighty three years of age but I think when she died the Tyler's there started to sell a few properties up there, like the boys and the in-laws they finished up selling out and of course this bloke

21:30 he gobbled it all up and I reckon the place is dead now, you go through there but it was great.

What happened after you left working there?

Well my turn came down to go on the wharves. I had to wait two years before my turn came up. They couldn't put fifteen hundred men on the wharves right away because it would swamp the labour market. Most of them wouldn't be getting any work so they

22:00 took in five hundred right away and twenty a month, so I had to wait until October 1939 for my turn and I came down, but I fully intended to go back. The Forestry office in Urbenville, the surveyor, the bloke in charge of the surveying and everything else was an Australian who's father was a Swede but his father was a wharf labourer also and he said, "What are you going for Paddy?" And I said, "I'm getting on the wharves," and of course he's talking about the wharves in the Depression years of his

22:30 father. I said, "My father was a wharf labourer," he said, "And he spent more time out of work than he spent in it," which was quite right in 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, right up to 1937 practically. He said, "Look I'll get you a job with the survey gang," he said, "And it will be full time work with the department." I said, "Righto," and when I left to take my medal out on the wharves

23:00 I was going to hang my medal up and go back to the bush. I bought a return railway ticket to go back to Tenterfield and sixty odd miles out to Acacia Plateau. But while I was down, when I got my medal I went to work on the Monday and I got a job on a ship called the Taranaki. Now I'd lived on the waterfront all my life, played around ships and everything else but I'd never worked on the wharves and

23:30 a bloke named Bob Bennett he was picking up, I was facing the men picking up the, the men to go work down in the hatch and he had a lot in front of him and Bob Bennett was picking up for the wharf, for men working on the wharf. They were both Dalgetty's Stevedores and he said, "Do you want a job

mate?" And I said, "Yeah, yeah." He said, "Go to gangway at number four hatch." So I got on at Dalgetty's and got to the gangway and had to ask where the gangway at number four hatch is and

24:00 to me the gangway was the thing that went up the side of ship to get you up and down. Anyway, in those days there was only one man on the gangway and the old wharfies woke up right away and, "How much have you done here Nugget, not Curly?" I said, "None, this is my first job.," "Right, you'll be right, you'll be right, this is what you'll have to do," and out comes the first sling and the hatch man takes it out in a hurry and it's got a big four and half swing in

24:30 it and when it's gets over the side, I weigh about ten stone and I'm hanging onto this thing to try and steady it and it's coming back at me and I've got it and then I try and stop it coming back and at last I got it and I'll never forget one of the old truckers, usually the truckers were all men and they had these big two wheeled trucks and he looked up at the hatch and in typical wharfie language he asked him why

25:00 the so and so and so and so he wasn't steadying the sling before he bought it out of the so and so and give the young bloke a go and anyhow things calmed down after that. Well I worked until ten o'clock that night. Started at eight o'clock in the morning, worked until ten o'clock that night and you only got a break at lunch at twelve o'clock and a break for tea at five o'clock, no smoko's, no nothing. And I knocked off that night and I was used to hard work in quarries and all when I was at Acacia Plateau

25:30 and I went home that night and I was dead tired. Every muscle in my body was aching, different kind of work and everything and I thought, "These people who say the wharfies don't work, don't know what they're talking about." I was in good condition and that happened to me a few times on the wharves. The first time I went on a timber job I could hardly straighten me back when I knocked off after twelve hours of making up slings of timber and my bloody back come right. Tom Wright he was the foreman of that job too and

26:00 he said, "What's wrong Jack?" I said, "My bloody back Tom, it's broken," and he said, "Oh yeah, you'll harden up," and that's how it was and you did, you hardened up. Even when I was in the army it used to make me savage. All of these blokes, farmers from Western Australia, they'd come off properties and timber workers and the timber and the forests down there, the kauri forests,

26:30 talk about wharf labourers didn't work, so help me God. Most of the wharfies I knew in my day did, different system all together now, different kind of work, ships are loaded differently, everything is different. But they worked and I've gone to work at eight o'clock one morning and haven't knocked off until seven o'clock the next. That is true as I'm here and that was common. You've got no smokers in the day time and if you were working right round the clock they gave you a smoko at nine o'clock at

27:00 night, and they gave you a meal break at midnight and they gave you another smoko at three o'clock in the morning and outside of your meal breaks they were the only breaks you got in that twenty three hours and that's as true as I'm here and who's to say they don't work. If there was anything that made me savage in the army it was when one of the blokes said the wharfies, and the name they got during the war and everything else and I read letters and

27:30 they said the wharfies in Darwin, well I don't know what the wharfies in Darwin were like but I know the wharfies in Sydney and Melbourne and Brisbane they was not too many people could keep up to them doing a hard, all the hard work on the wharf was down in the hatch when you're loading and discharging. On the wharf it slowed down an awful lot in the war because the sheds they'd get filled and all that cargo had to be put into the right stack so the marks could be

28:00 read so when they came to pick the cargo up they could just take a look, "Right, that's stacked under H and that stack and that's it," but you take a ship, you can get a ship with five or six thousand ton of cargo. They can take that much more cargo than they can on the wharf. When the cargo's coming out of the ship they have to have it taken off so they as to make enough room and you've seen the sheds on the wharves. They're big sheds. You can go down

28:30 along Wel(UNCLEAR) there or go down to Woolloomooloo and see what used to be the finger wharf and you can see the size of those sheds and they wouldn't even cope with a ship, the cargo.

Can you describe for us when you worked from eight o'clock in the morning until seven the next morning, can you describe the day for us, the work you did?

The work? No, I always worked deep sea. The jobs

29:00 used to last longer but they were harder cargoes, like the interstate ships were just like grocery ships, all manufactured goods and etcetera, etcetera but when you were loading ships for overseas you loaded wool, lead, particularly from the war camp, you loaded wool, lead, steel, sheet steel, frozen cargo and

29:30 meat and butter, of course that comes into frozen cargo. Like I worked on a ship called the Dominion Monarch in 1940 and from, I worked a twelve hour shift on the Saturday, a twelve hour shift on the Monday, a twenty four hour shift Monday, Tuesday, picked her up again on the Wednesday, did another twenty four hours, picked her up again on the

30:00 Friday and did another twenty four hours. That was ninety six hours work I did in that seven day period and my wages came to over eighteen pounds, which was a fortune then but see there was an awful lot

of war time rate and I came home and give my mother, I said, “I had a good week Mum, here’s four quid for my board,” and go in and draw my wages, eighteen quid and go out to races at Randwick and came home broke.

30:30 That was it but that would have been typical. The men that worked on the sugar boats you had to get sixteen bags of the same mark because every sling that came ashore they took a sample of the sugar to get the contents, the sugar content in it and they’d be doing about thirty, forty ton an hour and you had to have sixteen

31:00 bags of the same mark and if it was all bundled in anyhow you had to go searching for the marks to make up your sixteen and the hook was just going. In fact they were going loading and unloading that fast that they had a hook runner. Now the bloke that got the hook running job thought he was on a good thing but he was running dead poor because he carried the hook from the, into the various slings that were made up down the hatch. Unless you’ve been down a hatch it’s hard to understand but you’ve got a big hatch,

31:30 you’ve got four wings in it and you’ve got eight men working down below and the hook’s got to be carried in there, carried in there and carried in there and the bloke that’s running the hook at the end of the day he’d do a twelve hour shift and at the end of the day he wasn’t good for much else except for walking up the hill at Piermont to catch the bus. It was, the men on the lead, they’d do fifty or sixty ton an hour on the lead and as I said

32:00 before it used to make me very angry when they said they never worked, honestly. And some of those men, they were troopers, an old bloke eighty of age. I remember one fellow eighty three years of age and he’s stuck in the shafts of this truck for twelve hours in the day and it’s incredible and he wasn’t a big man. None of them had time to get big and oh no, I always think to myself the finest men I met,

32:30 the men I met in the bush, the people I worked with in the bush, the blokes I met in the army, most of them anyway, great men and the men I worked with on the wharves. I classify those three categories of being the finest men I’ve ever contacted in my life. Now in those days the wharf labourer would knock the eye out of your head if it was cargo but you could leave your gear there and you could have much money as you like in your pocket and

33:00 when we changed and went down to work and our wardrobe was you got a bit of dungaree, stuck it on a string and hung your shirt and trousers on it and you could leave all your possessions there and not a thing would be touched. But they had a different view of cargo and I don’t mind and the story of around about 1939, 1940 one woman

33:30 was married to a bank manager and this other woman said to her, “Oh you’re very lucky you’re married to a bank manager.” She said, “I’d rather be married to a wharf labourer with the pick of the cargo.” And that’s just what kind of stories they had.

What kind of things did the wharfies take?

The things they hated? Injustice was one of the things strangely enough.

34:00 When it came to, they weren’t too happy with the ship owners either. As I said at the rate we worked and the way we worked and we used to get two shillings tea money and if we worked right round the clock we got two shillings supper money but that was deducted from your wages at the end of the week. Any meal money they gave you for working back that was deducted out of your wages. That wasn’t changed until after the war. After the war,

34:30 no, that part was changed during the war, sometime during the war but we never got any holidays, we never got any sick pay. We didn’t get holidays until after the war. We used to load double dumps of wool. Now unless you, a double dump is two bales of wool strapped together. Now you get some of that greasy wool, bellies and crutchings

35:00 and they could weigh anything up to eleven hundred, twelve hundred, thirteen hundred pound in weight and they’d stand about four foot six high, maybe close to five foot and you’d get six men would lift one on top of the other and they’d do that all day, for twelve hours a day and I mean it’s incredible. That work has completely changed, roll on, roll off ships, container cargo.

35:30 Like that time during the lock out with Corrigan [Patricks Stevedores], when Corrigan locked the wharf labourers out of his ships because that’s all container work now and [Federal Industrial Relations Minister] Reith was continually standing up in Parliament and talking about crane movement, now Reith would not have known what a crane movement was. He’d have probably thought it was a crane moving along the wharf, he wouldn’t realise that it was lifting a twenty five ton container to put it aboard a ship and he’s talking about the container movements.

36:00 Now Hamburg was probably one of the quickest working ports in the world and a German came out here from the Hamburg docks and he took one look at the method used here in Australia and he said, “No one can work any faster than they’re working here.” He said, “With the equipment you’ve got and with everything else,” and he said, “When we’re unloading a ship in Hamburg we guarantee that that container can be picked up

36:30 within twenty four hours of coming off the wharf.” He said, “You can’t do it from Sydney.” He said,

"Besides your trucks and everything coming down to the wharf," he said, "You've got buses, cars anything coming and going," and he said, "You could not work Sydney port any faster than it is the way and the equipment you've got." They keep on talking about Singapore but they never talk about the casualty rate on the Singapore ships. I've been to Singapore and unfortunately I never got down to the wharves

37:00 and saw how they worked but Singapore is probably one of the busiest ports in the world and there was Europort in Belgium I think it was, that and Hamburg and Singapore would probably be the biggest working ports in the world. But in the days it was manual work Sydney was considered one of the fastest working ports in the world. I'm talking about the 1930's and '40s.

37:30 It slowed down an awful lot in the 1940's. There was an awful lot of industrial trouble there but at the same time they got an awful lot of conditions they should have had years and years and years ago and didn't surface. Jim Haley he became General Secretary of the Wharfies Union the year I was nominated, 1937. Jim was a Com. I never voted for him in my life on the wharf when I was a wharf labourer but he was a very personable

38:00 man and he was a very able union leader and my, I was not looking at the industrial side. I was looking at the political side and I said, "I'd never vote for Jim Haley." And a lot of the men that I knew, Stan Warren, Mattie Munroe, Tom Nelson, all red hot coms [communists] but yet they were men I liked. They were communists when it was not popular to

38:30 be communist in Australia in the early 1930's. They were communists then. I mean you had all the Parlour Pinks after the war. After Russia came into the war Communism became very fashionable when Russia came into the war and just as well for John Bull that Russia did come into the war because the Russians took the brunt of the fighting from them from 1945 pretty near. But it became fashionable then to become a Parlour Pink [communist] or something like that. Well I've never been a communist

39:00 in my life but there was lots of things they were agitating about that I did agree with because there was nothing but complete injustice and strangely enough we're reverting to it under this present Government with their workplace relations and everything else, they're going back to what they were in the Depression years. They've got people out there that far in debt that they're frightened to do anything about the job they've got. They're frightened to do anything. They're frightened to even go on holidays some of them in case

39:30 someone else comes in to do their work while they're away and they're considered better. I mean I don't think Australia's a good country today, I honestly don't.

We've got to stop there, the tapes at its end.

Materially it is, materially we're miles and miles better off. Now Nora's never gone to work in her life here in Australia but when I was, when I left the wharves I went to work at the Woman's Weekly for a while and hated the job. The easiest job I

40:00 ever had in my life and I hated it and I went concreting. Now I met some great workers out amongst the concreting. They were great workers but principles, they didn't have an ounce of it. They didn't have one iota of principle. They'd steal the eye out of your head. They'd cut prices, they'd do anything. I've never met a worse team of men, apart from their ability to work, I never

40:30 met worst principled men anywhere in my life.

Goodness.

Tape 3

00:31 **Okay, you mentioned before that there was a bit of pilfering that went on from the ships, what sort of things got taken?**

Oh there'd be material. If a job came from Liverpool the pickings were always very good according to the wharfies. Now I've done my share of eating whatever was ever down the hatch and if there was beer down there and I worked in Fremantle and I worked in Hobart and I worked in Port Adelaide,

01:00 but anything that was going to eat, well I helped myself. As far as I was concerned I was earning adequate wages and I didn't have to resort to pilfering and I do remember knocking off a few pairs of nylon stockings just after the war and of course I thought to myself, "Oh that wasn't the right thing to do," and I started to put so much into the St Vincent de Paul box. I was still putting it into the St Vincent de Paul [charity organisation] box when I was working on the wharves on

01:30 Wellington New Zealand years later. I thought, "God, I've paid for those bloody things over and over again," but yes, the pilfering went on. I'll give you an example of how desperate things were from 1929 to 1937. They started to pick up in 37 for the wharf labourers. Now a bow's head weighs ninety pound well in those days the wharfies, everyone had coppers

02:00 in their houses, so the wharfies used to make up a sling of donors and carry it on their shoulder out as firewood for the copper. Well some of those blokes were pretty ingenious. They'd get a bar of lead and they'd put it in and they'd pack the timber around it and you wouldn't even know there was a bar of lead unless you went to lift. And of course they were carrying ninety pound beside the timber. And I'll never forget a bloke named Johnny Burn.

02:30 Johnny Burn I suppose he weighed about, he might have weighed eight and a half stone and we all used to have black bags to carry our gear in but Johnny Burn's Gladstone bag was about twenty four inches long, twenty six inches by twenty six inches and I saw him come off a Yankee ship we were working on one time and he's got his bag over his shoulder and he's bloody near bent double. I don't know what Johnny had in it. I remember another time,

03:00 I remember when ballpoint pens first came out. It was before you were born and there was one bloke down there, I knew him pretty well and he knocked off three hundred pens and he got a quid of gold for them. A ballpoint pen used to cost four quid when they were, of course they were good pens. And another job I worked on, it was a Yankee job too and

03:30 we were working all night on it and it was nearly all Miller's Point working on it as it was down at Dalgetty's and going down below, I could never work out what was wrong with the mate who was in the hatch watching us. We were working on the between decks and there was cargo for Melbourne down below and they found this case that had white silk in it. Well when they went out at tea time they had twenty five yards of white silk wrapped around them. Nine o'clock smoko

04:00 we're going around the clock, they all lived in Miller's Point so they just did another quick dash with another twenty five yards of silk, midnight the same, three o'clock smoko and when we knocked off in the morning, I was working at number two hatch and number two hatch was where the swimming pool was so they had these big steel tops had to be lowered down into the well and of course we had to put a hatch on first. Now the only bloke who could bend outside of me

04:30 in the gang was the foreman stevedore, a man named Jackie Ryan, so he had to climb over the side on the other side of the hatch to get the hatch and guide it into the slot. None of the others could bend, they had their corsets on. Well I reckon you could have bought white silk in Miller's Point for a penny a mile, they had that much of it down there, but they were hard cases. Another time they knocked off a keg of beer. We were working

05:00 on a Yankee ship too and they took it down to number four hatch, which was a chiller hatch, freezer hatch and they put it there for about four hours, let it cool off. We were working round the clock and of course they had their own keg, they had their own bar down the hatch. The only trouble as I said to a man who became a foreman stevedore too later, I said, "According to the thing it's only been brewed three days," and it was going to mature on the way to Pago-Pago,

05:30 that was where it was bound for see and well you never had sicker men in your life from the beer, hadn't properly, hadn't properly seasoned out and God, they were nearly dead. They thought they were going to die. There was a man down there called, "The House of David." Now I think he, I never knew him. In fact I think he died before I went to work there but he was a

06:00 Shetland Islander. Why they called him, "The House of David," he had a big red beard down to there. He was about five feet eight tall I believe and he be nearly five foot broad and he could fight like a thrashing machine. Fight, was, well he'd walk along Hickson Road, Hungry Mile they called it in the Depression years, and the trucks moved aside for him and he'd do anything for a

06:30 fight. But Johnny Burn fixed him. Johnny Burn hit him over the head with an iron bar and that kept him quiet for a while but there was some real characters. Another one, Jimmy Carruthers, was down there, Rolling Jim Dwyer, he was ex-heavy weight champion of Australia, he worked on the wharves, Joe Boy Wilson, Joe Boy Wilson, Patty Griffith, Spider Roach, Albie Roberts, it was full of. Big

07:00 Patrick worked on the wharves. He worked at Patrick Stevedoring for a while and Ronnie James that came out to fight him just after the war, I'll tell you what you had to be careful who you got cheeky with although I never knew any of the boxing, never knew any of them to take advantage of their profession. And footballers, it was full of first grade footballers down on the wharves. Came from

07:30 Balmain, Eastern Suburbs, most of them. You had all kinds of characters down there. I used to see a Swede and he came into work in a collar and tie, like a wharf labourer. There was wrestlers down there. Tom Lurridge worked there for a while, so did George Penchiff. George Penchiff was one of the finest built men I ever saw in my life. He was a man

08:00 of getting up around six feet, beautiful pair of shoulders on him, he was about sixteen stone, he was a beautifully built man. He was a wharf labourer. You met the world down there really and some broken down characters. There was blokes from World War I worked down there when they used to talk about the wharfies. There was Joe Lockett, Joe Lockett had the DCM [Distinguished Conduct Medal] and the MM [Military Medal], Bob Midurie had the MM. Jack Hamilton had the VC [Victoria Cross] and they were the kind of

08:30 men that were getting slandered in the press during the war but I honestly think, that was in my time in the war but I've never known anything happen when Corrigan brought those armed security men in and

they were nearly all Tongans and they were huge men and he went in there with dogs, escorted them into the gates and that was it and Australia tolerated it.

09:00 I don't like the kind of Australia I'm in at the present time. I can tell you that now.

Let's move back to the Australia that you were in before. How did you hear about the war beginning in Europe?

I was working up in, actually we heard about it because I was working up in Acacia Plateau when the war broke out. Like Germany invaded Poland in August 1939, well we knew about Poland being invaded. Well now

09:30 when England, Germany, Australia declared war on Germany or followed England into the war, I can remember the date quite well. It was September the 3rd 1939. That afternoon I'd played football for Killarney at Warwick and I scored the winning try in the match and we only won by one point and we hadn't beaten Warwick in the Ambulance Shield for four or five years and we went over there with a scratch team and won. And I didn't drink beer, I drank that many lemon

10:00 squashes I was out like that but that's, when we got back into Killarney just in time, the proprietor of the Telegraph Hotel there said, "Hold on, hold on." He said, "There's news come over," and we heard Bob Menzies say, "Great Britain is at war with Germany, consequently Australia is at war with Germany," and that was nine o'clock at night. I'm absolutely sure that was about the time we got back to Killarney from

10:30 Warwick and everyone's sitting down there wondering what they're going to do in the war. And that was the main topic up on the job because there was a bloke up there had a wireless and we could get the news at night time. We were all gathered around the tent and we were waiting for the war to start. Of course the war was declared in September 1939 but there was no shots fired until 1940 in Europe anyway, apart from Poland and Norway.

11:00 **Were any of your colleagues, did they want to go and join up?**

The blokes I was working with on the forestry? None of them joined up while I was there but see I left there shortly after because I came down to go on the wharves but the blokes I played football with, Jimmy Clifford, Dominique Donigan and those blokes they all joined up, not in 1939, some time in 1940. A lot of them were in the 2/9th Battalion and

11:30 you might have seen a bit, Mike Carlton wrote a bit in the Herald about the 18th Brigade in Buna and Sanananda. Well that 2/9th Battalion when it went into action in Buna there were six hundred and twenty five officers and men in the battalion and they captured Buna after a week, them and the 2/12th Battalion and the 2/10 Battalion but at the end of that week

12:00 the 2/9th Battalion had two officers and sixty or seventy nine men still on their feet, not casualties and that particular thing. Michael Berger was the general in charge of the Americans and when I came back from Timor I ran into a Yankee from one of those regiments, 124th I think it was, and he said, "We were at Buna." I said, "Yeah, I know there was Americans there."

12:30 He said, "Yes, but," he said, "Your Aussie guys were the ones that captured Buna and Sanananda and Gona." He said, "But at Buna," this is what he said about their officers, he said, "They'd blow and whistle and 'go get em guys' and they'd stay in the fox holes," and to verify that story Michael Berger sacked over sixty of his officers out of that division he had.

13:00 And MacArthur finished up sacking Michael Berger because he was jealous, but that's something different again. That's not the war is it?

Were you interested in joining in 39?

No, I wasn't really. I had no intention of going to war but when you see like those blokes up in Queensland that went away and the wharf labourers I knew that had joined up, just didn't worry about reserve occupations or anything else, there was bundles of them joined up. You always got that

13:30 feeling but I resisted it and I kept on resisting it until the Japs bombed Pearl Harbour and to me then I thought, "Yes, this is Australia's war now." I was not a bit interested in fighting for any kings, queens or empires. I wasn't a bit interested in it. I saw what they did to my country in Ireland and I knew what my Irish history is, I've always been interested in history and I had no intention whatsoever

14:00 of going to any war that England was involved in. I finished up going but of course for different reasons.

There was some industrial problems on the wharves in the early part of the war, tell us about that?

They started to go, actually there was no strikes really as such. They might walk off a ship but they'd be back again the next day. There was the dispute over the tea money.

14:30 That was the first dispute and Mattie Monroe and Tommy Nelson and Stan Warren they were working on Sussex Street. Actually they called themselves, "The Militants," and they wouldn't work after tea unless they got their tea money and of course the ship owner was holding out about it and consequently

we finally got the tea money but it was a fair while after. But the industrial trouble that happened, anything that happened

15:00 from 1941, the end of 41 until I got back on the wharves in 1946, I would not know anything about except what I was told. Why the Stevedoring Industry Commission bought in, there was that much work on the waterfront with the war, it was [Labor Wartime Prime Ministers] Chiffley or Curtin who introduced the stevedoring industry vote and Healy wanted something like that, instead of free selection

15:30 when you stood in front of the foremen and they picked out the men they wanted. He wanted a roster system and any rate the government, the government was at it's end too because there's a union rule that once you start on a job you had to stay there until you finished but there was a lot of outside labour on the wharves at that time. They called them, "Snipers," and the snipers would be working on a job and a better job would turn up and

16:00 there'd be a shortage of labour and they'd leave that job and go for the better job that came in because there was no-one else to be picked up except them. They couldn't have done it if they'd been in the union because you had to stay on the job until you finished if you were a union member but the union had no control over the snipers. Any rate the, Jim Healy was trying to get the snipers in what they called number two something and that but I was away when the stevedoring industry vote came in but I know the reasons they bought it in

16:30 and the reasons were that the wharfies would not take the bad jobs. They had that much work going they could pick and choose what they did and consequently ships would be left idle waiting for labour. At any rate the Government, they voted three times on whether they'd have this roster system in Sydney or not. They voted three times for it and it was defeated twice and on

17:00 the third occasion it was only carried by a very, very small majority. And one of the men at that time who became, at that particular time, now I only know this from hearsay because I was in Timor when that happened, one of the men who was opposing that, Ivor Barrett and Dutchie Young would have been another, he made a statement that

17:30 if that roster system was carried you could do a certain thing to him on the steps of the GPO. Now I know I'd be censored if I said the words so I won't say what he said but you can imagine what they were. Now those men later, when I came back from the war those men were wharf labourers when I went away and when I came back from the war they're union officials.

18:00 Tom, Ivor Barrett, Tom Nelson was another, Mattie Monroe was an official, Stan Warne was an official, they were the communist side of it, not Ivor Barrett and Dutchie Young was an official and they were nominally in the Labor Party in those days and then the, but that was after the war. Before the war none of those men had union officials what so ever, none of them were officials what so ever. They were just ordinary wharf labourers the same as me.

18:30 **When you were a soldier how did you feel to know that there were people back in Australia going on strike?**

Listen my friend, when I came home from Timor in 1943 I wasn't a bit worried about wharf labourers going on strike. I saw what the general attitude of the people were here when they knew they were safe and not one of them was giving one bother about what was happening anywhere else as long as they were doing alright. The people who had sons and daughters at the war, yes,

19:00 but by, I knew a fella said to me and his brothers were in the army and his cousins were in the army and he had a job and a good army and he said, "I don't care how it lasts." And they talk about the wharf labourers, they all talk about the wharf labourers, they want to take a real good hard look at what the general attitude of the bloody population of this country was at that particular time at that particular time when they knew when they were safe and not many of them came out of it with any honour whatsoever.

19:30 And look at the exploitation that went on and look at the black market that evolved and everything else. Now who supported it and who started it? They can't blame Lebanese for that. They weren't in the country. They can't blame Arabs, they can't blame anyone else, their own people were doing it to them. I came back you couldn't get a drink of beer in Sydney practically. The pubs would be open for an hour or something else and

20:00 that was it and all the bottled beer was going to the Americans for the price they were paying for it. They can't talk to me about their bloody patriotism. There wasn't much patriotism amongst those people, as long as their hides were safe and they were making money they didn't give a damn about anything else and a lot of people mightn't agree with me but I've got a good memory.

Okay, let's move on to the process you went through to join up?

Well

20:30 as I said I had no intention and when I'm telling you people now the ship I was working on was at East Circular Quay and there's going to be people if they ever see this and they're going to say, "He's a bloody liar, there's no ships going in there," but they don't know their history of the Sydney waterfront

do they? As I said there was a little French trader running to Noumea and it would bring nickel from Noumea and it would take all groceries

21:00 goods and manufactured goods back and strangely enough, as an aside, I did know about the nickel mines at Noumea because when I worked at Dalgetty's on the Dutch ships they used to get all their labour from Indonesia or Java as they called it then and they'd go down there and they'd be indentured for two years and they'd be going back on the Dutch ships that, the Ducaties and those and they'd be in

21:30 the between decks of the hatches, the whole family because wives and all used to go. Where the men went the wives and they'd do their two years in Noumea in the nickel mines and they'd go back to Java and they'd be millionaires, so I knew about the nickel mines. At any rate I discharged nickel out of there and it was Monday morning, I'm sure it was Monday morning here, yeah it was, and Tom Ryan poked his head over the hatch

22:00 and he said, "The Japs have bombed Pearl Harbour." And I said, "What?" He said, "The Japs have bombed Pearl Harbour," so we all had these bell hooks and I put that in my belt and I climbed up out of the hatch and I said, "You'd better get yourself another man Tom." He said, "Where are you going?" I said, "I'm going to join the army." He said, "You can't, wharf labourers can't join the army," but plenty of them had and I said, "I'll get round that," but it was much stricter when I went up

22:30 and it wasn't as easy as I thought. And then he said to me, he said, "But you're Irish," and as I said he'd known me since I was a kid, known me since I'd come to the country and I just said to him, "Oh it's Australia now Tom," and that was it. I went up to Martin Place and joined up. Went out to the Showground and that's where me trouble started. It was three days before I finally got in the army. They'd x-rayed me and everything was going alright until the Manpower got hold of me

23:00 and that's when the questions started and that's when I had to go and see the detective. And as I said he said, "What are you doing joining the army?" He said, "You're a wharf labourer," and I thought, "Well it's no good trying to deny it, he knows it." So I said, "That's right," and he said, "Well," he said, "You're liable for six months gaol or a hundred pound fine or both"

23:30 and I didn't know that either but he told me that. And I said, "Oh yes," and he said, "What are you doing joining the army?" And I thought, "I'd better make this bloke laugh. I'd better do something with him," and I said, "Well I've been paying taxes for other blokes to go around the world or have trips," I said, "So I decided I'd go for a trip meself." And he just looked at me and he gave a bit of a grin and he said to the Manpower bloke, went over to the Manpower bloke and he said, "He's right, you can have him, he can go." And as I turned to

24:00 leave him he just said, "I hope you enjoy your trip digger [Australian soldier]," and I said, "Thanks." I didn't worry. I think that was on the Friday, that must have been round about, they sent us home on weekend leave and report back to the Showground on Monday. Got to the Showground and we went up to Dubbo camp and that night we left for Dubbo camp and it was my first introduction

24:30 to the life and the army too. I remember this bloke and we got out and we had to march out to the camp and he got faint and he said, I'll never forget, a World War I Digger, said, "Oh you stay aside, we'll arrange for your transport," and there was about as much wrong with him as the man in the moon. At any rate

25:00 while I was in the camp at Dubbo I was getting progressed around pretty smart. I started off in the 1st Training Battalion, then as reinforcements for the 2/1st Battalion and then I was shifted again and shifted again and I finished up over in the line for the 2/4th Battalion. I was supposed to go to the Middle East then, amongst the next batch of reinforcements for the Middle East but I didn't know that.

25:30 But I remember before mess one morning a bloke playing two-up, we were playing two-up before we went into the mess and there was a bloke there tossed sixteen heads. He broke nearly everyone. The instructors were mainly World War I Diggers and of course there was, what between shifting camps I wasn't getting

26:00 much instruction but I remember distinctly the sergeant giving us instructions on using a pick and shovel and what was it, "Strike, break, rake, strike, break, rake, strike, break, rake," and one, two, three and I thought, "Bugger me dead, what's a man doing here?" But they put us on digging a slit trench and I remember well there was an American, a Canadian, a Scotsman and me and not one of us

26:30 came from the same country and not one of us were Australian born. The Scotsman he was a proper little wolf, he was bad news the Scotsman. The Yank, I can't think of his name now, I knew it quite well and he finished up in the 2/5th Commando Company later but he was a big bloke, huge feet but Captain Dan

27:00 O'Connor came looking for recruits for the independent companies and Dan was a pretty good spruiker and he didn't kiss the Blarney Stone and just as well he didn't because God know he'd have owned Australia now. He painted a glowing picture of what independent companies would be like. We'd get sixteen shillings a day, we'd get extra tucker, we'd go on a raid and we'd come home and we'd live like lords, right. We go down to Wilson's Promontory

27:30 in Victoria and we got there on Christmas Day but I remember before we left, Caulfield Racecourse was

an army camp then and this strapping bloke stood up before us. We was taking us down to Foster, a bloke named Wally Marshall. He was a sergeant. He said, “My name is Marshall. I’m a Western Australian and I’m six feet and I can lick any man here.” And I thought, “Oh gee, what the hell have I got myself into?” That’s as true as I’m here

28:00 and I thought, “What the bloody hell have I got myself into here?” Any rate we got down to Wilson’s Promontory and we were going to form the 4th Independent Company. I was there a week and they wanted reinforcements for the 2nd Company that had sailed to Timor the day I got into the army. Bugger me, they were one of the fifty that they picked to go to the 2nd Company. I’d been a week in Dubbo camp, I’d been a week in the training camp

28:30 at Foster and all the rest of the time I’d spent travelling. Any rate we went back to, we left Tidal River camp down on the Promontory, we left it on New Year’s Eve and went up to Caulfield and we were there a couple of days and we travelled by train from there to Terowie in South Australia and then we got on the Ghan from Terowie to Alice Springs

29:00 and caught the trucks from Alice Springs to Larrimah and we got out of the trucks in Larrimah and we got into the cattle trucks in Larrimah and they took us to a camp about seven miles south of Darwin called Winnellie and we were there, we only spent about three days there too. And we got aboard this ship called the Koolana, a Western Australian state boat. Now they were taking the women and

29:30 children out of Darwin and they were supposed to go on the Koolana but they put us aboard instead. We were going to the 2nd, Number Two Independent Company and there was reinforcements for the 2/40th Battalion, the 2/21st Battalion in Ambon, the 2/12th Field Company of Engineers, 2/11th Company of Engineers and in fact one of their blokes going to the engineers, he was going to Ambon, I knew him. I played football against him in Sydney and I don’t know how the poor devil survived,

30:00 whether he survived or not but we got to Kupang and we slept on the Koolana that night and they give us leave the next day in Kupang. I had no money. I was broke. I was broke ten minutes after I got on the ship. I lost eight quid, I had eight quid with me and I lost it playing two-up as soon as I got aboard the ship. And so I went ashore in Kupang

30:30 and I’m a Catholic, always have been, a practising one and I had a walk around Kupang and I had a walk up around where the cathedral is these days and there was a priest there and I thought, “Well I’ll go to confession,” and I’ll never forget when I came out of confession there was a little Kupang boy there and his mate there, one was a Christian and one was, they were both Christians because the Dutch Timor in those days if they weren’t Catholics they were Dutch Reformed Protestants so it was

31:00 a Christian island really Timor, nominally anyway. And as soon as I came out having a talk to the priest etcetera, said to me, “You like jiggy jig?” and the other fellow, the other fellow, the other fellow and he just turned from him and his eyes were flashing fire and he told him off in whatever language he spoke. It might

31:30 have been Malayan and might not have been too, Macassar, but he told him off a treat and I knew what jiggy jig was from working on the Javanese crews on the Dutch ships and I had no illusions about that. I said, “No, that’s fine.” I spent the day walking around Kupang and I was on my own actually. I don’t know what the others did. If they had money they probably went looking for a bit of grog

32:00 but we were put aboard a ship that evening. I remember carrying one bloke aboard. He had been on the grog alright. He was a World War I Digger but he managed to join up again and I can remember throwing him across my shoulders and carrying him down to get on the boat that took us out to the Cinopus. She was supposed to be a Dutch yacht at one time, anyway

32:30 the fifty of us got onto that to go up to Dili to the 2nd Company. So I landed in Dili on the 20th of January 1942. That was exactly six weeks after I joined the army and I tried to spend a week in each camp and the rest of my time was spent travelling and I took one look at…

So at this point you’ve shipped up to Dili, what training had you had?

I’d had none,

33:00 except I’d done a bit at Wilson’s Promontory. That wasn’t parade ground stuff down there. I’d fired a Tommy gun and a rifle and I hadn’t had time to learn about a Bren gun [machine gun]. I was always pretty fit. I was alright, like you got up before breakfast and you ran for three or four miles and then you dived into the ocean and you swam. Well it was alright for us, we were there in the summertime but the unit I went to join they were there in the winter time and they had to do the same thing in winter.

33:30 And I don’t know if you’ve heard of Gordon Hart? He played football, he played with St George the first premiership St George ever won, Gordon Hart played in the centre for them and they bought him up from Wilson’s Promontory to play it. And he scored the first try of the day that day on the Sydney Ground and that was the first premiership St George won. Strangely enough when I go down to Wilson’s Promontory who should they put me into

34:00 Number Four Section and who should be the lieutenant, Gordon Hart. But we had a bit in common, football was one and I knew a family of footballers that he knew quite well too, the Morley brothers and I played football with one of them and then after the war with another one of them and we had a bit in

common. And Gordon was a good officer and I met him again in Timor when the 4th Company came to Timor.

34:30 But they were picking out fifty men to go to the 2nd Company and Dan O'Connor was one of the selectors and the man who became the future CO [commanding officer] of the 4th Company, he was the other. Now I used to always maintain that the 4th Company was being formed so I reckon they wouldn't have been sending fifty of their best men to the 2nd Company, They reckon they did but I think they might have been

35:00 making a snap judgement, I don't know. After a week they probably wouldn't know much about anyone anyway but I always said to Gordon Hart, I said, "Gordon you can't kid me. When you send fifty men to the 2nd you weren't going to send your best." He said, "Paddy, we put them in a hat." Whether they put them in a hat or not I don't know but I was the only bloke that was drawn out of Number Four Section . At any rate it didn't worry me. I went to the 4th Company, the 2nd Company. We

35:30 landed in Dili and it was Number Two Section. Now that unit had only landed five weeks before we had. They'd only got to Timor five weeks before I did and but they'd been all trained at Wilson's Promontory. They'd been, most of them were Western Australians and we'd always heard how good these blokes were and I took one look at the section that was on the aerodrome at the time, Number Two Section, I took one look and I thought, "Cripes, what have we

36:00 joined?" They looked like a lot of scarecrows. They were a superbly fit unit because they'd spent six weeks in the Northern Territory before they went to Timor, building a camp at Katherine. And they were superbly fit and by the time we joined them in January, just on ninety percent of them were suffering from malaria and tropical diseases. They were scarecrows.

36:30 One platoon had four fit men, four fit men out of sixty. Had the Japanese landed then I don't know what would have happened to that unit. I don't know, probably they would have still survived, they were pretty resourceful. Anyway they weren't that impressed with us either but I took one look at them and, "What sort of types are they," and we were lucky, we only spent one night in Dili and they took us out to a camp about twelve miles west of Dili and it

37:00 was an Australian place name and it was given three spurs and C Platoon and Headquarters were there and we were there and they were very standoffish. They didn't have much to do with us and they left us to our own devices, the West Australian blokes. Now I had met West Australians and I suppose out of the best that went there with me that time, that fifty odd that went with me, I was probably the only one that had ever had any experience with West

37:30 Australians and three of the boys that I was with at Mittagong had come from St Alusia College [west of Perth] in Western Australia to be Marist Brothers and I quite remember them talking about secession in those days, so I knew a little bit about the place. Anyhow we only stayed there a few days and we went further west to a place called Railaco and that's where Headquarters was moving too and that's where they put us and then they were going to give

38:00 us our training. Now that was, that would have been about the 24th or 25th of January when we went to Railaco, we did a few route marches, one of the officers wanted a batman and he picked me and I didn't want to be a batman and he said, "Paddy, I'll teach you map reading and everything else." And any rate the first time I took up my batman [servant] duties I had to wait in the offices and I was only a batman until after breakfast.

38:30 I went back and I said, "Find yourself another batman." I said, "I'm not going to wait on anyone." I said, "I'm not waiting on anyone." I said, "If I'm detailed to do it, I'll do it but I'm certainly not doing it voluntarily."

What was your idea of what an independent company was supposed to do?

Well they said they were special. From what we could make out, the commando's as they were later named, in Australia as well as England

39:00 their job was to raid into enemy territory, upset communications and cause whatever damage they could. Now they went up to some of the islands off Norway and there was a great big row about it. Actually that was Number Two Independent Company of the British Army and it all transposed when they got there and there were only a few Germans in the garrison there anyway but they destroyed the fish oil place and whatever installations there they destroyed them.

39:30 But probably the biggest thing as far as the British Army went was the bride of one of Churchill's brain child's and I think that was 1942 and I think that was an absolute fiasco, that raid. You might find a bit about it in probably that, I've got a book written by a man in there, World War II, he spent thirty years researching it and he gives a pretty accurate account of what happened.

Tape 4

00:32 **Paddy, when you arrived in Timor what sort of equipment did you have?**

I had a, all we had, we had Bombay bloomers as we used to call them for shorts. They buttoned up and they went down and you were supposed to send them down at night time. Look the blasted things the army came up with was absolutely ridiculous. I mean the mosquitoes could just fly up them just the same. When our unit went to Timor they had no

01:00 knowledge what so ever of tropical diseases. Now part of Australia is tropical but we didn't have malaria in this country at that time, we get a touch of it now, dengue fever, yes. But they knew nothing about the health problems that could occur in those islands. Now the reason the 2nd Company was sent to Timor,

01:30 a Japanese airline had got a concession for tourist traffic and they were landing at Dili aerodrome and of course that was all malarky too and at any rate there was no bloody tourists from around the world at that time. The war was well and truly on but this was before. And what a lot of people are forgetting is in June 1941

02:00 America and Britain decided no more trade with Japan and Japan couldn't trade with any of the countries that were at war with Germany, so and of course and if you cut Japan off from trade well you strangle it. So you could say the seeds of the war were sown in June 1941, although it didn't happen to December 1941. The Japs had no alternative, they had to go to war or go down and at any rate they went down

02:30 anyway. At any rate we went in there, the 2nd Company was sent there to protect the Portuguese of the colony and to safeguard the aerodrome. Now the Portuguese did not want them. The Portuguese Governor, Calhavano, he told them he did not want any protection, he didn't seek protection,

03:00 Portugal was not in the war, they didn't need it and of course I think the colonel that met him was Colonel Legett and a Dutch colonel, not Van Stratten, his name eludes me for the time being and he wanted time to, they told him that the Dutch and the East Germans were turning the next morning. They'd got up there by plane the night before, the day before and had a meeting with him

03:30 for eight o'clock that morning. Well of course when he wakes up that morning here's the old Sourabeua out on the beer and the Australians and Javanese, there were a couple of hundred Javanese on it too. At any rate they were negotiating about the landing and he asked for time to contact the Government in Lisbon so they gave him

04:00 the time and then they went back to talk again and he asked for some more time and Lieutenant Colonel Van Stratten, the Dutch commander who was going to be the commander of the forces wouldn't grant it. He got in touch with him on the Sourabeua and they said, "No, he's had enough time to talk, that's it." So that's when the landing was going ahead and he couldn't do anything about it but he did ask them. He said not to land right at the town itself,

04:30 Dili itself, because, "If you do," he said, ," I've got to do something." So they landed down a bit further west, down towards the mouth of the Comoro River. I believe the landing was a farce. As I said I wasn't there. I was in Dubbo that time when they were landing but Tony Bowers was telling me about it. He said, "Paddy you should have seen it." He said, "If there'd been any resistance," he said, "We wouldn't have even got as far as the shore."

05:00 They had to round the boats up and they got into these long boats and had to round them up and then be towed in and the boat that was towing them just shot sideways and they shot over the reef onto the beach. Well Tony Bowers was a Bren gunner and he said, "I fell over three times," and he said, "I doubt whether the bloody gun would have fired by the time I got out of the water," but there was no resistance. They took over the aerodrome there

05:30 and later in the afternoon the Javanese landed in the town and that was it. Now the Portuguese told them they were made aware they were, where they were camped. Like they used the aerodrome to start with but they went into a coconut plantation and it was just lousy with mosquitoes and they stood troop for three nights because there was a rumour that Captain De Costa, the Portuguese

06:00 commander was going to attack them. He had Portuguese NCOs [non commissioned officers], probably Portuguese officers and Timorese troops. Now the Timorese are good soldiers, very good soldiers but Van Stratten insisted that the Portuguese Army, first of all the Governor confined the Portuguese Army to barracks so there'd be no incidents and then

06:30 Van Stratten wanted them moved to Aileu so they moved out to Aileu but it took them three days by the time they got everything out, before the last of the troops left the barracks in Dili. And the Australians stood troop for the three nights and of course they were eaten alive by the mosquitoes so that within seventeen days they started to go down with malaria and by the time I got there practically ninety percent of them had malaria. As I said they were in very poor condition.

07:00 **Was there any medication?**

The only, quinine and they had to get it from the Dutch and they only landed with one month's supply of rations, plenty of ammunition but only one month's supply of rations. They had, of course the intention was not to stay there. That is fact. The Portuguese were supposed to be coming from Mozambique in East Africa, two thousand of them and when they were came the Australians

07:30 were going to pull back to Atambua. They had very dire consequences later on. As I said we went straight out into the marsh, any medical, the Dutch were the only ones that had any experience of tropical health conditions. The Australians had none. Even our doctor, he didn't have any but he was a very good doctor just the same. It was that bad they had to commandeer buildings in the town for hospitals.

08:00 In no time at all they never had enough men to do fatigues. It took them weeks to shift into the mountains because they had no men to work and they had only gone, they'd just got 3 Platoon into the mountains and I think B Platoon had gone to Bazartete in the mountains, overlooking the coast. By the time we got there on the 20th of January, that was five weeks after and they didn't look all that crash, good to us either when we got there and they didn't go much on us. But then reinforcements

08:30 are never regarded, they're not regarded, originals always have this sense of superiority despite the fact that they've never fired a shot in anger but by the time the Japanese landed we were part of them. At any rate we'd got to know each other better and sum each up and found out well no different from anyone else. And we were on decent kind of terms, except for

09:00 some of them but as I said we went up to Railaco, which was about another five miles further west of Three Spurs. They had this order in that you had to have your shirt on by four o'clock in the afternoon and your Bombay bloomers down. We had no mosquito nets, no we didn't and at any rate forget about mosquito nets when it comes to fighting. If a man crawls under a mosquito net and he's in a

09:30 front line position or in danger he's a bloody fool. Forget about mosquito nets all together if you're fighting. They can be a trap, anyway we proceeded to do whatever training we had to do at Railaco, which was a bit of route marching and a bit of this and a bit of that and it was mostly labouring. When they wanted

10:00 firewood, they didn't even have an axe to get firewood and they sent me out one day to get firewood and I found a dead tree and I went back and I said, "Give me some gelignite and some detonators and an augur," and they said, "What for?" I said, "I'll get you some firewood." Well I'd worked in the quarries as a powder monkey when I was on Acacia Plateau and the only reason I'd got those jobs was because no-one else would take them. Like no-one wanted to handle the gelignite and I didn't either

10:30 to tell you the truth but I took it. When you first handle gelignite it gives you an awful headache but I'll never forget the first fuses I lit. I took off and the man I was with, this was in Australia, he was an old hand. He'd worked on the Kyogle Tunnel when they'd put the line through to Brisbane and he lit the fuses too, like the long fuses you lit first and the short ones last and tried to get them to go off all together and at any rate I lit my share of fuses and I took off. And when I looked over my shoulder

11:00 Freddy Smith had gone ten yards and stood behind a tree and by that time I was four hundred yards away and ready to go further but I learnt about how to handle it. So when I was, they said, "What do you want the gelignite for?" I said, "I'll get some firewood," but of course I wasn't using full plugs of geli, I just got them up about that much (demonstrates) and I blew the tree apart and then they had to send out working parties to bring it in. But there was no such thing as a cross cut saw or anything.

11:30 Any rate, Callinan, who was our 2IC [Second in Command], he heard the noise of the explosions down at Three Spurs, so a message came up to, a message was sent to Railaco [settlement], "What's all the blooming noises we're hearing?" And of course they didn't know either, the CO [Commanding Officer] didn't know. The engineers just gave me some geli and some dets

12:00 and they'd have been horrified if they'd known. We used to clamp the dets with our teeth, not in the army you clamp them with pliers but that method of getting firewood had to cease right away. That was the end of that. At any rate we didn't need much more firewood because the Japanese landed on the night of the 19th or 20th of February. Now there was only one section on the aerodrome. That was the Number Two Section because all the rest of them were up in the mountains,

12:30 C Platoon was at Three Spurs, Headquarters was at Railaco and A Platoon had moved about another three miles west of us and B Platoon was overlooking the coast at Bazartete. I suppose the nearest troops to Dili at that time would have been at Three Spurs and they definitely heard the gunfire the night the Japanese landed. Now I think I mentioned about this

13:00 business of the Portuguese coming and having dire repercussions for us. They did, now these, you've got to bear in mind these officers were especially trained but there was an awful lot left out of their training. Now the Japanese had already captured Ambon three weeks before. They'd already captured Rabaul three weeks before, not that Rabaul mattered at all but Ambon was about within five hundred miles of Timor and

13:30 the Japanese had captured it two weeks before Singapore surrendered. So when they heard that gunfire that night, there's a book in there written by one of our officers and it's not a good book, I'm not referring to Callinan's book. This was written by one of the other officers and they put the fire down to either the Dutch or the Portuguese. Well it couldn't have been the Portuguese because they'd retired to Aileu,

14:00 they had no artillery any way. What they did have was no good and the guns the Dutch had, what would

the Dutch be doing firing at night time without notifying anyone, so they took no notice of that gunfire. Consequently the next morning the truck had to go into Dili for rations and we had two one ton trucks and they sent us away with two bloody bombs. They were always breaking down but anyway they had to go into Dili to pick up rations and they were getting them from the

14:30 Dutch. We were finished and there was one section used to go into Dili on leave. It was on rotation and Number Seven Section it was their turn to go in on leave and they decided to go in on the ration truck in the morning and they left Three Spurs about six o'clock. Well when they got down overlooking Tibar they could see these ships in the harbour and they said, "Oh the Portuguese have come."

15:00 Up at Three Spurs the officers weren't a bit interested in who had come and who hadn't come and made no investigations about the gunfire they'd heard. Anyway these blokes in the truck had never seen a Japanese in their life, come upon a body of troops down near towards the aerodrome and blew the horn for them to get out of the way, Japanese, they thought they were Javanese.

15:30 The Javanese had green uniforms and these were a kind of a khaki green that the Japanese had. They weren't the dark green that the Javanese had. Anyway of course they were prisoners in no time. Sixteen of them crowded into a one ton ute, they had their rifles with them but they never got a chance to use them and the Japanese took them prisoners and

16:00 they left twelve of them back in the truck and they put two of them walking behind and a Japanese soldier got in the front with the driver and they were just going along slowly. At any rate there was a Javanese, must have been a Javanese machine gun crew because the Australians had gone and they opened up with a machine gun and luckily their projectory was high. The first burst went through the

16:30 canopy of the truck and of course by the time the second burst come there was no-one in the truck but one of the Japanese got hit I believe. A man named Peter Alexander told me this and the Japanese got really wild then. They tied them up, tied their hands behind their backs with sig [signal] wire, took them four at a time

17:00 into a gully, shot them dead. Now Peter Alexander was in the last four. He was the last man in the last four and the Japanese officer pulled him aside and said to him, "You've got ten minutes to tell me where the Japanese consol is otherwise instead of shooting you, we'll behead you." I'm speaking fact now, not fiction and

17:30 Peter Alexander told me years later, he said, "I didn't even know there was a Japanese consul, let alone know where he was." At any rate there was a bit of a diversion and a man and woman and two children come walking up the road and it was the Japanese consul and his wife and two kids. Now they couldn't shoot Peter Alexander in front of his own, their own consul so they got a few kicks

18:00 in the ribs and they took him as a prisoner into Dili. One other man survived that. It was a man called Keith Heres. Now he's still alive today. He's over in Perth. Peter Alexander died about six months ago but he was shot and wounded, he was shot and bayoneted in the neck and on each occasion the bullet missed the jugular vein by just a fraction, the same with the bayonet.

18:30 But he had a wristlet watch on his wrist and the Japanese soldier wanted his wrist watch so he undid his wrist and took the wristlet watch off and then the Japanese took off into Dili, towards Dili anyway. Keith Heres came too and looked up and all he could see was two black faces staring at him out of the bush. All he could see was their faces and he

19:00 started to crawl towards them and they ran off but they went up to their village and they said, "Ida Australa soldada moras boot," one Australian soldier very sick, so this woman, Bartar, God I had the name, I'll probably remember it later. It's immaterial now anyway. She came down, saw Peter Alexander, got some

19:30 men and had him taken up, Keith Heres and had him taken up to the village. Now the Japanese came back again and there should have been fifteen bodies there and there was only fourteen, so they immediately realised that one man must be still alive. So they started hunting for him and now those people in that village hid from the Japanese. They put him into the bush and they only fed him at night time and they dressed his wounds or whatever they could and the Japanese patrols were pretty active and when it got time they could get him

20:00 safely away from there they took him out to the Australians in the mountains. And on the very first day that the Japanese landed in East Timor the Timorese people saved their first Australian soldier. They also saved Merv Ryan and the Portuguese. Merv Ryan was badly wounded in the fighting around the aerodrome that night. Number Two Section held the aerodrome all that night. There was pre-laid charges on the strips ready to blow them so when it was coming on daylight

20:30 they blew the strips because they knew well that once daylight came they knew they'd no longer be able to hold the Japanese. And they well knew that they'd already passed on each side of them anyway and they blew the strips and they escaped through all the debris and everything else but they were broken up. Now there was a man named Kevin Corrin and the two sappers, Bobby Williamson and

21:00 Tex Richards, they got out and they were heading west and they heard these voices up on the ridge only forty yards away, thirty yards away and they immediately flopped down onto the ground and when they

had a good look at the ridge there was a Japanese standing patrol up there with a machine gun mounted and about twelve men, a section of men up there and they laid in that sun all day, within thirty yards of the Japanese and it was Kevin Corrin's twenty first birthday.

21:30 Bobby Williamson fell asleep and he started to snore, and Tex Richards thought, "That bugger, they'll hear him if they don't," but as soon as night came the Japanese moved off and they got through. The crowd that took off along the road to Lahana they ran into the Japanese machine gun post up there and a man named Joe Poynton grabbed a couple of grenades and he silenced the machine gun up there and that

22:00 was another small group and they got through that way. Bernie Callinan had another fellow with him. He was with Dutch headquarters that night when the attacks started on Dili. Now Van Stratten said to him when they were pulling out of Dili, he said he'd rendezvous at Tocolulic and they'd regroup there. Anyway Callinan took a couple of days to get back to the unit because he went to Aileu first, him and Cyril Doyle, and when he got to Aileu he commandeered a car

22:30 and they didn't want to give it to him, so he just pulled his revolver out and said he was taking it. At any rate he took it and he saluted the lady in the car. There was a bit of the British officer about Bernie and he got the car and he got back to Railaco. Well we knew that the Japanese had landed by then because another man, Holly, Slim Holly, he had got through and told them at Three Spurs about the Japanese

23:00 landing. He was in the fighting at the drome too but he was on his own when he came through. As I said they were scattered and anyway the pennies began to fall up at Three Spurs too because the officer who's section had gone into Dili on leave he went off on a patrol on his own, fearing the worst and the worst was right. But they should have feared the bloody worst when the shells were landing in Dili, otherwise they should never have allowed that section to go into Dili

23:30 but that was just one of those things that happened. And the news came through to Railaco and Major Spence called me and a man named Paddy Willoughby, he was a sapper, into the tent, and they had twenty seven horse loads loaded with ammunition and spare rifles, spare Bren guns and whatever stores they had, which was little. And his instructions to us, I can remember them to this day, as he sat

24:00 in there telling us what to do, we had to go down into the Railaco River, keep the ponies fifty yards apart in groups of three and make our way up to beyond the Gleno River, towards Eramera. At any rate we get down into the river and trying to keep a Timor pony and three more ponies fifty yards away from another three Timor ponies, you'd need the Australian Army to do the job. They're used to walking along tracks where the pony in front,

24:30 the second pony had his nose on the first pony's tail and that's what they were like going up the river and Paddy Willoughby and I soon woke up there was no chance of keeping them. We had natives with us, we had Timorese with us, and we got that ammunition up to across the Gleno Bridge which was a fine bridge, a fine concrete bridge and we unloaded the ammunition and there was another sapper there, Babe Teague and we said, "What about some tucker [food] babe?"

25:00 You know what our tea was? A couple of army biscuits and a cup of weak tea. They had no tucker. At any rate we had to go back to Railaco that night. We went back the way we'd come up, we didn't go down the road. We were down on the riverbed approximately below where A Platoon would have been up on the ridge and there was a bit of shooting went

25:30 on. Well we had twenty seven horses till the shooting started and there wasn't much shooting, only about four or five rounds went off. I don't know what happened and that was I didn't know what was happening up there and anyway by the time the last shot was fired we'd got nine left out of twenty seven and nothing we could do about it. We couldn't go chasing them in the dark. We climbed out of the river and we're going through close to the Chinese shops and I said to Paddy Willoughby, I said, "Paddy

26:00 we should be getting challenged." I said, "Surely they've got guards out," and he said, "Yeah," and I let out a mighty roar and I said, "This is the two Paddy's coming through," and I thought, "If there's Japanese in there we wouldn't know what's happened while we're gone, if it's Japanese in there when they start shooting we can be far away enough for them to miss and if it's Australians in there we'll let them know who we are." Well at any rate we got no reply from anyone, so we decided to go into Railaco and when

26:30 we went in there all we could see was a light shining out of what was the sig tent and it was the wireless and I'm making my way over the wire to have a look in it and there's a .45 [pistol] poked in my back and a voice says, "Who's that?" And I said, "Paddy Kenneally.," "What are you doing?" I said, "Coming back." He said, "Where have you been?" I said, "Up the Gleno River shifting ammunition." "Oh right you are, you can go on the Bren gun." I said, "Hold on, we've had no tucker, we've had no nothing." He said

27:00 "go on the Bren gun," and it was Johnny Rhodes, the signals officer. Now the CO had taken the rest of the men and gone into the bush. He left the wireless where it was, Johnny Rhodes to look after it and Corporal O'Brien, he was a sigs corporal. They were the only two there and they put me on this blooming Bren gun and I fell asleep. Johnny Rhodes comes around and I've got my head lying on top of the stock of the Bren gun

27:30 and he says to me, “Hey, wake up, wake up,” and I wake up and I fell asleep again. The next time I wake up he wakes me up and we can hear footsteps down the road, you know, tramp, tramp, tramp. Not footsteps, just tramp and they’re going to be no-one else but soldiers but whose soldiers? And Johnny Rhodes said to, he was the lieut, he only had a revolver and he stayed up by the tent and he said to Johnny O’Brien and I to go down into the ditch, which was about

28:00 seven or eight feet below the level of where the camp was. So we climbed down and I’m trying to get my bayonet and I don’t know but I must have been going to be a great hero that night and I’m trying to get the bayonet onto the rifle and I’m shaking that much it was going everywhere but over the stock. At any rate I finally got it on and Johnny O’Brien he challenges them. We can hear

28:30 them but we can’t see them. He says, “H-h-halt, who goes there?,” “C Platoon.” They’re pulling C Platoon out. That night they pulled them out and we didn’t know that. Johnny Rhodes obviously didn’t know, or he might have known about it. He was the sig and he was probably making sure who it was. Next morning, they passed through they kept on going. The next morning

29:00 they came out of the bush, the other forty men that were there and the CO and one of the officers, a man named Garnett, they’d already sent two men down to cover the Railaco River crossing. And he said to me, “You go down and relieve the men at the river,” and I said, “Now look, I’ve had nothing to eat since yesterday morning,” and he said, “You’ll be right,” he said, “We’ll relieve you.” I go down and I

29:30 relieve the two men that are down there and it was pretty good position in a corn field on the side of a hill overlooking the river. At any rate I’m only there about twenty minutes or so and there’s a whole heap of bang, bang, bangs going on, just like rifle fire and I thought, “God, bugger me dead, that’s coming from up around Railaco,” and I wait and it’s still going on and I thought, “I’d better go up there. No-ones come down to relieve me and I don’t know what’s going on”

30:00 and I thought I’d better go up and see what’s doing. But I went straight up through the bush, I didn’t go up on the road and go up and when I get up there I take a look out and everything’s burning including my pack. They’re burning everything, the bloody officer that sent me down there, Garnett was his name and I salvaged a sleeping bag and a towel and that’s all I had and a spare shirt. My gear was all gone. I didn’t

30:30 even have a toothbrush even. I said to Garnett, he said, “Come on, come on, where have you been?” I said, “Where have I been?” I said, “You ought to know where you sent me.” I said, “You sent me down to cover the river crossing,” and I said, “What about my breakfast?,” “Oh got no time for that now, we’re pulling out, we’re pulling out.” We were. No wonder the blokes were that weak, he was on his hands and knees. The Timorese got a horse and they put him on the horse and took him off, a man named Jimmy Connor, he came from the north coast

31:00 of New South Wales. Anyhow he puts me in the head about two cases of ammunition and some tea and sugar on the rickshaw and a case of bully beef I think, so he put me on pulling that and where we went and I said to a bloke named Squirt Johnson, now Squirt wasn’t eighteen years old at the time, I said, “I’ve got a good mind to shoot that bastard.” He said, “Paddy, we’re in enough trouble without getting into

31:30 kind of trouble.” He had more sense than I had but that Garnett. At any rate we get over to the other side of the Gleno River, up towards Villa Maria and the sappers were up there, C Platoon had kept on going through to Hatolia so I didn’t know. There was an officer named Murphy there with a couple of men and unfortunately for me I was sent up with Garnett again and we

32:00 went up onto a ridge between Villa Maria and Eramera and we were getting tucker but that was all. Mostly we were eating maize, corn, boiled corn. At any rate, I don’t know whether it was from doing too much in a short time or not and I wasn’t feeling all that good and Garnett got me in the morning and he said, “You come with me Paddy.” Now I was loaded down with a Tommy

32:30 gun and four box magazines and a drum magazine. Now a drum magazine held fifty rounds. It was a favourite weapon of the Chicago gangsters in the old days with the Tommy gun and the drum magazine. I had that plus another three or four hundred rounds of ammunition and I was barely able to carry myself let alone that lot. And I took me off and I said, “I’m not feeling good,” and he said, “No, you come with

33:00 me.” I went with him and after about three hours we see a red roofed building in the distance and I thought, “Oh thank God, I’ll be able to put my head down and I’ll be right.” As soon as he sighted that building he turned to me and he said, “You can go back.” He said, “You can go back.” Right. I just went go, stop, go, stop, and I come to a creek, had a pretty substantial

33:30 pool in it and I thought, “Maybe if I get in there and get the cold water I’ll feel a lot better.” So I stripped off, got down into the creek and buried my head in the water. It was high up in the mountains so it was cold and I came out, dried off and I was just getting my shirt and shorts on and up came three natives. One of them grabbed the Tommy gun, one of them grabbed the webbing and I thought, “I can’t do a thing about it.” I was too weak to do anything about it,

34:00 that’s honest. I thought, “Cripes, here I am, can’t do a thing,” and then one of them got on each side of me, picked me up and took me up to their village, sat me in the shade, came out with two boiled eggs

and coffee for me and me own bloody officer had deserted, he'd left me there. He went to that building and stayed there for a couple of days. It was a Portuguese house and a part coffee plantation. He went there and he lived the life of Reilly and then

34:30 came back to where we were. By the time he got back to where we were they wanted more ammunition shifted from the Gleno River and they knew I could handle the horses so they sent up for me and I went down to Villa Maria. They weren't feeling any better at Villa Maria than I was and they told me to go down and pick up, they had five horses for me, Timor ponies. Go down, pick up the ammunition, load the ammunition and bring it back.

35:00 I went down and I remember it was pouring down, pelting down, it was the wet season and I'm looking at headquarters and headquarters was a groundsheet staked into the bank and on a couple of poles and under that was sitting Major Spence. That's his headquarters. Everyone else was standing around in the rain with their groundsheets on them and there was a battery charger sputtering away under another groundsheet, charging the

35:30 batteries for the wireless set. And that was our headquarters at Villa Maria towards I'd say five or six days after the Japanese landed. I got back after shifting the ammunition and the next day I went down and I did two trips and I went back the next day and I did another two. That was, I shifted about twenty five horse loads of ammunition in those three days. When I get back on the third

36:00 after doing me fifth trip there's no-one in Villa Maria. I thought, "Where the hell have they gone now." No-one ever says anything about what's going to happen or anything but Babe Teague was there, the bloke we'd first delivered the ammunition to. I said, "Where is everyone Paddy?" He said, "Oh the sappers are up the mountain here Paddy." I said, "Where's Headquarters?" He said, "They're up the mountain that way," but he said, "I don't know where but I know where the sappers are." He was with the sappers. He said

36:30 "I know where the sappers are," he said, so we got some natives and gave them back their horses, but none of the natives came with me when I was going down for the ammunition and I go with Babe Teague, climb up this bloody great big mountain above Villa Maria and in the morning we wake up, of course they had a guard and everything else on and Don Turton, who was the Japanese sapper officer, he looked at me and he said, "You're not a sapper?" I said, "No."

37:00 He said, "What are you doing here?" I said, "Well," I said, "I got back to Villa Maria last night," I said, "With the ammunition, last lot of ammunition," I said and, "Babe Teague was the only one there and he told me to come up here because you were here." He said, "Well you go back to Headquarters." I said, "I don't know where Headquarters are." He said, "Down the mountain, over the other side," and I said, "Oh right." No breakfast, on my way and I never let Don Turton forget that when I used to see him after. At any rate actually he died

37:30 last Thursday, yeah, he died last Thursday week, but he was a good bloke, just the same. Just because he sent me adrift, he was a good officer and a good man. Any rate I find headquarters on the mountain between Eramera and Villa Maria and I get there in time, they're pulling out. And I heard Campbell Rodd, he was another of our officers, Spence say to Campbell Rodd, "We'll leave a man

38:00 behind down at Villa Maria," and I thought, "Well it's not going to be Paddy Kenneally," so I just took myself out of sight and anyway they left a sapper there, one of the sappers. They left him there and they were pulling out for Hatolia and we spent the next three days going through the mountains. We had no tucker. Now they put me out forward scouting and that's not a bad job when you're retreating.

38:30 It's a lot different when you're advancing. At any rate I thought, "I don't mind being forward scout." I was first into every village that we came too along the mountains and the Timorese are giving me eggs and that and I finished up with about a dozen eggs and a WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK . So that night I said to Rodd, "Well we'll eat anyway," so we kill the WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK and we cook it and we boil the eggs and Roddy says, "What about Spence?" And I said, "Let Spence get his own," and I said, "Where you going?" And he said, "Major Spence," and I said, "Let bloody Major Spence get his bloody own"

39:00 but Roddy took some over for him. Any rate we went into Morobo and that's a bit like they have hot springs at Morobo, something like Rotorua in New Zealand. You could smell the sulphur ten miles away but probably the best overnight camp we ever had. The houses weren't occupied. The Portuguese would only go there to take the hot springs and we camped in the houses that night. The next day we got up

39:30 to Cailaco and I'll never forget going, we crossed over the valley again to go up to Cailaco and one of our men, Roy Martin, we came into a coconut grove and they started to drink the coconut juice and I wouldn't have any. I said, "I don't know, no, I won't have any." Now Angus McLachlan had some and Roy Martin. Now Roy Martin was a very sick man and

40:00 I was last man this time, not first, going up the track to Cailaco and I said to Roy, "Are you right Roy?" And he said, "Oh yeah, I'll be right," and I said, "Are you sure?" He said, "Yeah." He was leaning up against the bank and he said, "I'll be right Paddy," and I went ahead with the rest of them and the next morning I did about two hours guard from about four o'clock on and at daylight Roy Martin has come and I said

40:30 “no need to go on guard Roy, I’ll finish the lot, it’s coming on daylight,” and he said, “I’ve just got here Paddy.” All that night, it took him all that night, he was practically crawling on his hands and knees.

Tape 5

00:31 **As this withdrawal continued, what were the conditions like?**

They were bad. No-one had, the blokes that had money they fed the blokes that didn’t have money but when the money ran out, you got whatever you could. The Timorese gave it to the other Chinese. I was feeding five men. I had five patacas and wouldn’t spend it because while I could cadge

01:00 food I wouldn’t buy any and we weren’t getting along too badly. Roy Martin was very sick, he couldn’t eat. Agnes McLachlan was sick, he wouldn’t eat much, so that only left three of us but the rest of them, some of them were doing a bit better. Where the sergeant major was, they were doing a bit better for food because they had money. They were using the Company money probably and that’s how Atsabi was and

01:30 all over the island was hungry Australians and that was early March. Now Callinan had gone down into Dutch Timor to find out what had happened down there. Callinan was really, Major Spence was the CO but Callinan was the livewire. He went down into Dutch Timor to find out what had happened down there. He found out that that 2/40th Battalion surrendered after three

02:00 days, but that’s another story again. But he came back with the news and in the meantime one of our officers, Captain Baldwin of A Platoon, had met a Portuguese administrator of Fronteira Province, a man named Susa Santos Policar, as long as a wet week, call him Susa Santos. He was the administrator of Fronteira Province. He was very, very

02:30 much pro allied and he came to an arrangement with Baldwin, Spence was introduced to him, Baldwin introduced Spence to him and an agreement was came to, they’d supply us with food and at the end of the war they would be recompensed for whatever it cost. So they came in under what they called a sewer rat system. We wrote a note and we got food. We got it from the Timorese, we got if from the Portuguese

03:00 etcetera and even that changed, it was only the officers that would do the dealing and we’d do the eating. Any rate I reckon that was, once they’d solved that problem of food, now we could have taken the food but once you start taking one thing it don’t stop there, does it? Abuses creep in. Before we know where you are we might have been abusing Timorese or their women or something else like that and

03:30 you can just imagine how long they’re going to tolerate a thing like that? They wouldn’t. Any rate it never came to that, it didn’t come to that. Callinan split the platoons up. He put A Platoon along the border with Dutch Timor, this was a bit later though. At the present time he put them where he could. B Platoon sections went to, one section to Betano,

04:00 one to Hatu Udo and one to Same, headquarters to Same and 6th Section at Fatumaquerec. C Platoon was left in the hot seat. They were left up around, now they were only down, they only had two sections because their third section, 7th Section, had been murdered in that event in Dili. And C Platoon and the sappers they looked the Gleno Valley,

04:30 Eramera, Lete Foho, Villa Maria and it wasn’t a good spot to be in because when the Japs came out the first time they suffered a lot of casualties when Number Four Section ambushed them at Basazartete and Number Two Section ambushed them again at a ridge, south of Basazartete and they must have lost up to sixty or seventy men in casualties in those two ambushes alone.

05:00 Four Section was the unlucky section. They had two men killed and four wounded out of a matter of twelve or fourteen men and the action didn’t last all that long.

So what was the plan now you were up in the hills?

There was no plan. At that particular time there was no plan whatsoever. They only plan they had in mind was first of all to keep the unit intact and to keep it so that it would be an active, could play an active role on the

05:30 island. That’s where Callinan came in, that’s why the sections were split up and the platoons split up. Unfortunately for C Platoon their two sections and the sappers they had to hold the fort around from March, right through April. Callinan’s hands were tied a lot. He was only 2IC. He had a plan to blow up the aeroplanes on the Dili drome. They’d gone in, they’d okayed the place.

06:00 There was Dexter, whom I consider was one of the best officers in our unit. His section was going to be part of it, 6th Section from B Platoon and some men from C Platoon and a bloke named Tomasetti and I were going to bring the explosives in. We had two horse loads of explosives to take in and we got back to Obsardi and it was called off. The CO called it off. Everything was ready to go and we could have done it. We could have done it and

06:30 played havoc with it but the CO called it off because he thought it would arouse the Japs too much, arouse them to the extent they'd be determined to get rid of us at any cost, no matter what it cost. And Spence thought that the unit was in no position to meet that kind of threat at that time. Now Callinan never said one word. He's written

07:00 a book, Independent Company, and he never uttered one word of condemnation or otherwise on that. What he thought was his affair, he never let anyone know. He probably let men like Ludlow know, the captains when they were talking amongst themselves but it was called off and I think it was a mistake, not that I'd have had much part to play it, a couple of horse loads

07:30 of explosives. Someone else would be doing all the fighting and the plans were laid what they were going to do, everything. Any rate it didn't come off.

So what sort of routine did you settle into?

Until the, the section I went to join, I went from Obsardi to Ainaro. We were still at the hungry stage at that time and I can remember looking down into Ainaro, down in the valley and it's a very nice place and it's a nice valley and I said

08:00 to the three or four blokes who were with us, I said, "Golly," there were only four or five of us I think. I said, "There should be plenty of food down in there." Well when we get down into Ainaro, B Platoon is down there all hungry, A Platoon is down there all hungry and we added to them and added to the hunger as well. That's when I went back to Obsardi again because Thomas said he was looking for a bloke

08:30 that could handle horses so he said, "You're just the bloke I'm looking for Paddy, we're going back to Obsardi with two horse loads of explosives." I said, "Righto," and we set out the next day but when we got to Obsardi that's when it was called off. Well Tom Nesbitt, who'd been wounded just after Basazartete, he only got a flesh wound so he was pretty right. He came out of the hospital and he called up to where the staging camp was and he said, "I'm looking for two men, Holden and Kenneally."

09:00 "Yeah, here we are." He said, "You're coming with me," didn't tell us where. We were going to Four Section. All he had to do was tell us that but he never and at any rate we went over to Ainaro and from there to Hatu Udo and when I got to Four Section, and the other sections wouldn't have been as bad a condition but Four Section, out of nineteen men that should have been there take out the three wounded, four wounded and the two killed, there should have been at least twelve men there. There were

09:30 six. The rest of them were off with malaria, away at the hospital with malaria, were sick and couldn't even scratch themselves they were that weak some of them. Anyway we were left down there until April. Now the two C Platoon sections and the sappers they were looking after the Gleno Valley, Lete Foho, Eramera, Villa Maria and in fact they put an ambush on that went all the way as far as Railaco which is a long way east, well behind where the Japanese were.

10:00 Well they ambushed the Japs in there. There were four of them, a Tommy gunner and four rifleman and they took on six truck loads of Japs on their way out to Eramera and of course they didn't last there very long but the Japs got very angry. The ones that were still able they jumped out of the trucks and straight up the hill from where the fire was coming from. Now if you're going to be in an ambush with a Tommy gun it's got to be a close quarters job

10:30 because Tommy guns haven't got the range. Luckily we had a bloke name Doc Wheatley, a kangaroo shooter, and he was further up the ridge and he had a sniper's rifle. Well he knocked off about twelve Japs in about less time than they could fire and that slowed them down a bit. That gave Jack Shean and Scottie Weirs and Andy Smitten I think was the other man.

11:00 Well you had to engage the Japanese at any time you had. A Platoon was sent down to cover the western border with Dexter. Baldwin, their captain, he was seconded to headquarters. He was a very good organiser and Callinan

11:30 was practically running the unit and the men that came up from the Dutch end, we got a hundred and fifty men up from the Dutch end. Now there was a brigadier come through from there, Vale, and he was supposed to have a brigade down in West Timor. Sparrow Force was going to be turned into a brigade strength. There was a battalion of American artillery coming over and there was the 2/4th Pioneers from the Australian Army, the

12:00 AIF but they left Darwin on the 16th, got bombed and returned to Darwin. The Japanese bombed the convoy. They had no losses but they went back to Darwin and the Australians took their troops immediately off the ships. The Americans left their troops on the ships and the Japanese they got in on the 13th of February, which is the day before Darwin was bombed and I believe

12:30 they suffered very high casualties because the Japs sunk something like nineteen ships in Darwin, eleven ships or something and the ship they were on was one of them. But Vale, when the Japanese landed down in Dutch Timor, at Kupang, they landed six hundred naval paratroopers, east of Kupang. This was to stop these Germans retreating. They were supposed to defend the aerodrome Penfui,

13:00 which was quite a good aerodrome because it could take Liberators and Flying Fortress bombers and no trouble at all. That was really what the Japanese wanted. They didn't want Portuguese Timor at all. They wouldn't have gone there if we hadn't of been there, I'm absolutely sure of it. Anyway the 2/40th Battalion played havoc with those paratroopers. They cleared them. They were about, thirty, about thirty kilometres

13:30 east of Kupang and they practically wiped the paratroopers out as an effective force but they had a lot of casualties themselves and Colonel Leggett, their CO, he pulled up for the night and I spoke to a 2/40th Battalion years later, in fact 2000 down in Hobart, and I said, "Why the hell did you stop?" He said, "Oh we had a lot of wounded men Paddy, besides sick men."

14:00 And he said, "It would have meant leaving, try to, leaving them if we were to go on." I don't know how much transport they had and the infantry caught up with them and they had tanks so they gave Leggett ten minutes to surrender, either surrender or fight. Well he took one look at the position he was in and he surrendered. Now the 2/40th Battalion has never been given the credit for the job they did, never.

14:30 I don't give a bugger, including Milinoh [?], there's not too many men practically obliterated six hundred first class fighting men and those naval paratroopers would have been first class and they practically wiped them out.

So what were you doing up in the hills while all this was going on?

We were up in the hills. Well we never knew anything until I think it was Cailaco I ran into first of those blokes that came through. He was a sig, a man named Dave King. I think he came from Norfolk

15:00 Island and, or Lord Howe Island it was, yeah and I thought, "In the name of God whatever made you a soldier?" He was that gentle and he told me about the bully beef and everything they'd left behind them. I found out later from another bloke that came to our section from the 2/40th Battalion, Brigadier Vale abandoned Atambua about the end of February. They had petrol, I don't know what transport

15:30 they had, I couldn't tell you what transport they had. They had plenty of petrol in drums, they had bully beef, they had stores, they had everything. They left the stores behind. They shot holes into the drums of petrol so that it leaked out. Whatever transport they had they ran the motors without oil until the motors seized and they took off. Brigadier Vale said, "Every man for himself."

16:00 He took off with the pick of the men for his own bodyguard. Now one of the men who I know who was in that, he's dead now, Jimmy English, he was a Sydney bloke, he got very sick. He said, "We just crossed the river into Portuguese Timor Paddy," and he said, "I got sick and I couldn't go any further." He said, "They all went off and left me except one man." Now the one man that stayed with him was a man I never had much time for after the war because he was a

16:30 awful bloody liar and he was a man that, I don't know he used to grate on me. I probably grated on him too but Jimmy English said to me, he said, "Paddy, I don't care what you say about Joe, he was the only one that stayed with me when I couldn't go any further."

As the months progressed and things began to settle down a bit more, what were the conditions like up there over such a long period?

Oh we were

17:00 getting better. The health of the unit improved out of sight. Now as I said C Platoon were doing the job on their own, with the sappers [engineers] but at the end of April our section went from Hatu Udo to a place called Remexio, up on the north coast, about twenty kilometres out of Dili and we took us a while to get there. We pulled up here and pulled up there but

17:30 it was the first, B Platoon, that section would have been the first one to go in to start taking any more action. All the sections were in their positions looking after, each one given an area to look after. The food position was good. We were getting regular native food and getting fruit, pigs, buffaloes, whatever and the health of the unit improved out of sight in the mountains.

18:00 And when we went up to Remexio there were only twelve of us, thirteen of us, well twelve men but the Ludlow, he'd gone up before us and Nesbitt had gone up before us and the two, Ray Aikman and one of the corporals. They went up to Remexio, they went down to Dili and they did a rec job in Dili and on the night of the 16th of May,

18:30 we went down to a village called Kamia. Do you know anything about the ridge east of Dili? It's like there's a big statue of Christ there now that the Indonesians put there, just east of Dili. We went down to that village. We had a look through the binoculars at Dili. They told us we were going to raid Dili, the headquarters. A lot of people thought we were going in to rescue the prisoners. We didn't know where the prisoners were

19:00 but strangely enough instead of rescuing of them we nearly killed them. But the, we went into Dili about midnight that night. Now I've got a photo out there of a bloke standing with a bloke, who I met in Dili in 2000 and his father, and he was able to vividly describe to me about the Australian's being in Kamia village. How they had a meal of boiled corn and goat and we blackened our faces with the charcoal from the fire and the Timorese kids came

19:30 and they rubbed it on our backs and our arms and on our shorts and he was able to tell me every bit about it because his father was a little boy and had told him about the Australian soldiers and that was in 2000. And we went down to do, we got through the barbed wire alright, not a great deal of trouble and I was about half way down the line I suppose and I'd just got through the barbed wire and I could hear the boots tramping down the road, a couple of Japanese soldiers.

20:00 Well I only crouched down, right down alongside a bush. Now the blokes who had gone in in front of me, the other five or six in front of me, they had just crouched down in the ditch too. The blokes outside never made any effort to come in. Well they were there and I was absolutely amazed at their discipline really. I mean it just went like clockwork. Now I was only about from that screen to that wall away from the Japanese across. They're on

20:30 that side of the road and I'm on this side and they turned into a house there and when they went into the house I got up and moved on and picked up the rest and the others came through the barbed wire and we're on our way into Dili. And we came to a machine gun post and Ludlow went across to see what the setup was and while he was half way across the road a Japanese came around

21:00 from behind the pile of sandbags and he just looked at Ludlow, took a couple more steps and looked at him and he'd have been as close to Ludlow then as I am to you now and we're all crouched in the ditch on the other side of the road. There's no curb and guttering in Dili of course. At any rate we're crouched down in the ditch waiting to see what Ludlow will do and we thought, "Well he'll hit him on the head, knock him out and we'll finish him

21:30 off and leave him in the bush." Now that might sound a bit bloody callous but you're not going to leave an unconscious Japanese you, he's going to regain consciousness and you can't spare a man to stay with him. At any rate that didn't happen, Ludlow shot him. Now I think we still would have got away with that one shot. I'm speaking from benefit of hindsight now as you can appreciate but I think it was Tom Nesbitt who opened up with the bloody Tommy gun.

22:00 Well one shot you can get away with but you're not going get away with a long burst of Tommy gun and as soon as he opened up we started to shoot the houses up as they were. We hadn't got to our objective. I didn't know where it was anyway. I hoped Ludlow did and, but I got a full version of the story afterwards from the other side. Merv Ryan

22:30 who was the man wounded in the aerodrome was in one of the houses we shot up that night and he said to me, I worked on the wharves with him at Fremantle after and he said to me, we were having a drink in the pub and he said, "You know the night you came into Dili Paddy?" And I said, "Yeah," and he said, "One of the houses you shot up," he said, "Peter Alexander and I were in it," he said, "And some Dutch prisoners." The Japanese were guarding them and but as soon as the shooting started the Japs out the

23:00 back door and out, except the officer. He pulled his revolver out and he had them in one room and he told them to lie on the floor and he said, "He didn't have to tell us to lie on the floor," he said, "There was that much lead coming," it was only wooden shutters see. He said, "There was that much lead coming through," it was autumn at that time too but Jap, Merv Ryan thought, "God I hope a grenade isn't thrown in," and the Japanese officer was thinking the same thing because he motioned to Merv Ryan to move. This is what Merv Ryan told me after.

23:30 And it was only 1948 when he told me, so it wasn't all that long after 1942, but he was a prisoner of war. The Japanese officer was signalling to him to go over and close the wooden shutter and he said, "I went over and closed it alright." He said, "I think I put one finger up and I thought I might loose it," but he closed it and bolted it and they were safe from grenades. At any rate

24:00 Ludlow gave the order for them to retire but as they retired they shot up every building on their way out. Now with all this shooting going on I didn't know they'd been told to retire. Now there must have been about five or six men went round the back of me and I never ever saw them go because they were shooting from the hip as they went and suddenly I realised that there was only one rifle firing and that was mine. And I'm not making,

24:30 I wouldn't have been there if I'd known what the rest knew. I didn't know they'd been told to retire and as soon as I realised I was the only one there, I never got up on my two legs again. I crawled along the ditch and I got my grenade ready because by the time I got to the barbed wire I was going to hurl the grenade because by that time the Japs would be well and truly alerted and they'd have a machinegun trained on the barbed wire. So I was going to throw the grenade at the house

25:00 and as soon as it went off I was going to dive through the wire. But I was going down and I saw a rifle in the drain and I thought there might have been a wounded man there so I started to feel around and a voice started saying, "How's that, how's that?" And I didn't know who that was and I forgot all about the rifle, forgot all the wounded man and I just lay straight down on the ditch and I put my rifle out in front of me and this figures coming down towards me on his hands and knees too,

25:30 and why I never pulled the trigger I don't know. I had the first pressure on it and why I never finished the job I'll never know but when he was about three feet off the muzzle of my rifle I could see the beard and the helmet and I said, "Is that you boss?" He said, "Yeah." That was in the dark. He said, "Where are the others?" I said, "God, I wish I knew. I'd have been with them." At any rate we didn't go out that way. We went back in towards the town and we found another way out.

26:00 But how I never shot Blue Ludlow's head off that night I don't know, I honestly don't because I really thought it was an English speaking Japanese, but I wanted to make sure before I pulled the trigger.

Describe to me what sort of emotions are going through you in an incident like that?

Fear is the least one. The adrenalin is pumping and you wouldn't even break an egg if you stood on it,

26:30 you feel that light and your movements are fast. I have not read any books about anyone else, when they went into action or anything else but all I know is what I felt that night. You're keyed up and you're ready for anything. Fear is the last thing that's in your mind and at least that was me and I reckon the other's would be just the same. And I remember saying to Bill Holly when we're raiding this goat and things,

27:00 I said, "Gee Bill," I said, "Man shouldn't be eating anything, if you get a bullet in the guts," I said, "On a full stomach it's pretty bad." He said, "Don't worry Paddy, eat up," he said, "If you get a bullet in the guts tonight," he said, "No-one will be stopping to pick you up." And that's honest and those men must have had the same feelings as I had. They were eager to go, they knew what had happened to the men by then and they knew what had happened to men that had been captured by the Japanese in February

27:30 1942. They knew what had happened and it's quite, every man who went into that town that night had no idea, no intention of surrendering, no matter what happened. They'd have had no, no matter what happened to them they wouldn't have surrendered. They would have kept on fighting until they got killed, I'm absolutely sure of it. But when you got out of course you get a bit of a let down but we were pretty jubilant actually. We only went back

28:00 to, there's a saddle east of Dili, the Hera Saddle and we camped there for the night and then in the morning Ludlow stood up there on the skyline so the Japanese Army would know exactly where we camped because he wanted them out of the town to come and chase us. And he left six men at Dare, which is only about, you walk from Dare down to Dili if you went down over the side of the mountain. Get there in under an hour walking. Anyway they stayed there and the next day we went down and relieved them and we stayed for three days and then relieved them

28:30 and the second time down, by that time there was Julie Maderia, who was Portuguese Timorese, Alfreda De Santos was what they call a deportarda and a political exile from Portugal and a man named Fernadez, he was a cripple. He had a club foot, very powerfully built,

29:00 not tall and him and a man named Tomasetti, Bill Tomasetti, the same old Blue Tomasetti and a man named Kirkwood they went down to Kolmera to do a bit of hole peeping from there and we were up at Darrelo, which I suppose was about a half an hour's walk, three quarters of an hour walk from there, maybe a bit more. When he was coming back from Kolmera he decided to cross the Hera Road in the dark because a Japanese transport could come out and occupy the saddle and we wouldn't know anything about it. If they

29:30 came on foot we wouldn't know at all, we couldn't cover that area. Anyway they ran into the Japanese on the saddle and Julie Maderia was out in front and the Japanese challenged them and Julie Maderia probably shot him dead. As soon as he shot him there was another few shots fired and that was all, no more. We were in Dare and Ray Aitken said, "We'd better get out of here,"

30:00 so we got out, sighted Dare, went back about a quarter of an hour's walk maybe, back into the scrub and at daylight Ray Aitken, "Right you come with me Paddy and we'll have a look." Now he always said he took someone else, he didn't, he took me because I said to him, "If you'd have taken Norman Thorn," whom he thought he took, I said, "Who's going to look after the rest of the section?" Norman Thorn was by far the most experienced

30:30 soldier of the rest of us. Any rate I went in with him and he put the binoculars down along the river on the road into Dili, down the course road and he couldn't see a Japanese anything. He said, "Ah, must have been a false alarm." And then he swung the binoculars to behind the Pimple and the track up to Dare and Remexio came behind that track and it was just full of Japanese.

31:00 He said, "Come on, let's get out of here." I said, "Just give us the binoculars for a look," and he said, "You'll see enough of them before the morning's over." And at any rate we got out and we picked up the other four and we went back along the track and now Aitken was a good soldier and a good NCO and he said, "We'd better make sure these blokes are coming on." He said, "I'm not going back to Remexio on a false alarm." Anyway we were waiting where we had a good view of the track and it would have been a great ambush spot if we'd have

31:30 had a Bren gun with us but all we had was a Tommy gun and a Tommy gun is a close quarters gun. Some bloke tells me, "You can fire them from five hundred mile," but you can't. The bullet wouldn't travel that far. Anyway this native came panting up and he said, "Two and two and Japanese mine," two and two and the Japanese are coming? We said, "No, where are they?," "No, up." They'd broken up, split up into two parties and there was another track which we didn't know anything about

32:00 because we hadn't been up that area that long. And that got our track and they were sending a party along that track for us and then the main party would come along. Anyway we beat them to the junction, Ray Aitken picked an ambush spot and we ambushed them. Well there was only six of us in the

ambush but we did, if the story we heard from the Portuguese is true, we killed and wounded nearly thirty

32:30 of them and I think Norman Thorton with the Tommy gun would have done the bulk of the damage. I suppose we were that close to them that if we met them in the street out there today we'd know them. We could see them quite plainly, their features, the whole lot. It was a very close set ambush and we got out without a shot being fired at us, which we couldn't understand. Later we found out that the captain

33:00 was wounded, he died of wounds later, was one known as the, "Singapore Tiger," he was a trouble shooter. Now he wasn't one of the Japanese that landed originally. They'd moved another battalion into Dili. He came from the 48th Division I'm sure and he died of wounds and another officer got killed too I believe and the Japanese just stayed where they were. Late in the afternoon they opened up with a machinegun but where the bullets were going no-one knows. We were not in the ambush place anymore. We'd

33:30 gone back to Kikrassi, picked up the rest of the section and I don't know what happened up there when they got the message. Ludlow was a very cool, calm, collected bloke but I think he was too cool and calm that morning because I don't know when he got the message from Ray Aitken. I wouldn't know any of those details. Ray probably wouldn't know himself what time Ludlow he got the message but he sent it back in plenty of time. He sent it back

34:00 around about six o'clock in the morning and they had their breakfast and were leisurely going to make their way down the track and pick us up when the shooting started. At any rate that would have been a similar kind of action to what the other sections were doing at the same time.

What were your feelings about shooting at men?

Didn't matter to me mate. I was nervous that morning. I'm sitting up on the side of the hill and I'm thinking to myself

34:30 "now if I was back home in North Sydney I'd be getting up and I'd have had my breakfast and I'd be getting ready to go down the Wilson Club to play solo whist and I'd have been to eight o'clock mass and all those things and instead of that I'm sitting on the side of a hill, shivering and wondering whether I'm still going to be alive,," but once the shooting starts you're right. But when you're sitting down doing nothing and that's what you wanted to know before is likely to set in but when

35:00 you're on the move and you're going to do it, no, not then. You've got one object in mind and that's the job you're going to do.

What were your feelings about the Japanese?

Now a lot of people, of course I've read a fair bit of history and everything else, the Japanese there's no doubting their courage. They were tenacious, their

35:30 stamina was marvellous. They pushed themselves to the limit but they were cruel. The things they did. Now I make some excuse for them because when I think of what happened in the Holocaust and women and children being put into gas ovens and things like that, that was done by a nation, the ruler, that had much a similar culture to ourselves.

36:00 They were supposed to be a Christian nation and they had two thousand years, well maybe the Germans would have had about nine hundred, a thousand, eleven hundred, twelve hundred years of Christianity. I always think what they did to the Jews was far, far worse to what the Japanese ever did to us on the score of the two different cultures. If you were a prisoner of the

36:30 Japanese he thought you were in disgrace but that does not excuse them for what they did at Bangka, Bangka Island when they shot, opened up on those nurses and the unarmed men, what they did to our blokes that were captured just outside Dili, what they did at Ambon to the troops, the 2/21st Battalion. I'm not quite sure but I think two hundred of them were executed, or murdered in my book.

37:00 You knew quite well, by that time we knew quite well, if you were wounded and you couldn't get away, you'd be bayoneted, you'd be used for bayonet practise. Shooting myself never entered my head at all if I was wounded. I was wounded in New Guinea but the very thought of becoming a prisoner it didn't appeal to me,

37:30 most probably the others too and even if your position was hopeless I think under the circumstances we were in you were better off dying. You were better off if you died. It never came to that stage. As I said the sections were in good condition and they were really operating very well. Like all sections you have the good and the bad and the poor but that's not that

38:00 bloke's fault but there is one thing I won't excuse. We did have, it's something you don't like maybe but we did have officers, some officers who were sheer lazy and didn't look after their men well. We were well looked after. Tom Nesbitt looked after us well but then we were hardly ever with the officers at any rate. It was mostly the corporal you were with because you were patrolling, patrolling, patrolling.

38:30 I think when we were at Remexio, like Ludlow was imbibed you with confidence and everything. One look at Ludlow and you were confident but at the same time I don't think he was any tactician because

when we were at Remexio there was three officers there, not at all the one time but up towards August. Now we were patrolling forward alright but nothing was done

39:00 about, the Japs weren't going to leave us there forever. We knew, we were aware of that as privates and we were told very little. We were supposed to be an independent company, the way they talk about special forces I don't know what the rest were like but in our unit you were lucky to be told where you were going. And that's honest. Some people might disagree with me. Nothing was done to pick good ambush positions, south, east or north

39:30 of Remexio, which ever way, if we were going to get pushed out we'd probably be not in a position to decide which way we were going. The whole of the country behind us should have been reconnoitred, not worrying about what was in front of us. We knew what was in front of us. We were not that far off the coast. I remember going down on a patrol to the Hera Road and there were four of us and we were used to the mountains and the mountain tracks and believe it or not, we

40:00 used to get nervous when we got on a road, strange as it seems and we got down to the Hera Saddle and were we in for a shock. I think if we had of gone down on that patrol twenty four hours later I wouldn't be talking to you today. When we got down there we could see where practically a full platoon of Japanese and they probably had someone up on the 'Pimple' [high feature] as well. We never climbed up to check but you could see where they'd been lying down on the grass. You could still

40:30 see the shape of their bodies because it wasn't that old.

Tape 6

00:32 **Paddy, could you tell us about your relationship with the natives on Timor?**

When we first went to Timor any association with the natives, with them was frowned on. As I said maybe a specially trained unit as far as armament went and military operations went but they missed out on an awful lot. If you're going to be a guerrilla fighter

01:00 or you're trained for guerrilla fighting, you've got to have a good relationship with the people of that country and it was frowned on that we had anything to do with them. I remember a man called Cisco Coles, he was talking to a Portuguese, a young Portuguese commandante, Marcus de Silva. Now Marcus was interested in his watch and the CO Spence, this was before the Japanese landed,

01:30 he called Private Coles over and he said, "Don't have anything to do with those people. For all you know he could be a spy." What Major Spence did not know that George and Marcus spoke French, Spanish, English, as well as Portuguese and he resented the remark that was put to him because he was the commandante of Hatu Udo and

02:00 when we went to Hatu Udo, when Four Section went to Hatu Udo they were having a bit of a lean time because I suppose the way George Marcus looked at it is, "If I was a spy before the Japanese landed I should be a worse spy by now, look after yourselves." But at any rate Tom Nesbitt got around that when he came back to the Section. It was a stupid edict actually, very stupid because as I said

02:30 on the first day the Japanese landed the Timorese saved their first Australian. Merv Ryan was saved by the Timorese and the Portuguese but of course he was still a prisoner but they were the ones that took him to the Portuguese Hospital and had him treated. They intended to get him out into the mountains too but the Japanese took one look and thought, "This bloke's getting pretty strong," so they took him in and put him with Peter Alexander and the Dutchman. Another Australian soldier was saved at Hatolia

03:00 by the Timorese. He was badly wounded and the Japanese would have definitely caught him but they took him and hid him and got word to some more of the Australians that they had him in hiding and the Japanese were no longer in Hatolia and to come and get him. So it was very short sighted on their part to start with. By the time we left Timor the Timorese were our blood brothers. A lot of them were accused of

03:30 spying and of course when you look back now the Portuguese that helped us really did not do themselves a good turn because they were neutral. Now Captain de Costa he was neutral, strictly neutral and the Japanese murdered him. They murdered eleven Portuguese in Aileu and that would have been

04:00 about September, early September, end of August, early September. The Timorese, how they stayed with us so long I'll never be able to work it out. Some say, "Oh because you were white and you were Christian," what they were forgetting is the Timorese at that stage were mostly animists. There were plenty of Christians there but most of them were animists and Timor didn't become entirely Christian until the Indonesians went in there. That's

04:30 a different story again. I don't know, the Australians got on well with them. Some of the Australians didn't treat them well either. There was a lot of that business, "Oh the black bugger," and you've got to remember we were an entirely different generation from your present generation. Australia was a very

bigoted, intolerant country when it came to colour and religion as well, however

05:00 they were the only ones that were really doing any real suffering in Timor, the natives. We'd put on an ambush and if there's going to be an ambush in a place there's going to be reprisals and it didn't worry the Australians. We put our ambush on but the Timorese had lived with internal warfare for many a long year so as soon as there was an ambush they made sure they left their villages and went down into the gullies

05:30 and stayed there until the trouble blew over. We were well treated. I mean there would not have been any unit in the Australian Army that could say, "We're going from here to there, we'll get there about eight or nine o'clock tonight, it's about a ten hour walk." You walk off and you don't bring a skerrick of food with you. All you carry is your ammunition and your weapons and you go to where you're going and you're going to get a feed, that's what it was like. Now why the natives did it, maybe,

06:00 they must have seen the Japanese were the stronger force of the two but then again the Japanese committed a lot of abuses. They went out to Liquica and commandeered women for their brothels and things like that. That was not true of us. That don't mean to say that some of the Australian soldiers didn't have affairs or relations with the Timorese women, they did but as far as I know

06:30 there was, I'd say there were two cases of rape. I'd say that. Nothing ever came of it, nothing was ever said about it but a chappy in one village complained to Callinan that there were two Australians in the village and they were menacing the women. At any rate Callinan got them, took them back and what happened after that I don't know but they were still in the unit. But Callinan was very strict on that too, he was very

07:00 strict. In fact his nickname was, "The Saint," but we got on very well with the natives, very well. We got on very well with the Portuguese. Now we as I said were bought up in a different era. Whether you like it or whether you don't like it, Australians probably still do too, tended to look down on Latin people

07:30 and they tended to look down on Italians and Spaniards and Maltese and Portuguese and people like that, as if we were superior and there was a lot of that kind of feeling amongst them. They had that feeling towards Portuguese and yet if it wasn't for the Portuguese and they were the one's that really influenced the natives as well, things would have been worse than they were. By the end of June the Japanese,

08:00 they had already sent His Majesty's Botanic Consol, a bloke named Danny Ross, who was an Australian, they had sent him out to Hatolia in March, March the 17th was the date exactly, telling us we had to surrender. The Japanese Commander in Dili said that the Netherlands East Indies, that was what Indonesia was known as in those days, had surrendered on the 9th of March, 8th or 9th of March, 1942,

08:30 and General Portanse, who was in complete command of Australians and everyone else that happened to be in the East Indies at that time, surrendered unconditionally and the Japanese commander said that as we were part of that East Indies force we had to surrender. That's the message they sent out with David Ross, who was the British Consul, even though he was an Australian. They also printed

09:00 notes in Malay. I've got copies of them here which I copied out of our Unit's records, and in Japanese and in very poor English, that if we didn't surrender we'd be classified as outlaws and they'd put a price on our head. They did put a price on our heads, that was in March. Privates were worth fifty patacas which would be about eight dollars fifty in Australian currency. The CO was worth a

09:30 thousand patacas, Callinan was worth five thousand patacas and one other man they wanted very badly but they didn't know who he was. He was also valued at a thousand patacas but he was sitting right there in Dili with them, a man named Pat Dulous, who was part Portuguese, part Timorese and he was a telegraphist for the Portuguese but he also did a lot of work for the Australians.

10:00 Now Qantas had a transmitting set and as soon as the Japanese attacked Dili Pat Dulous got hold of that set and hid it. And a lot of it finished up with us but unfortunately minus vital parts. But Pat was worth a thousand dollars too, oh a thousand patacas, but of course they didn't know who Pat was, but it was there. Now no-one

10:30 attempted to collect that blood money. As I said that day I was with, of course that was before this had happened, but the day the Timorese picked me up and took me to their village, if the Japanese had of been out there they could have taken me to the Japanese and I couldn't have done a thing about it. I was too weak and in lots of cases sick men would be left behind because they couldn't keep up. The Timorese would look after them and

11:00 to me we could not have carried on, if the Timorese and the Portuguese hadn't of assisted us, we wouldn't have lasted ten weeks. We lasted ten months and ours was the only unit, and you can go from Hong Kong down to the Philippine Islands, Malaya, Java, the rest of the islands in the Indies, over to Rabaul, ours was the only unit that never surrendered to the Japanese and we lived to tell the tale. And we would not have lived if it

11:30 had not of been for the Timorese and the Portuguese people. The Japanese they pulled out of the mountains at the end of June and we had the mountains to ourselves. We controlled all of Timor, from the Dutch border to the gates of Dili, we had the lot and we were all cock of hoop. We thought, "We're

invincible, yeah." We soon found out how invincible we were but they

12:00 sent Ross out again in June and he was a very emaciated Ross by June. They sent him out with a message for us to surrender, we'd be treated well and according to the Geneva Convention and the message went back, "We still wouldn't surrender." Now it's the officers making this up of course, there's Callinan, Ludlow, Baldwin and Boland and the doctor was in it too and on both occasions

12:30 they knocked those surrender notices back. There was also a third surrender from a Japanese captain and that came in August 1942. When they refused to surrender the second time, that's when they pulled out of the mountains, when we wouldn't surrender and little did we know that Major General Hito, whom I think from the records I've read at the unit, no-one else seems to think it but I do, he was the man that

13:00 planned the August offensive in 1942. I'm absolutely sure of it because the two Japanese battalions of the 2/28th Regiment down in Dutch Timor had taken no part whatsoever in the fighting in East Timor. They left their sister battalion from the 2nd Battalion, they left them to look after East Timor, they didn't come near the place. They were at Atambua and Atapupu and they might have gone along towards Batugade

13:30 fishing but they kept well away. They didn't come in, take any action in Portuguese Timor up until August.

Tell us about that?

And in August 1942, and that's why I'm absolutely sure it was Hito planned the operation. He landed troops on the south coast, they came through from Dutch Timor. They had commandeered five hundred horses, they'd been collecting, Callinan always predicted that when the thrust came it would come from West Timor and he was dead

14:00 right. He warned his captains as early as May and June that not to relax, that the Japanese were not an army that sits on it's backside doing nothing. They believe in offensive warfare and I can remember, I've got the whole history of the 2/2nd in there from the war museum, our own records kept from day to day and in

14:30 June Callinan when round to every platoon and before he left headquarters he recorded, "I hope they give us at least another two weeks." That was in June. He was always expecting an offensive and he went round the traps. I remember him. He came up to Remexio. He was with a major from the 2/40th Battalion. In fact he was their 2IC and they just stayed the night, had a look around and went onto the next platoon. He went around every platoon

15:00 headquarters and had a chat with the platoon commanders who was usually a captain. July was a very quiet month. All through July there were falling trees, the sappers were kept very busy. We were patrolling. The sappers did all the work. They demolished culverts, they broke down bridges that were wooden. We didn't have much material for

15:30 destroying anything really. We had gelignite and ampolt and another couple of explosives but the sappers knew all about that and they blocked every road out of Dili. They blocked the roads coming in from East Timor. Now there weren't many roads in Timor I can tell you. What were there you wouldn't call a back alley but anyway they did what they could and estimated how long it would hold the Japanese up for.

16:00 Well our section had been operating up around Dili from very early in May and in August they decided to go us a spell, so one sub-section went out and had a fortnight's spell. Our sub-section, Ray Aitken's sub-section, the one I was in, we went out and we got paid on the track. It was the first pay we'd collected in Timor since January. We got four quid a man and we went back to a place called Liltai. Ray Aitken went over to Bazartete. Ray

16:30 always had a great love of Bazartete and the people there and the commandante and the half Chinese and Portuguese that were there and Ray spoke Tetum very well. He was a school teacher, very good linguist. We had quite a number of school teachers actually but he went to Bazartete and the rest of us went to a place called Liltai. Well I lost my four quid the first night. We were playing

17:00 cards and that was the end of my four quid and Patricio, I'd sent him back to his village for a bit of leave. The only reason I was able to pay Patricio then was a man named Bob Ewan would give me five avos [currency] and that's the equivalent of an Australian pre-war, pre-dollar penny. And I'd give that to Patricio so he could gamble on the cockfights or dice and that's all he was getting. Some of them weren't getting any money at all. They were getting fed.

17:30 They were the ones getting the food for us too and they loved being with us because they were going all over Timor. They were going into areas they'd never been in and if you were in an ambush they loved to watch it and their eyes would light up. Anyway in August, we'd only been out three days, four days and we looked to the north, towards Remexio and Dili and all we could see was black smoke.

18:00 We thought, "What the hell is going on there?" At any rate about eleven o'clock in comes Jody Smith out of our section, out of the other sub-section and I said, "What's wrong Jody?" He said, "The Japs are on the move." I said, "What?" He said, "The Japs are on the move, that's where all the smokes coming

from.” I said, “Oh right.” Anyway that was the end of our spell. Five Section they ambushed the Japs and this would have been true

18:30 of the other sections what I’m talking about now with our section and Five Section ambushed the Japs. Ludlow came back to Liltai, 5 Section fell back to Liltai after the ambush and Ludlow positioned us in Liltai and there was a lot of mistakes made. I don’t know why or how but they did. We were sent over on the right flank. We patrolled, I remember six of us, we patrolled along that

19:00 river all day and I’m absolutely sure the Japs were just sitting up in the scrub watching us. They didn’t want half a dozen men. They wanted a platoon and they probably looked at us going by but we never saw a Jap. We didn’t get back until nine o’clock that night, about nine o’clock. We’d been out all day. It was a patrol I wasn’t happy with. Tom Nesbitt was a bit of a procrastinator. He’d stop and

19:30 dawdle and that’s not good, not good. As I told you about you’re ready and you’re ready for trouble and if it’s going to come you want to get to it as fast as you can, not be dawdling round. Bugger me dead he goes and buys a pig, of all things, to feed us. Now the thing was just killed and we’re eating this pork, roasted over a fire and it was fresh. We paid for that later

20:00 on and we got back and Mick Wogan, he was the other section. There was nineteen men in our section, one officer, two corporals, two lance corporals made up the nineteen men and Mick Wogan’s sub-section they could see the Japanese all day through the binoculars on another ridge. Now we didn’t have to worry, they were on the warpath so that was it. But that night

20:30 Five Section had patrolled down one river, we had done the other river and we’d done it pretty thoroughly but I think we should have left the river and gone up the tracks but I don’t know what the orders were, so that’s it. As I said you were never told. We just went where we were going. That night there was a loud bang, no, not that night, all of a sudden there was a chant and it was probably the officer and he chanted,

21:00 chanted and then these hundred of voices, “Bansee, bansee,” and the bloody clouds were nearly lifting and I thought, “Mother of God,” and we were sitting there on the side of the hill and as I said when you’re moving and on the go, it’s different but when you’re sitting and waiting and you’ve got to wait, it’s a cat with a different tail altogether. You’re imagination

21:30 runs away with you and everything seems to be moving in the dark and shadow although our night sight was very good because we never had any lights of any description, whatsoever, only the light of a fire and he sent two men down. One of them is in that photo that you saw in there with me, Bill Holly. Him and a man named Neil Scott were send to Ludlow at Liltai, Liltai. We were up on the right flank on another ridge, spur.

22:00 Now they hadn’t arranged what the hell they were going to do. They knew the Japanese were going to come. We were sent out there. What the hell they didn’t make their mind up as to what we’d do under such an event of happening and the only thing that could happen was the Japanese were going to attack. He send two men down to find out what was going to be done. He knew what to do if they’d come up. Anyway Ludlow

22:30 said to Bill Holly, “Tell Four Section to withdraw, come back into Liltai,” and Bill Holly, who was only a private, said to Ludlow, oh yes, then he said, “Tell Five Section to withdraw from the saddle.” Now they covered the junction of the tracks, Five Section covered the junction of the tracks. We were up one track, they covered the junction and Six Section was on a

23:00 high knoll behind Liltai, so the whole platoon would have been in Liltai at that time but they were not going to stay there as it turned out. Bill Holly said to Ludlow, he said, “But Boss,” he said, “Five Section won’t withdraw until we pass through them because they’re holding the track junction. If they’re gone we’re wide open.” He said, “No, they’ll withdraw right away.” And Bill

23:30 Holly came back and he said, “We’ve got to go down to Liltai,” and I said, “Oh yeah,” and another man named Alf Bundy, I said, “Oh well, we’ll be moving,” I said, “It’s better than sitting isn’t it?” Anyway Alf Bundy said, “Paddy,” he said, “Five Section’s gone from the saddle.” I said, “How do you know?” He said, “Bill Holly told me. He said he just gave the message to Nesbitt.” I said, “But if they’re gone from the saddle,” I said, “We’re walking straight down an open track with nothing.” He said, “That’s right.”

24:00 Anyway Mick Morgan’s sub-section had been sitting on the hill all day, so thank God we’d gone out on that patrol, his sub-section, we get selfish, don’t we? His sub-section led the way down and Nesbitt and us we were to follow on and Mick Morgan was out in front. He was a lance sergeant and he got challenged, a Japanese challenged him. The Japanese were great like that. I mean they never bothered just shooting. The Yanks were just the opposite. They’d shoot at every sound or anything else but

24:30 the Japanese soldier challenged and Mick Morgan fired from the hip. Whether he hit him or whether he didn’t hit him, he probably didn’t.

So what happened?

Well he fired and he jumped off the side of the track and four or five of his blokes went with him, in the sub-section . Four of them came back up the track, Bob Ewan,

25:00 Noel Buckman, Alfredo de Santos, and Tex Richards, I'm sure that's who it was later from what happened. Now we were just getting ready to go down the track ourselves, our sub-section, Nesbitt, ready to go down the track and Nesbitt said to Bob Ewan, he said, "What happened?" Bob Ewan said, "The Japs are up the track," he said, "They've got the track covered." And the officer, I shouldn't have said his name

25:30 really, he said, "Oh that's someone firing accidentally," and Bob Ewan said, "No, that was Mick firing." He said, "The Jap challenged him." He said, "Take your men Corporal Ewan and go back down the track." And Bob Ewan went back and I can remember to this day, now when we were standing around before we set out originally, we were standing around and like soldiers were there was a bit of language flying here and there and I can

26:00 remember what Bob Ewan said before we went, "Why don't you watch your language. You could be meeting your maker." That's as true as I'm sitting here. They're the words he used. He went down the track and I thought, "Bob just go round the bend of the track, pull out a grenade and let fly and then that will let him know it's not a stray shot." He kept on walking until he got killed.

26:30 The other three that were with him they shot off the side of the track. We were back up the side of the, further up on the knoll. They straight away galloped up the track, me included. They were completely lacking leadership. I'm looking from hindsight now. That night in August in 1942

27:00 I wasn't thinking anything like that at all. We get up the top. There were bullets flying everywhere. You could hear them hitting the ground, the branches of the trees, zing, zing, zing. We got up the top and they were firing from everywhere up there too and the section got split up more. Ray Aitken dived down on one side of the track, Tom Nesbitt, myself and a man named Neil Scott

27:30 we dived down on the other. Norman Thorton was with Ray Aitken, Doc Larasie and Buckman wasn't, he was with Tex Richards. Ray would have only had about four men with him. There was three of us with Tom Nesbitt and Morgan's section was split wide open. We didn't know where they were and they were split up too but no matter where you went you seemed to be getting shot at. At any rate we get down into this gully

28:00 and we came on a native village and I'll never forget the chief of that village, the old chappie. He heard the shooting, he heard the Japanese voices, the whole lot naturally and he's getting his village together, they're collecting their food. They'd been used to doing this for centuries. They're getting their maize, corn, they're getting rice, whatever they've got and their cooking pans and away they go. They're going up into the gully.

28:30 Tom Nesbitt wanted him to guide us, put us on a track to get into Liltai. Tom still was trying to get to Liltai and Guiseppe wouldn't move until he'd got his village on the way. Tom Nesbitt said to me, "Get down there and see if you can find Ray Aitken." Now I knew there was no chance of finding Ray Aitken, no chance of finding anybody but I did what I was told. I went out about four or five hundred yards down the track and I

29:00 thought, "I'm not going to walk onto the bloody end of any Japanese rifle," so I let out a roar, "Are you there Ray?" And I let out another one and I came back and I said, "He's not down there Boss, no-one's answering." And he said, "Yeah, and the whole bloody Japanese Army know where we are, don't they?" I thought, "Yeah, but I'm still alive," and I wasn't going to do what Bob Ewan did, keep walking until I got blown off the end of a Japanese rifle. I wouldn't have found Ray Aitken anway.

29:30 I knew that. I don't know why the hell he sent me. Anyway we managed to get to the back of Liltai by dawn and then there was another ambush, Number Six section took them on from the knoll, Five Section was gone, Headquarters was gone and as soon as they opened up again we picked up Julie Maderia. But Julie was a cunning man and he could hear the voices up on the track and before he came out of the scrub he started to speak Tetum, wanting to know who was up there and then he came out. At any

30:00 rate there was more shooting going on and at any rate we went, we didn't go down the track, we went overland across the river. Now what I'm telling you about us would be similar to what was happening to other men, it was just similar to what they were going through in similar circumstances. When we got across the river we looked up the hill and it was just swarming with Japanese and we didn't know it but three of our blokes were still on that hill, Noel Buckman, Tex Richards, and Alfredo de Santos, the Portuguese.

30:30 And we thought they were, we picked up the rest of the platoon and it was the first earth tremor I was ever in, yeah, and we were pulled up. I was sitting on a log talking and I went to have a drink of water out of my water bottle and everything was shaking and I thought, "Oh God, you're giddy." Now we'd been on the run now for nearly ten days and I thought, "Cripes, you're going giddy," but it wasn't me going giddy, it was the

31:00 whole mountain going giddy, the whole lot was shaking. It was the first tremor I was ever in and them as well. I've been in a few since in New Zealand and we went back to Turiscai and Charlie King, incidentally who was a great, great nephew of Ned Kelly's, he and I were guarding the track two days after and I see these blokes coming along the track and I said, "There's Buck and Tex and

31:30 Alfredo." They hid on the side of that hill all day. They could see the Japanese searching the hill looking for the Australians and they were under a rock with a bit of cover around it and they just sat on their backsides and they watched the Japs going around the place looking for them and that night they got out and rejoined us. Bill Holly and myself and Alfred de Santos, we went back to look for Bob Ewan. We thought he might have only been wounded and

32:00 he'd holed up somewhere and we'd find him. We left Turiscai and the only natives we saw in four hours walking we ran into five natives in the river and we wanted them to come with us because if we found Bob Ewan wounded we had to have someone to help carry him and they didn't want to come. They said there was no Japanese in Liltai, said, "No Japanese in Liltai now," but they still didn't want to go back to Liltai.

32:30 And Alfredo de Santos he talked them into coming with us and we went back to Liltai but we didn't go straight into Liltai either, even if they said there was no Japanese there. We didn't know that so we climbed up a good high hill looking down into Liltai and the surrounds of the village and we couldn't see any signs of life there so we went down. We went up the track where we'd been and we found Bob Ewan but he died instantly.

33:00 He was shot right through the eye. I know it because when we turned him lying on his back and we looked to see where the bullet went in and came out his back and he'd been dead for four days then, maybe five. He was pretty bloated and he's the only man in the 2/2nd that was buried by men of the 2/2nd. The

33:30 other men that we had killed in Timor we don't know who buried them or what happened to them or anything. But we buried Bob Ewan and we only had our bayonets and our hands and we covered him the best we could. We knew we had tea and sugar stashed away. Ludlow told us before we went back. They never told us to go back. We went back off our own back

34:00 and he said, "Well there's a saddle and there's tea and there's sugar." That was the only kind rations we were getting from Australia. They weren't feeding us at all really and at any rate we picked that lot up. We found the hiding place and picked it up and the natives carried it back and we went to a place called Fatumaquerec. Food was very scarce. August was a bad time. When the Japanese came in from West Timor they came out from Dili and landed on the south coast and the air force did a bit of damage to them on the

34:30 south coast but those blokes got ashore and they were still ready to fight, the Japanese. And Callinan could not contact his force headquarters for three or four days but all the platoons were on the move backwards and they were going the same as us. Dexter's was probably the most successful, his platoon, A Platoon. They took the Japs on at Memo, Maliana, and at the saddle at Cailaco.

35:00 We lost two men and Bob in our lot. The Japanese came in another track and they surprised the men that were there but that was generally the whole unit. Now we were completely dependant on the natives, completely by that time. Food was scare. Now because the Japanese when they came in they bought artillery, they had mortars, they had the air force, they machine gunned

35:30 all the mountain villages. They machine gunned and bombed all the Portuguese ports, they burnt the villages and the camp food, they destroyed the crops, they killed the livestock and they tormented the Timorese people around Hato Builaco and Mindelo and Maubisse and they incited them to rebel against the Portuguese. And once the Portuguese administration broke down

36:00 we'd be gone. The Japanese knew what they were doing. If they couldn't drive us out of the mountains, if they couldn't kill us in the mountains, they'd starve us out of the mountains, that's what it boiled down too. And we survived and we were lucky to survive. A lot of our blokes, full of glory and everything else, said, including some of our officers, "Oh we inflicted too many casualties on them, we held them up too long, they ran out of this and they ran out of

36:30 that." Well I found a Japanese captain who'd been in that particular offensive in 1989. I found his name and address and I wrote to him and wanted to know what they had but that's a different story. But when we went in to look for Bill Holly, that night there was a green fairy light went up. I didn't see it. Bill Holly did but I heard the thing and the Japanese just melted away. We couldn't find them. Like although we were on the run and we were in a desperate position we

37:00 still patrolling to keep contact with the Japanese. We could not find Japanese anywhere. They just disappeared like that through the night and they went back to Dili and back into West Timor, cause we didn't know where but they'd gone and we just went back into the areas we were in and we could find no trace of the Japanese but we found plenty of burnt villages and we couldn't get any food. We were living on raw peanuts

37:30 for about five days, our section, just digging them out of the ground and eating them. That's the only food we had. Things got desperate again. We were back in March. I went with, when this rebellion when the Portuguese Army came out from Aileu and they bought a native army down from Laclubar and I saw that because we were in Fatumaquerec at the time and there was this young Portuguese leading them and

38:00 all that country around Fatumaquerec that's all open country, you can see for miles along the

mountains. And we were looking along the tracks and we could hear this drum playing, boom, boom, boom, boom, and all we could see in the distance was banners and it was black with Timorese and they came to Fatumaquerec and Ludlow was talking to the young Portuguese in charge of them and they had everything. They had cutlasses and they had swords and they had old blunderbuss guns and you never saw such a collection of armament in your life and they were heading

38:30 for Mindello. Now, oh yeah, we just shrugged our shoulders, the Portuguese were fighting the natives, we were fighting the Japanese and everyone wants to kill the Chinese and that's what it was like at that time but the place was in turmoil really. But we still had control of the mountains and the, I went through Mindello shortly afterwards. There was Captain Ludlow,

39:00 Mick Morgan, myself and Norm Thorton and who the other man was I don't know, I can't think of him but on the tracks into Mindello the people, the tracks were just littered with dead Timorese, men, women, all the ages down to children. I saw a young fellow there with his throat cut from ear to ear, wouldn't have been more than maybe nine or ten and the gullies were filled with dead Timorese and there

39:30 were heads stuck in the forks of trees and we get into Mindello and there's three heads lying near the cock fighting pit and they look like soccer balls. You come up a rise onto this little plateau, escarpment and that's where Mindello is and we looked across, maybe a hundred and fifty yards, and the three heads just looked like soccer balls and when we got up closer to the cockpit the Timorese are in there and their arms bound

40:00 behind their back and they were that tied, they were bound up here (demonstrates) and you couldn't even see what was binding them. The flesh, all swollen up, was over the top.

Tape 7

00:31 **Paddy, can you continue what you found when you got to the village?**

When we looked in the cock pit as I was telling you these Timorese, they were combing for them for weeks, literally wild men and they were part of the rebels, and they came from a bad area. They mightn't have had any part in the rebellion whatsoever but that did not count with the Portuguese Army. But that was the army that came down from Laclubar that did that and the,

01:00 as I said there was men, women and children, age didn't matter, dead and these people, the men inside the cock pit , they were stark naked and Timorese, they're a very modest people about their bodies. The women, yeah their (UNCLEAR) would be down here when they were pounding rice and everything else but they were very modest, very modest about their bodies all together and you could see these fellows, us white men looking in and

01:30 they're trying to hide their genitals like that but they were crammed up that tight you could hardly see a thing. And the suns beating down on top of them and the young Portuguese is sitting down in the shade and Ludlow went over to them and he had a Tommy gun, an Australian Tommy gun. Now I know how that got captured later on but Ludlow wanted the gun back. He said, "That's Australian property," and the Portuguese said, "It's not." He said, "We found natives with this Tommy gun." He said, "Its our

02:00 property," and at any rate Ludlow couldn't budge the Portuguese but what the Portuguese did say, that's why I can nearly tell you the date because of what the Portuguese said. He said, "An Australian warship was sunk on the south coast," and Ludlow couldn't believe it and we knew nothing. We didn't know what was going on and Ludlow said to us after, he said, "He reckons there's an Australian warship sunk down on

02:30 the south coast." There was, we didn't believe it, Ludlow didn't believe it but there was. The Voyager brought the 4th Company into Timor and if you ever hear and you start thinking about army commanders and everything else and everything else and the brains that run it, they sent another company into a country that couldn't feed the ones that were there already. But we had brought in an awful lot of supplies before

03:00 that, I'd say at least a thousand horse loads of supplies were bought in from the south coast. I know because I went down there twice, once with two hundred horses and the first time with only five and we wondered what the Australian Army is going to feed us. We didn't know a thing. We thought, "Oh the Australian Army is going to feed us." It wasn't the Australian Army going to feed us, it was the Australian Army sending food in for the 4th Company that they were going to

03:30 send into Timor and all the supplies went to the 4th Company. Nothing went to us and that's understandable too because they were supposed to relieve us see but they sent them into a country that was in turmoil. The natives in some places were turning against us and I can understand it. I mean in the August offensive all they saw was their villages

04:00 burnt, their people killed, and because of the rebellion more of them getting killed yet and Timor was full of orphans, little kids that high, running around with no-one to look after them. Old Criados

[Timorese assistants to Australian commandoes] used to take the little kids, bring them with us until they found someone to leave them with us, so whatever food we could get they'd get a feed anyway and you never saw kids like them, some of them that high, some of them that high (demonstrates) and they were covered in mud. But the 4th Company

04:30 came across and if they had sent them anytime from June, July, Callinan would have had time to get them into position and everything else but they sent them over there, the Voyager ran aground, the Japanese reconnaissance plane picked the Voyager up the next morning before you could say Jack Robinson, five thousand Japs were on the move out. Two thousand left Aileu. Up until

05:00 that happened they were prepared to stay there. They probably had long time plans but they were not prepared to move at that time but they moved out of Aileu to Maubisse and for the first time they got from Dili overland to the south coast for the first time since the Timor campaign started. I was attached to one of the sections of the 4th Company as a guide and interpreter and I might

05:30 as well have been sitting on my backside in the rear section. The officer had no intention of asking me anything and he had no intention of telling me anything and if I did suggest anything he had no intention of taking any notice of it anyway and I don't blame him. He was an officer and I was a private. I was with them in an ambush but the ambush that really counted, Dave Dexter was I think one of our most outstanding officers and he set an ambush up at

06:00 Nunamogue and he had the place done and he knew the Japs would come down the Ainaro road from Maubisse and he set the ambush and had we had the equipment that the 4th Company had it would have been a massacre of the Japanese, although he only had about twenty odd men with him. Because there was another sub section but there was no intercommunication. We did not carry wirelesses in each section. The 4th Company had wirelesses for each

06:30 section, they had communications from section to section to platoon headquarters to headquarters, they had everything and they had it in the Northern Territory. We were over in Timor and we had nothing but it didn't matter much for any of that. Dave Dexter put an ambush on there and those men held the Japanese all day and it was the only ambush that the Australians ever walked away from, usually they were running out of them but that day they held Japanese all there.

07:00 They wiped out every machinegun the Japanese had, as a matter of fact in our jargon they called it the, "Battle of The Light Machine Guns." Our light machine gunners, the Bren gunners took on the Japanese light machine gunners and they wiped every one of them out and they fought them all day, and there was only as I said about twenty odd men there. One of D Platoon's sections, sub section, had also ambushed them and Joe Burridge had also ambushed them

07:30 but they were in different positions. Had we had the inter-section communications that the 4th Company had, Dexter could have set up an ambush from three different positions and I don't think, there was two hundred and fifty Japs and I don't think too many of them would have got out to get back to Maubisse. But of course when darkness came Dexter pulled out. The Tommy gunners took no part in the ambush whatsoever. All the Tommy gunners did was sit down and watch the battle

08:00 because the Tommy gun was useless at the range it was, it was held with the riflemen and the light machine gunners. But he had the Tommy gunners guarding any of the tracks that led into that area. When he pulled out he went back through Ainaro and he left the Tommy gunners to hold the track junctions at the main Ainaro track coming down from Maubisse and the track coming down from Aitutu. He had the

08:30 Tommy gunners hold that track for two hours after the section left and then they were to pull out. Dexter was outstanding, he was. I wasn't in his platoon. Ludlow was a good man too but he didn't have Dexter's tactics I don't think. He inspired confidence and everything else and I always reckoned Dexter, Campbell Rodd, Don Turton,

09:00 Callinan himself and a few of them they were very, very good officers, excellent. They not only looked their men but they knew how to fight the enemy as well. And really that was the Timor campaign. We stayed with the 4th Company. We stayed with them for another three months and things were desperate in Timor then, not so much for our section. They sent three hundred Japanese up to Baucau and all they could afford to

09:30 send up there, they sent six of us to stop them coming down the road from Baucau to Viqueque and of course we were walking. The Japanese had motor transport, there were roads. They went up the north coast road and they could come down the Viqueque road. We heard they were over at Venolali and by the time we got there they'd been in and out of Venolali, Ossu and everywhere else and gone back to Baucau, by the time we got to Venolali because we had to walk.

10:00 And I'm not going crook. They did not make any attempt to make any effort to come the Viqueque road while were there. They reinforced us with another six men two weeks later on. Mick Waldron came up with the rest of the section and that only left twelve of us to stop three hundred Japanese and we wouldn't have stopped them but we would have ambushed them every opportunity but things were really desperate. We were

10:30 living well. There was plenty of food up on the east coast, that's why when some of our blokes in B Platoon started talking I said, "We were lucky there." , "Oh yeah, we were up there." I said, "Oh yeah

we were up there but we were lucky the Japanese didn't come out of Baucau, they stayed there but down at the Maubisse area, Mindello, Turiscai, down that area there was D Platoon, A Platoon and C Platoon and they used to have to bring food from other areas into them.

11:00 They had very little food and the natives were against them. They were doing as much fighting against natives led by Japanese as they were fighting Japanese. They were really doing it desperately and then they bring the 4th Company in to make it worse still. Any rate we stayed with the 4th Company, well we couldn't leave them. They had no time to get them into positions. Callinan reckoned it would have been at least six weeks before

11:30 they'd have been ready to go into action. As it was they were pitched into action right away, some of them were up on the Cablac Range, their C Platoon and I saw them come down the Same Track because I was with one of their sections in B Platoon and this officer put this ambush on and I said, "We're too far away." I said, "Too far, waste of time," and we saw their C Platoon come down first and they didn't stop at Same, they

12:00 went right through and then after them the Japanese came. There were three parties, I suppose fifty men in each party and Fleming decided to ambush them. I said, "Waste of time," I said, "If we get down by the river and get closer," but of course he wouldn't take any notice of me anyway. So Patricio was with me by that time and I said, "Patricio go back behind that mountain," I said because the ridge came straight down from the saddle at Aitutu and

12:30 I thought the Japanese would definitely send a flanking party down that to protect the blokes going down the main track but they didn't, which was unusual with the Japanese but they were in a hurry to get to the south coast and probably that was one of the reasons. And as I said Fleming ambushed them and we went down and slept in the river that night. He got a message back and the only reason I knew he was in the wrong place is because I heard

13:00 the sig read the message to him and the message read in part, "What are you doing where you are? You're not supposed to be there at all. You should be north-east of Maubisse, not south-east of it." He never told me where he had to go. When we left Turiscai, if he'd said to me, "This is where I've got to go," I would have said, "Righto," and we would have been there in four hours. We got there four days later and when we got there a

13:30 message came in from Turiscai and a message had to go back and Noel Buckman was one of the blokes that bought the message in and I don't know who was with him, no, he was on his own and Fleming said to him, "Oh I'll give you a message to take back," and Buckman said, "I'm not going back." He said, "I've just come out, send one of your own men back," and of course his men didn't know the track, so I said to him, little did he know

14:00 I was only volunteering to get rid of the bugger, get away from him and I said, "I'll take it back," and he said, "But you've been walking all day yourself," and I said, "I know but there's plenty of walk left in me yet," and I said, "I'll take it back," and of course Patricia came with me and none of the other natives would go back because they were frightened and I got back to Turiscai with his message and Mick Walden said, "Number Six Section is sending a couple of men out to him Paddy, you needed go back to him anymore."

14:30 I said, "That won't break my heart Mick." I pleaded with him not to go into Mindello, practically pleaded. I said, "There's only a few Australians in there," and I said, "They don't know we're coming in the dark." I said, "We'll be gone," and he wouldn't take any notice of me so one of his men was sick, a bloke named Arthur Stephenson and he was a corporal and I said, "Stevo, Bluey, keep on getting sick will you for God sake," I said, "And slow this bastard down

15:00 so it's daylight, make it in daylight." So it was in the piccaninny dawn, you know what it's like before daylight comes? And the three Australians that were in Mindello they heard them coming and one of them had a Tommy gun and he said to me later in Western Australia after the war was over, he said to me, "Paddy they were lucky,

15:30 we just had enough light to make them out." He said, "Otherwise." I said, "You wouldn't have hit me." He said, "Why?" I said, "When he wouldn't take any notice of me I stopped walking behind him and went to the back," and that's as true as I'm here. You can call it cowardness if you like but I wasn't getting myself killed after nine months fighting in Timor just because he'd take no notice of anybody. He went out to where he had to go and that was the last I saw of him and it didn't worry me greatly either,

16:00 and he had a very good section. They got into an ambush up on the Laklo River afterwards and they came in and occupied the places we had when we went up to Baucau and then Gordon Hart's section, Number Four Section, they ran into two lots of Japs at various times in between them and they really did acquit themselves excellently. They were good, there was nothing wrong with the men, it was the bad time they sent them into Timor.

16:30 They sent them at the wrong time. We left Timor on the night of the sixteenth of December and we were in Alice waiting to go down to the south coast. We'd come down just slowly from down east because the Japanese could have left Baucau and they could have followed down and it would have been a pinch because they'd come down to Ainaro-Same and they were down at Betano and we were supposed to go to Betano to be taken off

17:00 on a Dutch destroyer and we couldn't go to Betano. Three hundred Japanese were down there but we were going off that night and they went and occupied it that morning, Betano, so we went off Alice beach and I remember they brought a priest, two priests and eighteen nuns down from Soibad. It was an orphanage up in the east end, in between Laclubar and Lacluta and two of those nuns were over eighty years of age and

17:30 rain, the wet season it started again and we had started to get malaria again and those two old nuns they were sitting on chairs, that were strapped, strapped to poles and the natives were carrying them and they went through swamps and rivers. And we gave them our groundsheets and they went through Alas and we gave the nuns our groundsheets

18:00 to keep them dry anyway and keep them a bit warmer as well and when we got down to the beach, we got down there about six o'clock at night and we didn't leave until about one o'clock and when we got down there the nuns were just lying on the ground flaked out. Some of the younger ones were saying the rosary and they came off the destroyer with us

18:30 that night. Number Two Section, they're the bearded blokes you can see in there, they probably fought the last action that the 2/2nd was in Timor. They ambushed the Japs that morning over round Fatumaquerec but they got away without any casualties but there was one man killed and two wounded

19:00 near Same. They were coming down to get off the destroyer but the Japanese had followed them down the track and ambushed them and one man was killed and I think two were wounded but they got away. They would have been, the 16th of December would have been our last actions in Timor. We got on this Dutch destroyer, the Tjarkedes and the 4th Company was left behind. They'd come over to relive us in the first

19:30 place and the position was that bad three weeks later they took the 4th Company off too. They shouldn't have sent them there. That's not casting any aspersions on the men. They were good men, they were a good company, they proved it in time. They proved it in Timor. When they were there they were there for just on a bit over three months but while they were there they proved how good they were and in New Guinea and Tarakan they were a good company.

20:00 It was just it was finished. They still left eighteen men behind. They were lucky they got off. They wouldn't have got off only for Z Force [Services Reconnaissance Department]. Z Force had a wireless and they made a rendezvous and they got a message back to Australia through the Z Force wireless and they had a Z Force in there too. What for I don't know, with us as well. At any rate

20:30 they got in contact with Australia and they were taken off on a Yankee destroyer, eighteen of them and taken to Fremantle but they were all 4th Company men, not Second Company. We were kept up in Darwin for about seventeen or eighteen days because we were in awful condition. They had to give us the malarial treatment, the lot. Most of the men that did the fighting in

21:00 Timor, we got back to Darwin and we went from there down to Larrimah, it's about three hundred mile south of Darwin and most of the men that did most of the fighting in Timor finished up in hospital. And the men who weren't fit in Timor they were a lot fitter than us at the end, most of us spent three or four days in hospital, some of them longer and I think about the 8th of January they bought us

21:30 south. We got on the trucks at Larrimah and the Yankee convoy they took us down to just north of Tennant Creek and we came across the Barkly Tableland to Townsville by train, by truck as far as Mount Isa and Cloncurry, we got on the train at Cloncurry, at Mount Isa and we travelled from there down to Brisbane by train and of course they're loosing blokes all the way down.

22:00 I lasted as long as far as Bundaberg and I said to Roy Martin, the train pulled up at Bundaberg to give them a feed and I said to Roy Martin, "I played football up here last year, believe it or not." I played with a team up there. We were on an end of season tour and I can assure you it wasn't like the Canterbury end of season tour, different era, different times and different women too.

22:30 And the publican remembered me, "Have a drink," and, "Have another drink," and of course we missed the train. When we did we got on a passenger train that night at nine o'clock and we were lucky to be able to walk onboard it by the time he really treated us well. I stayed at his pub, the pub I stayed in was his pub when I was up there with the football team and anyway we caught up with the rest of the unit at Kunghar. That was

23:00 the jungle training camp then and we went on leave from there. But six months after we left Timor we got aboard the troop ship in Townsville to go to New Guinea.

Can I take you back to Timor just before we go to New Guinea? Did you pray?

I did, I tell you this much, I only went to mass once, twice in Timor. Everywhere I was there was no Portuguese priests,

23:30 Same. My friend Angus McLachlan he was in Same. At Easter time the priest came from the Azure Islands and he knew how to play cricket and everything else and Angus and a couple of the blokes that were with him in Same, he invited them up for Easter lunch, produced a couple of bottles of wine, they played a game of cricket. I was in Ainaro and I had a feed of corn. I went to mass. That was the first

place I went to mass in Timor and the second

24:00 place was up at Laclubar. The priest up there spoke English and strangely enough of the six of us that went up to Baucau, the first, four of us were Catholics and I was probably the only practising one but there was Tommy Fitzgerald, John George Roth and Doc Lacey and I said, “Well I’m going to Mass.” I said, “I’m going to confession, he can speak English,” and I said, “I’m going to mass in the morning.” I said, “I’ll go to mass before we

24:30 go.,” “You please yourself Paddy,” Norm’s agnostic, he didn’t believe in anything but he was a great soldier and a great bloke and he and I were friends for years and Bill Holly but Bill Holly got killed in New Guinea. And any rate we went to mass there at Laclubar the next morning and then we went on up to Ossu, Ossu Rua and looking after the Viqueque road, As I said it was a pretty uneventful thing, the Japanese stayed in, as I said when they did come out they came

25:00 out in trucks and for every mile we could do they could do twenty or thirty and by the time we got up to Venalali they’d even come down as far as Ossu, which wasn’t all that far from Ossu Rua and they’d even got out of Ossu before we we’d even gone out of Ossu. But as I said it didn’t break my heart. By that time we’d been fighting in the mountains for ten months and we were getting a bit tired

25:30 but I still reckon there was still a lot of fight left in them. They were in pretty bad condition mostly. I was pretty lucky. My health was always fairly good I reckon. I saw Bill Holly there, I saw him vomiting and diarrhoea and he had malaria and he was stung by a scorpion. That all happened in one night and I’ll never forget, he had blue eyes, blue eyes and red curly hair and he said, “What did I do to deserve all this?”

26:00 And he was in that much pain and agony and he was another good man but I’d say, I don’t know what Timor did to us blokes but I think we would have had one of the strongest unit associations of any associations in the AIF. The reunions we’ve had, reunions all over Australia and they’ve come from every state.

26:30 We had Perth, we’ve been to Perth three times, we were in South Australia twice, Hobart, Melbourne, the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast and of course the numbers were getting smaller and smaller and smaller and we went to a reunion over in Perth last November and the widows outnumbered the men. It was to look at them, now

27:00 they reckon it was the last national reunion and I think it’s a good thing.

Did anything happen on Timor that you’ve never told anybody else?

Not really. I’ve been very frank about what happened. As I said there was a couple of rape cases. I knew one of the men

27:30 and no names, no nothing. Most of the men were very good. Actually the majority of them lived like monks really. There was the odd case of, there was a lot of VD [venereal disease] in Timor too and whether that had anything to do with it or not I don’t know, because we did get quite a few VD cases when they got into good condition.

28:00 But all round, there are things I haven’t told other people or not naming names but there were a few incidences there and I think me self that there was a big cover up. I reckon the men that were allowed to go into Dili that morning, there should have been an inquiry into that. How the hell the officers stood by and let them go, particularly when they heard the gunfire in the night time. They’re supposed to be specially trained.

28:30 If you hear gunfire in the night time and you can’t explain how it happened you’ve got to go and find out why it happened and it wasn’t done. And those men were sacrificed in that respect. A few events in August I haven’t talked to people about. I’ve thought a lot about them myself, things that shouldn’t have happened and leadership

29:00 that’s lacking, but what’s the good? It happened, it’s over but we were never told, we were never told much at all. And really it wasn’t a war officers were always embroiled in because the sections were split up and it might only be a matter of six men going into an ambush but the morning we ambushed the Japanese on the Remexio track there was only six of us.

29:30 Lee Aitken was the corporal. We were lucky, we had a very good corporal. If we’d had a bad corporal we mightn’t have ambushed the Japanese at all. We’d be running and that happened with one corporal. He pulled his men out of a position. Now he wasn’t a very good corporal. Now I wasn’t in that platoon but I knew the man but he

30:00 pulled his men out and lost, he couldn’t loose his stripes, he couldn’t be court martialled because there was no-one in rank high enough but Callinan stated in his, in the army records, in our unit records, he’d have him court martialled if had the power but he was certainly going to stop him having control over men. Now it wasn’t his fault. The officer who was supposed to be looking

30:30 after them never sent any food up for them or anything else and he just rebelled and he paid the penalty. Now the officer, the section he was in, he himself was later taken away from the section and I

can quote what Callinan said about him, he said, “Get so and so,” and this was a letter to one of his captains, and he said, “You rule your officers, don’t let your officers rule you.” He said, “Get hold of so and so,”

31:00 the name is all there but I’m not mentioning it now, that blooming thing will be going round and those people have got relatives, they got anything. At any rate he said, “Make an officer out of him, get him out of his lazy habits,” but nothing, that was it, he never improved and the captain that it was sent to he finished up loosing his

31:30 platoon. As Callinan said to him, he said, “If you’re lenient on your officers rest assured that those above you will not be lenient on you,” and Callinan means himself but that man lost his platoon later. The man that took over from him he got the MC [Military Cross] and the Dutch Don’s Cross for his actions in Dili the night the Japanese landed. He took the platoon

32:00 over and his first report to Ludlow, who was our CO by this time, Callinan was given complete control of the forces in Timor. Major Spence, Lieutenant Colonel Spence who’d been promoted to Lieutenant Colonel went back to Australia and Callinan, the report from Butch McKenzie to Ludlow was

32:30 “not only is the morale of this platoon lower than any of the other platoons in the unit,” he said, “There health is far, far worse.” He said, “The sections here some of them are lucky to have four men to go on a patrol, out of nineteen,” so that tells the whole story in my book it does anyway. It wasn’t the men. They were good men, very, very excellent men. Two of those men got killed,

33:00 round Mindello, no trace was ever found and they were sent into a place above the Mindello area. There was some shooting heard and those blokes were never sighted again. I knew both the men, Andy Smeetan and a bloke named George Thompson from Kalgoorlie, both from Kalgoorlie really but Andy Smeetan was a Barnardo boy, you know those orphans and that they sent out to Australia in between the wars and after the war? Well Andy was one of those people and when

33:30 he was joining the army, we all made a will when we joined the army, who’d we leave our possessions too. It was a bit ironical, anyway he said to, the sergeant said to Andy Smeetan, he said, “Well who do you want to leave your whatever you have to?” And Andy said to him, he was a hard case, he said, “Give me five quid and you can have the lot.” He said, “I can’t do that.” So Andy said, “If there’s anything coming,

34:00 he said, “If I’ve got anything give it to the Salvation Army.” And quite frankly we had quite a number of those boys. Some of those blokes were English. There was Scottie Taylor, an excellent soldier, he was a Pom [English]. Whether he was one of those boys or not, I don’t know. I think George Lewis was one, there were several of them. Even the Australians in the unit,

34:30 a lot of them were only first generation Australians and they weren’t of Irish descent. They were of English descent. They came out, their parents came out in the group settlements before the 1914 War. Norman Thorton, Ray Aitken says Norman Thorton was born in England. I don’t know, I thought he was always born in Australia but Ray Aitken said, “No, he was born in England and came out as a child.” And Don Hudson, an awful lot of them had

35:00 English parents and the ones that had Irish in them they were longer Australians, because they would have come from Australian convicts and the Australian miners went to the west during the gold strikes in Kalgoorlie. See Paddy Hannan was an Irishman, the bloke that discovered the Kalgoorlie gold, gold in Kalgoorlie and a lot of them were from farming stock, they were longer Australians again

35:30 than the blokes that came from the timber country or from the group settlements down the south west of Western Australia. But it didn’t matter where they came from they were all Aussies but the West Australians were distinct from the rest, there’s not one shadow of a doubt about it. It wasn’t strange to me because I’d had a bit of contact with them when I was at Mittagong but an entirely different outlook all

36:00 together and as Bluey Sullivan said to me, he was one of the Irish but he wasn’t in our unit, he said, “The trouble with Western Australia Paddy is they never sent enough Irish criminals out there.” They were very, their attitude towards the Crown and everything was far stronger than ours in the east and they were very much state orientated but most Australian states are. The rivalry between the states in that era was far, far worse than

36:30 it is now. You’ve only got to take a look at the infrastructure of the country. They had about three or four railway gauges. They had three foot six in Queensland, four foot eight and a half in New South Wales, five foot three in Victoria, the transcontinental was standard gauge, four foot eight and a half, South Australia had a bit of Victoria gauge, a bit of their own gauge and some of the transcontinental gauge and that’s

37:00 what the country was like and strangely enough they all said they were federated in 1901. So they were but it didn’t make the people think as a whole as Australians, I don’t think. More so they think more as Australians now than they ever thought of it then. Your were a New South Welshman or you were a Victorian and the Tasmanians.

And what were you?

Oh I was a New South Welshmen.

Not Irish?

No, I was Aussie. I classified myself as

37:30 Australian but I wouldn't take, when I got an Australian passport I got it in London in 1951 and I let it lapse about 1983, 19, yeah 1983. I renewed it and I let it lapse in 1983 and I wanted it again in 1990 and I had to get another passport. Yeah, 1980 something it lapsed and when I went in to renew it

38:00 there was a Chinese behind the counter but he was obviously an Australian citizen or he wouldn't have been allowed to work in the job he had and I produced my old passport and he said, "Where's your citizenship papers?" I said, "I haven't got any." I said, "I'm Australian." He said, "No, you're not." I said [Prime Minister], "Ben Chiffley made us all Australians," outside of everything I said, "Ben Chiffley made us all Australians in 1949," and he said, "Not the Irish," and he was telling the truth. And the reason happened,

38:30 the reason why is because the Irish Government objected to any of their citizens being en masse given a new national identity. Mainly because the Korean War was coming up and things were very dangerous and the Cold War was going and there was thousands and thousands of Irish boys and girls working in England and the Irish Government did not want

39:00 them conscripted, so that they wouldn't. In England the same, in Canada did the same, they took them in a block citizenship and I never knew that here in Australia. So when I went to renew my passport I couldn't get it. I had to go and get citizenship papers and when I went to see about the citizenship papers they wanted me to take the Oath of Allegiance to the British Crown and I wouldn't do it and

39:30 I thought, "Right," and I was getting that passport to go to New Guinea and I'd already paid my fare to New Guinea and I had no passport and I couldn't get one because I wasn't going to take any Oath of Allegiance to Queen Elizabeth. She's a lovely woman and I've got nothing against her but not for me.

Tape 8

00:31 **After you got back to Australia from Timor, what did you in Australia?**

We went on leave, they gave us two weeks leave. Now it took an awful long time to get the unit together again because in Timor, Number Two Independent Company was composed mostly of West Australians. I'd say eighty five percent of the unit were West Australians. When we reinforcements got there we up the eastern

01:00 state quota a bit more but on the whole it was practically a Western Australian unit. A lot of our sigs came from Victoria. There were only two South Australians but we were very fortunate. See we were cut off in Timor and we had a technician from either the ABC [Australian Broadcasting Corporation] or the PMG [Post Master General] a wireless technician and Joe Loveless put a wireless together.

01:30 It's down there in Canberra now. They called it, "Winnie the War Winner," and bits and pieces and we were out of contact with Australia for about sixty nine days. They thought we were all gone and they get this message out of the blue and of course they suspected it right away but then the history books got it a bit wrong. They asked us to identify ourselves and they

02:00 said, "Well what the name of Jack Sergeant's wife? Sergeant Sergeant? He was a Sergeant too but he wasn't in our unit actually, that was just a fluke that had happened. He was one of the men that had got out of Dutch Timor but he was there that night with the wireless because he was one of the blokes that was helping to get it together, but Joe Loveless was the brains behind it. And he was on the set and the bloke said, "Well right, he's right here," and they wanted to know his wife's name. I've forgotten it now

02:30 but actually she's in our address book and he just came at it like a shot out of a gun, "So and so from Queensland," and he was a Queenslander and then they thought, "Well this is genuine." So then we, so of course the first thing we wanted was really medical supplies but that was the first time we got anything in. Now when I said they never fed us I remember getting a couple of bar of chocolate and I can remember getting some Capstan tobacco a couple of times but they

03:00 reckon there was forty ton of, after around about June or July they reckon there was supposed to be forty ton of supplies coming over to Australia, to Timor. All we ever got out of it was tea and sugar. I can't even remember seeing a tin of bully beef out of it.

Did you ever feel like you'd been abandoned?

No, and it's a funny thing, the morale of the men was great. We were there in Timor and we knew that we'd

03:30 all been reported missing. We found that out when we got in contact with Australia but they immediately sent out, my mother got a telegram to say that I was missing, that was all. And then after

they contacted Australia the first thing sent back was they compiled a list of the men that were in Timor and sent that back and of course the Defence Force sent telegrams to all their next of kin saying they'd rejoined their unit, but that was all.

04:00 They didn't know where they were or anything else but they did know we were still alive and we got no mail. The only mail I got in Timor, the mail came in, it must have been in June. I'd been out on a patrol and I came in that night and they said, "Here's your mail Paddy," and there was about four letters in it and it was really good but they hadn't looked underneath. The other letters were for other blokes because it was all in one little packet and they thought it was all for me. And the first thing I saw

04:30 and this is going to be very hard to believe but it was a bill from the Taxation Department telling me I owed them eleven pound, no, what did I owe? I think it was eleven pound and they could collect if they wanted, if they came over. I got no money anyway but it didn't matter, it didn't worry me much anyway but when I came back to Australia I found I had about twenty nine pounds

05:00 worth of stamps and I couldn't go in fast enough to give them their eleven quid so as I could keep the change. I owed them eleven but they owed me twenty nine because I'd gone overseas by a certain date and I wasn't up for any tax at all.

What did you, when you got back to Australia did you indulge in any luxuries?

About the only luxury we indulged in was beer if we could get a drink. No, not really, most of our blokes, most of my friends anyway

05:30 were West Australian blokes and it was a pretty boring time. I knew no-one by that time because tons of people who hadn't joined the AIF or anything had been called up and we'd moved from North Sydney. My mother was living at Yagoona in my brother's house because he'd joined the air force and his wife went back to live with her mother, so my mother came out to look after their house. My mother

06:00 and father came to live in Yagoona because Dad had gone done to Woy Woy and then came back to Sydney again and they were living with my sister, they were living in rooms, so his house was a golden opportunity for them at Yagoona because he was away, as I said his wife had gone back. He was younger than me but he married younger than me too and I didn't get married until 1952. We didn't indulge. There was no luxury. The place was,

06:30 that's when I noticed the people. It wasn't a matter of sour grapes or anything. I had no girlfriend I'd left behind or anything else and so that there was no attachments with anywhere. The blokes I'd played football with had either joined the army or been called up for the army and the wharf labourers I knew a lot of them

07:00 had joined the army as well, but they'd joined the army early. I was more or less, my mother was staying at Ryde, no she wasn't. She was staying at Ryde when I came back from Timor, when I came back from New Guinea she was staying at Yagoona. I knew no-one in Ryde. It was right out of my territory all together and I was in Sydney the night there were supposed to be aircraft overhead and I saw this girl and she was panicking and she lived at Pott's Point,

07:30 a road beyond there and she was trying to get home. And I said, she was with two friends and they were going a different way and I said, "I'll go with you," and she was willing for me to take her home too but her girlfriend and the girlfriend's boyfriend I don't think they liked the look of me so they said, "No."

08:00 So I said, "Well the best thing you can do," I said, "You won't get a taxi." I said, "The best thing you can do is," I said to the bloke, "You two might as well walk to where she's going," I said, "Because you're going to have to walk," and, "No." And I said, "Well otherwise," I said, "I'd be taking her and if you want to come along you can come along and make sure she's safe," and at any rate they didn't do that either.

08:30 So I walked her home and then I walked all the way to Ryde after. It was over the other, it was somewhere down towards Rushcutters Bay she lived, I'm sure, yeah, that's where it was. She lived with her parents and everything else down there. It was down towards Rushcutters Bay she lived so it wasn't such a long walk really, up through William Street and away through King's Cross and down, because I'll never forget the American soldiers. They

09:00 were all crowded into doorways and everything else and wouldn't walk on the street sort of thing and there was an air raid wardeness and she had a respirator on at the alert. It was stuck way up here and how she saw over the top of it I don't know and I was smoking a cigarette when I was walking on the way to Ryde and she said, "Put that cigarette out, there's enemy aircraft overhead." I said, "Climb up and put the moon out," I said, "And I'll put the cigarette out."

09:30 There was a bright moon and it was an absolutely beautiful, like to look at Sydney Harbour it would have been absolutely glorious, like a bright moon like that. One cigarette wasn't going to make one iota of difference to the landscape at the time. No, we didn't, the West Australians had a far better time than us because they went back, there were still plenty of them from the west. Not only that

10:00 they were all living in the same place they enlisted from and not only that they all met in the pubs in Perth and the blokes that came from the bush they made for Perth as soon as they'd gone home and seen their people, came up to Perth and it took them months to get back because they had to wait for transport to bring them across the Nullarbor Plains. And they were only taking back so much at a time,

so they were all nearly actually really but all they'd do was report everyday and if there

10:30 was no transport they just went on leave again, so they had a really long leave. I took an extra week. A doctor gave me a doctor's certificate to say I was suffering from malaria and couldn't travel for a week so I had an extra week's leave. Instead of two I had three but it didn't matter as I said. Outside of the family I was more or less at a loose end, just drinking beer and then my brother-in-law gave me a welcome home party.

11:00 Where he got the keg of beer from I don't know but he got it and I guarantee it cost him plenty too but outside of that there was very little, a couple of blokes, yeah.

So tell us about you next campaign?

New Guinea? When we went to New Guinea we got aboard the troop ship up in Townsville exactly six days, six months after we got back to Australia and in that time we picked up, when we went to New Guinea fifty percent of

11:30 the unit was reinforcements. Now I should have done some training at that point, when I came back from Timor, when I got back to the unit but I went a bit actually on St Patrick's Day. I went up to Brisbane and I knew a publican there that I'd stayed with when I was playing football and I had about six or seven pound in my pocket and I thought, "Oh right," and so I stayed in Brisbane. And after four days

12:00 I still had money because it wasn't costing me nothing to live and the bar maids behind the bar knew me and they were giving me the beer for nothing and but I had no change of clothes. I thought I'd better go pack and I went back and as soon as I got back I was immediately put under open arrest for being absent without leave for four days. I went up and I faced Ludlow, he was the CO by that time and

12:30 read out the charge and he said, "Yes, yes," and he said, "What did you do?" I said, "I had some money," and I said, "I went up to Brisbane to celebrate St Patrick's Day.," "Righto, two pound ten fine, four days pay deducted and seven days CB [Confined to Barracks], confined to camp [barracks]." And I only did one day of the CB. There was a working party going out to load gravel

13:00 and I was picked on the working party and Tom Nesbitt was our captain by that time and I said, "Boss, I'm supposed to be doing CB, I'm not allowed outside the camp," and he said, "Oh you'll be right." He said, "You can't go anywhere with the working party." Any rate we did a couple of trips and we were going back for another load of gravel, this was all manual work incidentally, pick and shovel and loading the truck and we were going back for another load and

13:30 the truck driver, the bloke driving the truck didn't have an army licence or any licence really. He did have a car, he did drive a car and we were coming to a bend in the road and he's feeling for the gear and instead of getting onto the bridge the truck just went straight ahead into a gully. The blokes who were thrown clear they got out

14:00 pretty good. One fella had I think a bruised cheek and Angus McLachlan he was very lucky. He went between two pine trees, Gordon McQueenie was sitting, he was going over to the centre, he was going to be discharged on medical grounds and he was sitting on the bottom of the truck. He'd only got on, he wasn't with the work party. He'd only got on to go over to the centre and I was not thrown clear of the truck. I was thrown over the canopy,

14:30 over the cabin and a forty four gallon drum, I don't how much it had in it, came straight from the back of the truck, hit me in the back, it climbed over the top of me and over the top of me into the creek. And the only thing holding the truck up when I looked, I didn't see Gordon McQueenie, you don't see everything when everything happens and all I could see was a little pine tree like that

15:00 and that was the only thing stopping the truck from turning completely over and I thought, "If that breaks I'll be crushed." Now I climbed out of that truck and up onto the road and that was the last bit of moving I did for two weeks. Gordon McQueenie, who I didn't see in the truck, my eyes were out like that and all I saw was that truck was going to turn over and I'd be crushed. Gordon McQueenie got a fractured skull and died

15:30 and he was ready for discharge from the army. I finished up, they put me in the camp at the Kunghur Training, base hospital there, just a camp hospital and one of our blokes came in to see me, a bloke named Bob Larney and he said, "Well you're finished Paddy," and I said, "Why? What's wrong?" He said, "I heard them talking out there," he said, "You've got internal injuries, broken spleen," and I said, "I don't know what I've got." I said, "I know I'm awful sore."

16:00 Anyway they shifted me up to Greenslopes Hospital the next day, and that's the military hospital in Brisbane and it's a funny thing, there was an officer going up, he was sitting in the front. I didn't know he was going to hospital and at any rate I was in a stretcher in the back of the ambulance and we get down to Kangaroo Point, I didn't know Brisbane all that well then

16:30 and the driver jumped out and he said, "Right you are digger, here you are," and I said, "Where?" He said, "Kangaroo Point," and I said, "I'm supposed to be going to Greenslopes," and I said, "I can't walk anywhere." I couldn't and then he said to me, he said, "Aren't you the pox case, VD?" I said, "I'm not,"

and it was the officer in the front but just because I was the private I'd be the one that would have VD, I said, "I haven't," and then the

17:00 officer said, "No, I'm for here." I went to Greenslopes Hospital and I was in there for six weeks. For two weeks I couldn't walk or anything then I started to get better. All they x-rayed was my hand, that was broken, I knew that and I knew I had internal injuries but they never made any effort to find out what they were and at the end of six weeks I was pretty fit.

17:30 I was discharged from hospital. I did a week in Cooparoo Convalescent camp and I went back to Kunghar and of course being discharged from hospital I didn't go straight back to my unit. I had to go through the centre, what they call the centre and I was over there for about four days and I went back to the unit. Well by that time they had got the reinforcements. That would have been in May, so I was from some time in March till

18:00 close to May in hospital easily and when I got in, everyone had their army number on their kitbags and I'm looking at the numbers and there's SX141, SX881, NX22000 and something and I said to Bill Holly, Bill Holly said to me, "I've kept a place for you in our camp tent for you Paddy," and I said, "Right," so when I go in I said, "Who are these blokes?" He said, "They're the reinforcements," and

18:30 I said, "They've got funny numbers for reinforcements," and he said, "Oh all these blokes have been to the Middle East," and they had been. Some of them had fought in Libya, Greece and Crete and when we went to New Guinea, as I said, we picked up a hundred and fifty reinforcements. That was over, fifty percent of the unit was reinforcements. There was not section in that company that didn't have fifty percent reinforcements.

And how did you feel towards them?

Great, they were great blokes.

19:00 I reckon the unit that went to New Guinea was a better unit than the one that went to Timor. They were terrific soldiers, the men that had fought in Libya, Greece and Crete. They were artillery men, most of them were artillery men. They got sick and tired of being in the artillery and they came back from the Middle East and some of them came out of a unit called the 2/1st Mediums. They were six inch guns and they were bored stiff. They been to Nauru Island and they'd

19:30 been to Ocean Island and they'd been to Darwin, detachments of them. They'd gone to the Middle East and they'd never gone into action. They had not fired one shot in anger and they were fed up with the artillery and they volunteered for the independent companies. A lot of the other blokes were young fellas that had joined up later, like some of them had numbers like NX120 or a 130 thousand or something like that. They would have joined up like the end of 1942, so they were all young

20:00 as well. See when we went to Timor the youngest bloke that went to Timor to my knowledge, and I'm absolutely sure he was the youngest, was a bloke named Jack Thompson. After he'd been in Timor for ten months he had his sixteenth birthday. When he got back from Timor his father claimed him out of the army and in no uncertain language told the sergeant down at Victorian Barracks what he thought of the army and what he thought of him and he said, "You'll never get him again," and he took him away droving with him. He was a drover and that was the

20:30 last we saw of Jack Thompson. But the unit that went into New Guinea, they were great. The reinforcements they were terrific. We got wonderful reinforcements and we had a, new officers too in lots of cases and they were good. A couple of them were artillery men. They were a bit gung-ho kind of men being out of the artillery but

21:00 we took no notice of that, they were still good soldiers. One of them got killed, Baldy Nagel he got killed but being artillery men and I don't care what they went through in the jungle camp in Kunghur and they were far better trained than our unit because apart from the training they got in their original unit, they did three months training in the jungle training camp. When our blokes were being trained to go to Timor as a special unit, they only did six weeks down at Wilson's Promontory.

21:30 I did a week. That's why I didn't do any training when I came back from Timor either because I was in hospital in Brisbane, as I said, for seven weeks and a week in Coorparoo was seven weeks and I got back to the unit and I can remember we walked down to Woody Point from Strathpine Camp, about twenty two miles and I got hurt playing softball. I did my knee in.

22:00 I didn't go to hospital, oh no, that was in Strathpine but that's right. We were going, the unit was going up to the Tableland and I was picked to go to the Tableland and there was twelve of us going up as an advanced party to build a camp for the unit. We had one of our officers, Colin Doiger, he'd been in Timor with us and he was a very good man. He could mix with anyone, didn't matter what you were,

22:30 colonels or privates, he, Doiger could mix with them. He was a real knockabout really and we went up the Tablelands and we were only up there a week and Doiger looked after us very well. He'd always scrounge a couple of bottles of beer for us out of the officers' mess. He'd just take it and bring it back to our camp and he'd stay with us. He used to camp with us but he could go into any officers' mess he liked. We were up in the Wandaclo area, that's where the 16th

23:00 Brigade were, at Herbert and anyway we were only up there a week and a message came back, "We

were to report back to Redlinch Camp." It was a station camp about seven miles out of Cairns and we got down there and then we found out what was on. They pulled the unit off the train. They wanted a unit in a hurry for a certain part of New Guinea and it was a very isolated place and they reckoned we were tailor made for the job.

23:30 So they pulled us off and on the 16th of, I got into trouble again in Cairns. One of the blokes that I was in hospital with was out of the 2/15th Battalion and he'd been wounded at El Alamein really but he was still in hospital for something else in Brisbane and the other fella was out of the 2/15th Battalion also. They were both Queenslanders and I got pally with

24:00 them when I was in Greenslopes Hospital and we'd go out and we'd drink together and we were hardly ever back in the hospital for tea but we always got back and then we'd go into the galley and the night nurse would be on by then and we'd get something to eat. Anyway I remember the Sunday, one Sunday they used to hold the church, the Catholic church services used to be held in a tent and there was a sister there, Sister O'Leary. She came from Beaudesert

24:30 in Queensland and at any rate she's standing at the tent and this Basil Burns, Rex De Strange and myself turn up and she says, "Where do you think you three are going?" I said, "We're going to mass," and she said, "What?" I said, "We're going to mass," and she said, "Of all the patients I've got on my ward in this hospital," she said, "You're the last three I'd expect to see going to mass." I said, "Well we're going Sister," and she just couldn't believe it because we were,

25:00 we were able to walk by then and there was another bloke, Smithy, he was out of the 2/12th Battalion and he was on crutches and as soon as the roll call was done in the hospital, we were gone for the day and she knew it, the nurses knew it but they never put us in.

So how did you get transported to New Guinea?

We went on the Duntroon ship to Port Moresby and oh it had a bundle of troops. It

25:30 had our unit and there was a big compliment of militia men on it too. Australia had two armies, which was a bad thing. You had the militia men, the call-ups, the conscripts and you had the AIF, which were volunteers and we were a bit looking down our nose at the militia but we were wrong. I can see it now but at that particular time we didn't see it. As I said I'm looking back through sixty odd years of hindsight.

26:00 We had a pretty good time on the ship. There was a lot of boxing, a lot of sport and that and our blokes excelled on it, particular the boxing. I think they won every bout they went in for. We got off in Port Moresby and went out to Murray Barracks camp. We were there a while and we couldn't get any transport. They couldn't spare any troops to escort us when we got on the transport because

26:30 they were carrying out a lot of operations up around Rabaul, bombing and strafing and etcetera so they sent A Platoon first, they went up to Bena Bena. Do you know the highlands in New Guinea at all? No, well Bena Bena it's right up in the eastern highlands. You're up about six thousand feet above sea level, five or six thousand, healthy climate. Well A Platoon went there and we were, they went

27:00 off first and we had to wait some more time until a plane became available and then B and C Platoons went to a place called Goroka. It's possibly, it is now the main town in the highlands and of course in those days there was only a mission house there and a landing strip. Now the landing strip was only cut out, they cut it out of the kunai grass in three days,

27:30 with the natives and we would have been the first planes in there. It was just as if you'd just cleared a paddock and that was it. Well we went in on these DC3 transport planes. There was eleven men to each plane. When they were transporting Australian troops the gross weight of the cargo, including the humans could only be five thousand pounds. If

28:00 the Americans was using it for themselves they could take eight thousand pounds. We only had five thousand pounds. At any rate when we were circling to land we looked out the portholes of the plane and here's a plane with the red blob on it, red circle, a Japanese plane and no-one could believe their eyes. Here's this Japanese plane circling with us. As it turned out it was a reconnaissance plane and

28:30 of course he was over the target and he whistled up the bombers and the fighters to come in and strafe the strip. This was before our convoy of aircraft turned up and of course he was hanging around to see what would happen and before he knew where he was we had fifty Lightening fighting planes escorting us and the safest place for him was to join the transport planes and circle with them and he just kept on circling with them until they got

29:00 close to the ground. And as soon as they got close to the ground he went whoosh and off because the Lightening plane it's best technique was diving. It would get up high and it would dive. It was not a manoeuvrable plane. It couldn't match it with a Zero for manoeuvrability and of course the Japanese pilot was probably well and truly aware of that. He got as close to the ground as he could and he took off. The Lightenings then took off after some bombers and fighters and we didn't see any aerial

29:30 battle. When those planes saw the Lightenings they took off too. They were well and truly outnumbered and they said there was one bomber plane shot down and one Zero but we wouldn't know a thing about that but what I do remember is the Yankee pilot said, "Come on, unload that crate." He said, "Let me

get me arse out of here, let me get my arse out of there," and he was that busy getting his arse out of there he left a beautiful camera behind

30:00 after him, but I said to him then, I said, "What's wrong with you?" I said, "You're safe enough down here." He said, "Guy," he said, "I just want to get me arse out of here. I don't want any part of this place. I want to get." He felt safer in the air than he felt on the ground and we'd have been just the opposite but we had no troubles. We had no troubles. The Bena Bena tribe, as I said, they're high up in the air and

30:30 they used to cover themselves with pig grease to keep warm and all they wore was, it wasn't even a grass skirt, it was nothing. It was just like, say you've got a scarf and they'd have a bit of vine tied round their waist and the scarf would lap over that, between their legs and lap over the back and that's all they wore and the men were the same. In fact they still wear that kind of dress at times up in the highlands for the tourists, but that's to

31:00 get some ar(UNCLEAR). But that was the dress in the highlands when we were up there at that time and they were part of the Bena Bena tribe and you could smell them to high heaven from this pig grease but the reason for that, they built their huts very low to the ground. They'd have a fire inside there but that was for warmth because it gets damn cold up in those mountains at night time and we stayed around. The 2/7th Company, that was the 2/7th Independent Company, they put the 2nd, we

31:30 were known as the 2/2nd Independent Company then, not Number Two Independent Company. The 2/7th had gone in there before us and they'd been fighting up around Mubo and Wau so they were only there more or less as caretakers until we got there, but they must have been pretty well due to go back to Australia on leave. All that happened

32:00 to them of course, what did happen to them there was a man named Mal Herbert, he was a corporal and Jack Petie, he lives in Tamworth now. He was out of Five Section and I was out of Four Section and we were being sent out into the Bismarck Ranges, into the position we were going to take over and get there and have a look at the country etcetera. Now we were only, Jack Petie was a private, I was a private and Mal Herbert

32:30 was a corporal but we were going into three different areas at any rate. We were going into the areas where our sections would go to. Word came through that a 2/7th Company man had been very badly wounded down at a place called Sepu on the Ramu River, down in the valley. Actually he was the only survivor out of the three of them. They were a bit lax but I can't talk about that because of what happened to me later on.

33:00 They were sprung in the middle of the day by a Japanese patrol, which crossed the river. See we had no means of crossing the river either and this man, Rolf was his name, Bruce Rolf. He was a South Australian. He had five bullet wounds and eight sword cuts. Now he was the only survivor out of the three men. With independent company work that's what it was like. There might be only

33:30 three of you on a night post and that was bad when they made you stay in the one place. That spelt nothing but trouble. You weren't strong enough to defend yourself and you were stuck in one particular place. If you'd been allowed to shift around and everything else, now that shouldn't have applied but that was how it was. And our doctor was going out, a bloke named Doctor MacAnerie, not the doctor we had in Timor. Oh he was a bloody wild man, MacArnerie and a great bloke and

34:00 a good doctor. So was our doctor in Timor, he was excellent too but MacAnerie had to go out and pick this bloke up and the RAP sergeant that was, Alan Newby, he was going with him and then they grabbed us for escort because we were going in the same direction. So we went out through Kundaw Valley and up through Dengalali and Dengalali is eight thousand feet above sea level, up through

34:30 the Iwan Pass and that's nine thousand, eight hundred feet above sea level so I think it took us about three days to get out to a place called Guebe on the northern slopes of the Bismarck Ranges and we went down there and we saw this Bruce Rolf and his head, his own blokes at that outpost they'd bandaged his up and everything else. The maggots had got into the wounds, which as it turned out was the best thing that could have happened and the doctor

35:00 amputated the top of his finger, one of his fingers, only the top, took a look at the wounds and they were clean. The maggots had eaten all the foul flesh and everything else. Now when he was shot, the Japanese, when I say he had five bullet wounds, two or three bullets did all the damage. One went through his arm here, through the pectoral muscle here, out here (demonstrates) and back through the other pectoral muscle. That was three wounds.

35:30 The other wound, two wounds were in his buttocks and then the Japanese got stuck into him with his sword and he had two cuts across the head, and his arm was badly cut and his body was cut and part of his buttocks were hit with the sword as well and the Japanese, he only had a pair of shorts on him and the Jap, he was lying on the ground and the Japanese

36:00 officer, he must have been an officer or an NCO to have a sword, he bend down and he started to undo the buttons on his shorts and this is honest, Bruce Rolf thought he was going to geld him. And he pushed the Japanese off him like and got up and staggered into the bush and the Japanese opened up with his revolver

36:30 again but he'd used up all his bullets and they didn't bother chasing him because they said, "He's going to die, let him go." But he made his way back to Guebe on his own, that's where the other blokes were. They didn't know what had happened out at Sepu until he came in and he was a walking, he was a walking cot case, not a cot case, he was lucky

37:00 to be alive. And they got on the wireless and they sent a message back to their platoon headquarters and it went from there to Goroka to our headquarters. The doctor set out and we went out and the doctor thought, "Maybe there's a better track back than the one we come," and they weren't bad tracks but we didn't know about the mountains. I mean we went from five thousand feet up to nine thousand, eight hundred but we went up and down a couple of times before we got to the nine thousand, eight hundred. You might go down three thousand feet to the

37:30 next river, cross it and climb out again and he thought there might be an easier way back and he knew there was a track going across a place called Bundikri well that's where I was bound for, Bundi-Bundikri area and he said to me, "You go across to Bundikri and send a message back what the tracks like," and I thought, "This is lovely. I don't even know where Bundikri is." And I got on the track and

38:00 I stayed on the track until I came to a cliff face that was perpendicular practically and about fifty or sixty feet high and when I got to the top of that, I had to climb up it, when I got to the top I ran into this Colin Douge, one of our officers and a bloke named Kiwi Harrison and they were going over to Sepu area because that's where they were going to be stationed, at Guebe.

38:30 And I said, "When you see the Doc tell him not to waste his time coming this way." I said, "He's got a wounded bloke with him." I said, "They've got to cart him all the way back to Goroka," and I said, "The way we came out is better than going back this way." Well I went over there then, I went down to Bundi and that was the area we were taking up. We took over from the 7th Company,

39:00 three of us were sent down to the Imbrum River, Charlie King and myself and Ron Gurr, Ron Gurr was one of the reinforcements but as I said he'd fought in Libya, Greece and Crete and he was one of the finest men I've ever met. He was known in the unit as the, "Old gentleman." He was a lot older than us. He was thirty six, thirty five, thirty six. We had no tobacco. Ron had tobacco.

39:30 He'd put his tobacco tin on a stump, "Help yourself," and that's the kind of man he was and I said to him, because when that tin was finished he'd produce another tin and I said, "Ron," I said, "How come you've got so much tobacco?" He said, "Paddy when I was in Greece and Crete we had no tobacco, nothing," and he said, "I made up my mind I was never going to be without tobacco again." So when he went to New Guinea he must have taken about

40:00 sixteen or twenty two ounce tins of tobacco with him and he kept us in tobacco.

Tape 9

00:17 As I said, they tied us down on the one spot. If they'd let us shift around we would have been safe, we would have on the move but we were tied down to one spot and there was a very bad incident happened there and I was

00:30 wounded.

Tell us about that. What can you remember about that?

I can remember all of it.

Tell us about it.

01:00 Two of the blokes from platoon headquarters crossed the river, run into the Japanese and got back over the river again safely. They were very close to the fight that they had from about five yards apart. One of them was an avowed atheist before he crossed the river and I think he was a fundamental Christian by the time he got back to the southern

01:30 side of the river, a bloke named Arthur Hirst, he's dead now but the other man is still alive, Bob Smythe. Anyway they were expecting trouble down at this place called Fighter, or Fighter Top so there was Norman Thorton, Shadow Old, there was Bill Holly, young Brownie and a fellow named Shepparton.

02:00 And Mick Morgan was our lieut by this time and he decided there was going to be trouble there, they expected it really, after these blokes crossed the river and that makes what happened more culpable in my eyes, particularly for me. I was shifted from the Inram River to go over to Fighter, called from there to Fighter. Norman

02:30 Thorton was down there with Don Bassey at the time I think it was, no Sam Fullbrook and he, that's all he had with him, Sam Fullbrook and Gordon Old, and when I came over Bill Holly, that's the bloke that's in the photo with me there, he was going down to relieve Norman for three days. We used to take three days about. Now we had four

03:00 men, so we were one up because I'd been sent over there they had an extra man. I went down with Bill, we got in there that afternoon and I can remember Norm Thorton saying to Bill Holly, he said, "Bill, this place is a bloody death trap." He said, "Be careful," and we had all the warnings, we had the lot. Apparently a native had come up there one night in the dark and said

03:30 "hello master." No-one saw the native, could have been a Japanese in the pitch black, in the jungle, that had happened previously. We get there and the next morning, just at daylight, there was a hand grenade lobed just outside the hut we were using, which was another thing we didn't want,

04:00 being camped inside a hut. Young Brownie said, "Look out for the bomb," the grenade went off and it was probably a grenade that took out one of our booby traps. I jumped up and was looking for my Owen gun and I got hit in the head and I thought I'd been hit with

04:30 a brick travelling about a thousand mile an hour. I must have got knocked but I can remember before I got hit I saw Bill Holly going out of the hut and I could even see him with his rifle in his right hand like that (demonstrates) as he jumped out. We were all in shorts, no shirts on us and that wasn't the uniform we had in New Guinea. That's the uniform we used to go and sleep in.

05:00 We had long trousers by that time, green shirts but none of us had a shirt on. I, Shadow Olds, he saw me lying on the ground but I didn't see him but he saw me lying on the ground and I was covered in blood and I don't know how long I was out for. Probably saved my life when I went down because I

05:30 got hit in the head and there was blood everywhere and probably, the Japs were only five yards away at least from the hut and I was lying there and I thought, "What's the good? You're going to get killed anyway, you might as well die anyway." That's as true as I'm here. That sounds far fetched but I can remember those thoughts going through my mind and suddenly I just seemed to wake up and I was

06:00 "get up and get out." Now I never went looking for my own gun again. My one thought in my head was to get out of that hut and that's where I was wrong. I still should have gone looking for my gun, my own. It wouldn't have made any difference to what happened but at least I would have had a weapon and I could have done something. I got out of the hut and young Brownie was lying there

06:30 and I thought he'd just fallen over. He was shot right between the eyes as it turned out. I didn't know that. I didn't see Bill Holly and I didn't see Shepparton. Shepparton must have been the first man out of the hut and all I know now is where they found him and Bill Holly is from what the men who went down there later when they found the bodies told me.

07:00 One of them is still alive, Ron Hilliard, he lives in Parkes and I got out and the next thing that saved my life is I didn't know the place from Adam. I'd only got in there the afternoon before. I went straight for the scrub and I fell over again but instead of getting up the next time I just crawled into the scrub. Gordon Old, who I didn't see, didn't even know he was around, the only reason he was

07:30 still there he had malaria that badly he was too weak to go back up to Kobun and the worst thing we did was to let him stay there but anyway he's a different story again. I got back up to Kobun and there was only Norman Thorton, Sam Fullbrook, and Harry Butrell, the sig, so Norman Thorton said to Harry Butrell, "Take the wireless set, go back down the track towards Bundi," and Harry said, "What will you

08:00 do?" And he said, "Well I'll guard the bottom track and Paddy and Sam can guard the top track." And I said to Norman Thorton, I said, "If they come Norman," I said, "The bottom track is the one they're like to come on." Now I was barefooted and I was covered in blood, all round my face and head and down to my chest and everything else. I also got some shrapnel in my legs from the grenade but I didn't know that at the time. I only found that out when they x-rayed me years ago,

08:30 some years ago in Concord Hospital and the girl said to me, "You were wounded?" And I said, "Yes," and she said, "There's bits of shrapnel in your body," and I said, "But I was shot in the head." She said, "Well there's shrapnel in you," but I didn't know it. It didn't matter much anyway. I got hold of another rifle at Kobun,

09:00 so Sam Fullbrook and I, Harry Butrell bandaged my head up and cleaned the wound out and it, I was lucky. If it had of been another half inch further in it, but it went through the bone and left a furrow in the bone of my skull and it was there for years until the bone grew.

09:30 But there was a lot of liquid inside there and I don't what caused that but, and I didn't see the doctor anyway. I got back and Sam Fullbrook and I, we were guarding the top track and Norm Thorton was on his own guarding the bottom track because he insisted Harry Butrell go with the wireless, because that was our major communication. At any rate around about four o'clock in the afternoon

10:00 I saw some movement down through the trees where the track would have been running and I said to Sam Fullbrook, "They're coming now." He said, "Where?" I said, "Look down through the trees," I said, "And you'll see some movement," and there was. Any rate the movement that was on the track disappeared and then came around the bend in the track and it was Gordon Old. Now Gordon was a man of about six foot, six foot one, straight up and down like a drink of water.

10:30 He's walking with the aid of a stick and the stick was about up to there on me (demonstrates). He was

bent right over and as soon as I saw him I didn't, that was the first I saw of Gordon all that day. I didn't see him when we were going over to the outpost and I raced down to see him and he nearly screamed.

11:00 He said, "Paddy, you're dead," and I said, "I'm not," and that's the first I knew that Gordon Old had seen me. He said, "I saw you lying on the ground," he said, "And you were covered in blood." That's the only reason I know I must have been knocked out really because you've got no chance of judging time or anything else. All I know is I was lying on the ground and those thoughts went through my mind and how long I was there I don't know. At any rate we sent him back up into Kobun

11:30 and Mick Morgan came over from Bundi with the rest of the section and just asked what happened and I told him what happened. Now I'm not excusing myself. First of all I should have had my own gun, secondly, we were careless. We were not, we should have been well and truly up and out of that hut. That's the least we should have done. The Japs would have seen us because they were there, they passed the, they got up there that night.

12:00 And but at least we would have been prepared and we would have been armed. As it was we were caught with nothing. As I said I'm not excusing myself and I'm not blaming Bill Holly either but what I was thinking about was you'd get three men on an outpost like that, one bloke had to stay in the camp maybe, climb a tree and see what he could see from the tree. The other two had to patrol and our captain said, "We did not exercise internal security."

12:30 Now he told me that in Timor in 1992. I said, "We didn't have internal security," and I said, "You said it was Bill Holly's fault." I said, "We were careless, I'll agree with you there," but I said, "Neither you or any officer went down to see what those positions were like when we were sent into occupy them," so I said, "You can please yourself."

13:00 And I was supposed to go up the east end of Timor. They had a jeep, I'm talking about 1990. Patsy Thatcher [Melbourne academic], and they had two thousand Australian dollars, three million rupees to go to various orphanages and Patsy Thatcher and the woman that was with her said, "You can come with us Paddy." I hadn't gone to Timor with them. I had met them over there and I'd run into them and I said, "No, I'm going." I said, "I'm going the other way."

13:30 "Why?" I said, "If I go up there and go along with you and I got to be with that man," I said, "I'm going to open my mother and say things that I will regret." I said, "I'll keep well away." And there was nothing wrong with the bloke really, he looked after us well in Timor, and but when he blamed Bill Holly for what happened down there, I took umbrage at that.

14:00 I was just as blameable as Bill Holly. You couldn't blame the other two young fellows. They were reinforcements and it was their first time overseas and there was nothing wrong with them either but both of them got killed. Both of them got killed because Bill and I were careless.

Does that trouble you today?

Sometimes you think on it. Probably there was nothing we could have done about

14:30 it. We should have all been killed, even if we'd have been up, but that still doesn't alter the fact that we were careless and I'm not blaming the other two young fellows. Young Brown was twenty and Bill Sherrington was about twenty one, twenty two, great humour, Bill Sherrington he was a Melbourne boy, wonderful

15:00 sense of humour. Bill Holly was a good man. He'd come through Timor and they were not pretty sights when they were picked up. Now Mick Morgan would not let me go back down to Fighter. He made me take Gordon Old and there was an RAP [Regimental Aid Post] corporal up at Bundi and my job was to get him

15:30 to Bundi and I remember he, I wasn't carrying him but I was supporting him and he was in a shocking condition. You could practically see the weight peeling off him. We had to cross the Inram River and it was just like looking down into a raging torrent with rocks and white water and the only thing we had to cross on was a tree, felled across the river.

16:00 So I walked backwards and I told him close his eyes and I'd get him over the other side. I got him over the side and I knew well he couldn't go much further, if any, so I took him into the scrub and I hid him and I said, "Now, no matter what happens, don't move from here." I said, "There's no Japanese will get here." I said, "Mick Morgan and the rest of the section are forward from where we are here."

16:30 I said, "Now don't move," so I left there and I set out to get up to Bundi. Well I'd only gone about half a mile and I ran into Corporal Sparr, the RAP bloke, and fortunately he had some natives with him. I took him down to where Gordon Old was, he took Gordon Old's temperature and it was a hundred and six point eight. Now you can get a temperature like that with malaria and stay alive but you're only just alive. Now he took him up to Bundi and Gordon went from there

17:00 to Denglagu from Denglagu back to Goroka, from Goroka back to Moresby, from Moresby back to Australia. The last I saw of him was in New Guinea. He never came back to the unit. His nerves were shot to glory. He shouldn't have never been taken to New Guinea. He should have been one of the men they boarded out of the unit anyway. He could have gone into any base unit or anything else

17:30 but they certainly shouldn't have taken him to New Guinea because Gordon's nerves had started to go on him in Timor and that wasn't Gordon's fault. There was nothing wrong with him but that kind of game wasn't for Gordon. Now you probably think that my nerves shouldn't have been too good but go back to the two men, Bill

18:00 Holly was either wounded at the shoulder that took his collar bone away, his shoulder away and the other man it could have been vice versa, was wounded in the hip. When they went down to Fighter and looked around and I think they were only about thirty yards, that's as far as they got out of the hut, about thirty yards. One might have been closer than the other. One was right near the hut. Bill Brown was definitely, he

18:30 was at the bottom end of the hut when he got hit. I saw him myself but I didn't know he was dead and that's honest. I thought he'd only fallen over. One had eight bayonet wounds in him and the other had five bayonet wounds. They were alive when they were being bayoneted. Now if nothing else was to shatter Gordon Old's nerves, Gordon Old when he got out of the hut had only gone about thirty or forty yards, not as if he'd

19:00 gone that far and he thought he'd travelled miles and he crawled under a log and one of the Japanese who was directing the search, when I fell over again, they must have thought I'd been hit again. And he was standing on top of the log yelling out orders to the others and Shadow Old could see his boots and he was lying under the log, covered with the undergrowth but he could see this bloke's boots.

19:30 So he heard those men being bayoneted, he heard them. So it's no wonder his nerves were as bad as they were. That was the last straw. I met him back in Australia after we got back from New Guinea. I was at the races with, I took my mother to the races at Rosehill and on the railway platform coming out from the races I ran into

20:00 Gordon Old and he had an AAMWS [Australian Army Medical Women's Service] girl with him, that was Women's Nursing Service but they weren't nurses. They were nurses aides and that was the girl he married actually and I said to him, I said, we always called him Shadow, I said, "How're you going Shadow?" And he said, "I'm fit to go back to the unit Paddy," but as soon as he saw me he started shaking like that. He said, "How are you?" I said, "I'm alright."

20:30 I said, "Everybody else is going okay," and they gave us nine weeks leave when we came home from New Guinea. Now.

What medical treatment did you get for your wound?

None, the doctor took one look at me, he said, "You're lucky." He said, "Whatever liquids were in there, instead of going into my skull they came out." He said, "You're right." He said, "You could have had trouble." He said, "You'll probably get nerve deafness in the right ear," and he was right. I got it but

21:00 he said, "You're alright," and I said, "Right," so I went back to my unit a couple of days, went back to the section. But by that time B Platoon had taken a tumble itself and they put the whole section at Kobun and we patrolled from there and even when we did that we didn't take up the best position. We should have occupied the knoll on each side and in the middle and we had eighteen men and we had plenty of firepower.

21:30 We had four Owen guns. They're automatic guns to each sections, two Bren guns and we had the manpower. We patrolled from there. Strangely enough we crossed the Ramu River again but I remember the first patrol I went on when I went back. Charlie King was forward scout and I was

22:00 second scout and I don't think I even put an imprint in the ground, I was stepping that lightly. Charlie King was out in front and I was behind him and there was about another six behind, well back behind us. As I said Charlie King was a great, great nephew of Ned Kelly's and Ned Kelly was a big man, Charlie King wasn't. Charlie King was about five foot four, four and a half, five maybe,

22:30 very light in his feet, his movements and his reflexes were light. He, I took my eyes off him for a minute and there was a leaf, in the jungle it's that silent and a leaf falls out of a tree, and they're big leaves and you can hear them as they hit the other leaves on the way down. Charlie King heard a leaf and he was off the track. I took my eyes off Charlie King for only a fraction of a second and there was no Charlie King on the track and I was off

23:00 the track too. And I got up to where he was and I said, "What is it Charlie?" And he said, "I think it's nothing Paddy." He said, "Probably only a leaf falling out of a tree," he said, "But I dived off the track." Now we were on a very good patrol later on but we went back over the river. We had no means of crossing the river, that was our trouble. We had to try and cross that river and Norman Thornton couldn't swim a stroke. How he never got drowned I don't know. We'd

23:30 make a raft. All we had was the vines to tie it. We'd put our own guns and rifles in that and our boots and then we'd try and ferry the raft across. The Ramu River was running pretty fast particularly after the rains. There was that many rivers and creeks ran into it. It would rise about six or eight feet overnight and be gone again and of course was travelling at a fair old bat.

24:00 We hit a snag, the raft would disintegrate and we'd have to make it to shore the best we could. I don't know how many guns or bloody Owen guns are at the bottom of the Ramu River because we lost at least two. But at any rate Nesbitt came down from Bundikri and he decided we're going to cross the river. Now Sam Fullbrook, Keith Dignam and I, we'd gone out on a patrol and we'd been out for four days and it was only

24:30 a fluke we ran into them. I said to Dig, I said, "You've been back up the creek to Kobun Dig." I said, "I don't even know where it starts," and Dig said, "Oh yeah," and I said, "We'll go back that way." Now we'd been out for four days and our rations for the four days, each man had four tins of bully beef. I opened mine for breakfast, you opened yours for lunch, Sam Fullbrook opened his for tea. That was our rations with a packet of biscuits.

25:00 We'd run out of rations by this time and I'll never forget it, we were going through these swamps to go up to where this creek is to get out of the river, get out of the valley and we're wading in the swamps and of course we come to the backwaters and we had to go around the tops of them because we couldn't swim them with the gear we had on us and there was crocodiles in them too. At any rate we're going along

25:30 and we came to some dry ground and I was out in front and I looked down and I saw these footprints and I stopped the other two and Dig said, "What is it?" I said, "There's footprints out there Dig," and at any rate we had a look around before we came out of the swamp and we were back where we'd slept the night before. The footprints

26:00 were our own footprints and Dig said, "You're a great bushman you are." I said, "Hold on Dig, you're in it the same as me." We'd got completely bushed trying to get around the tops of these swamps and we went back the way we'd come. Because you couldn't see the sun you couldn't pick up your directions. At any rate we camped there again that night and the next day we got through the swamps and we're going up through the creek to the river and we looked up and it looked like the whole

26:30 Australian Army was coming down the creek. There was only twelve or fourteen of them and it was Number Four section. They'd gone across the river, Nesbitt was taking them over, Mick Morgan was with them. Now Mick hadn't done any patrolling at all. I don't know what the hell happened to Mick in New Guinea. He was quite a good friend, he was an NCO in Timor. There was nothing wrong with him in New Guinea either, except he just spent it sitting on his bum.

Describe to me what it's

27:00 **like to be a forward scout walking down a track without knowing what's ahead of you?**

Oh my God, I've done my share of it so I should know what it's like. You're stuck out there and there's one thing you're hoping, that the rest don't come too close to you. You've got a bit of a show if they're seasoned soldiers and you're on your own out in front, they're going to let you go through. It's not you they want, they want what's behind you and

27:30 that's about the only bit of safety you've got about being a forward scout. When you're out there you're wishing to God it was someone else and I don't know, maybe other men had a different idea but you did your turn, you took your turn and there's not much you can do about it really. We'd been in ambushes ourselves and we knew exactly what the Japs could do and what they couldn't do. You can't do a bloody thing until they start

28:00 shooting and then you pray to God they miss the first time because you won't be the same distance a second time and that's what it's like being a forward scout.

Were there ever men who didn't take their turn?

No, every man in the section took their turn. Now officers usually didn't go forward scouts. I can understand that. That's nothing against the officers. Even the corporals went out. Now if you went out on a patrol with a

28:30 man like Ray Aitken or Norman Thornton, they stayed out in front all day. I never knew Ray Aitken to use a forward scout. I never knew Norman Thornton to use a forward scout. The other corporal I don't know about. The other corporal he was a cat with a different tail altogether. The less said about him the bloody better.

29:00 But it's not that, he saw his share of action in Timor but there was something about the man that just didn't gel, because I said to Norman Thornton, this was after I'd been, I had to take a patrol down to the river. I had a man from Griffith with me, a man named Alf Hodge and I had not been down to the river before this but Alf Hodge had. The other man was Alec Guard, a New South Welshman.

29:30 And there was only the three of us and I said, "Well you'll know where the booby trap is Alf." I said, "I don't," but we set our booby traps on instantaneous fuses so that if you made one mistake you were gone. I said, "Tell me where it is and I'll defuse it." He said, "No, I'll do it Paddy, I've done it before." You get that pride. Alf Hodge was taking the booby trap, making it harmless but

30:00 I wouldn't go away. I stood alongside him. It's just something that you do. Probably it's not, maybe it's not bravery, maybe it's not anything else but it's just the way it was. We didn't expect Alec Guard to be

there and any rate our booby traps were very simple. It was just a hand grenade with an instantaneous fuse on the detonator. We put it in into a

30:30 condensed milk tin and that stopped, you took the pin out and that stopped the, that stopped the lever from flying and activating the booby trap. Now Alf Hodge put the pin into that booby trap, first threw the lever to hold it down and then he took it out of the tin and we just laid it aside and we were going to put it back in when we came back.

31:00 So that any patrol that was going down the river from our section they took the pin of that booby trap with them and if you didn't have the trip, if you didn't have the pin you certainly didn't go down the track. You went into the scrub and you stayed in the scrub and hacked your way through it if you wanted to stay alive. When I said to Alf Hodge, I said, "Where do we go n the river?" He couldn't see

31:30 it. I said, "But you were only down here a week or two ago with Ludlow?" And he said, "That's right Paddy," and I said, "Well where did you go?" And he nodded his head over the ridge, "That's as far as we went." I said, "But he came back to Kobun with a big long story about the river and everything else," and he said, "I know." He said, "But he never went to the river," and I said, "Right." So I went back and I thought, Norman Thornton was the corporal

32:00 and Bill Holly was dead so I was a lance corporal by that time. I said to Norm, I said, "Hey Norm," I said, "Ludlow hasn't been going down to the river."

Keep going for the moment. We can talk about that afterwards.

And he surprised me. He said, "I realised that long ago Paddy."

32:30 Thornton knew and we never said anything to anyone else about it. The other men knew. The only one that didn't know was Mick Holden our officer because no-one told him and that was the difference in the two corporals. Norm Thornton never used a forward scout and when we were in Timor Ray Aitken never used a forward scout. But we went to the patrol scene when we had a forward scout out and we took our

33:00 turns. They tried to cross the river that night and a funny thing, I was talking about the West Australians, now Bob Smythe was with Platoon Headquarters and Bob Smythe was a very strong swimmer. He still goes down and swims at least half a mile a day in the ocean at Cottesloe, near Perth and he and his patrol tried to cross the river and we had vine but they couldn't do it,

33:30 so the next morning Sam Fullbrook and Nesbitt crossed the river and years later I'm talking about that river crossing and Nesbitt said, because Sam Fullbrook had seen a canoe on the opposite side when we'd been patrolling up the river before we ran into these blokes and he recognised where the place was. Sam was a very good bushman,

34:00 also an artist. He won an Archibald Prize. Anyway he swam across the river. He was a very good swimmer, get the canoe and they captured two natives with it. Anyway they come back with the canoe and there was Nesbitt, Sam, Doc Lacey, Keith Dignam and they went down the river in the canoe. I was invited to be

34:30 part of the crew and I said, "No thanks." You could understand why. You were in a bloody canoe going down the Ramu River and the Japs have got the other bank of the river and you're a pretty easy target. So we had to patrol, and we went down overland and we had these two natives with us. Now one of the natives was carrying Bob Larney's pack. It was

35:00 only the haversack really and all he had inside of that was six or seven tins of bully beef and six or seven packets of biscuits. We were all, they had to share theirs with us because we had nothing left, Sam and myself and Dignam, but we pulled up for a spell and the native that had Bob Larney's pack, we had a police boy with us too, a Papuan police boy with us. And the native

35:30 started to just move around, move around and Norman Thorton said to the police boy, he said, "Go catch him, that fella." , "Oh him alright boss," him alright boss, as soon as he got about fifteen yards away he dived into the scrub and that was the last we saw of him but he's got Bob Larney's pack and he's the only bloke got tobacco and any rate Norman Thorton jumped up. He was funny when he got angry. He'd swear like

36:00 a trooper and when he did swear the ING's [fucking - swearing] went in and he took off and he said, "What the hell am I going to tell Nesbitt." He said, there was about twelve of us, he said, "Twelve big bronzed Anzacs," and he said, "We can't even look after one boong, New Guinea boong." He said, "What the hell am I going to tell Nesbitt?" We didn't know what he was going to tell Nesbitt, he was going to do that job.

36:30 But you know about the lyre vine, "Wait a while"? It's got thorns in it. The first place I ever struck it was up around the Queensland border when I was working there, well we were going down the track and he got hooked up on a bit of lyre vine by the lip and he was that angry and we had to climb over a log as well and when he climbed over the log his basic pouch was open and some of the magazines of his own gun fell out

37:00 of that. That made him angry too but loosing the native was what really made him angry. I said, “Hold on Norman.” I said, “Come back.” I said, “It’s just like a fish hook, we’ll get you off.” It tore his lip like that and just tore straight through us, picked up his magazines. We still had one native with us and that night we, well we always put guards on, we were finished with the outposts

37:30 where you only had three men. It was impossible to put on guards when you had three bloody men. I’d like to see the ones that were going to do it patrol all day and go right through the hours of darkness with three men doing guards. It just wasn’t feasible, that’s why we got caught. We got careless as I said but.

What were your impressions of the natives?

We found them alright but what happened at Fighter, the 7th Company stopped the natives from

38:00 going to their gardens. Why they did it God only knows, I don’t know. We’d have never ever thought of doing it. Not only that, instead of putting them in behind them and letting them go to their gardens, they sent them down into the Ramu Valley and that happened at Fighter and probably did happen at Sepu too, I don’t know. Consequently they were not very pro-Australian and you could hardly blame them. I wouldn’t blame them a bit. I know it was natives that led them in that morning when they got

38:30 to us, I’m perfectly sure it was a native led them in but I never held any grudge against the native because of what happened to them. When we crossed the Ramu River you were likely to run into pro-Japanese natives over there. Well okay you run a country and some people come in from outside and they fight their war in their country, what side are you going to be on? You’re going on the side that’s there at the time, aren’t you? And that was the same with the

39:00 natives, some of the Australians took a very dim view of the natives being pro-Japanese when the Japanese were in control there. What the hell else were they going to do if they were going to survive? That question didn’t pose any problems for me what so ever.

Yet the Timorese helped you from the first day?

The Timorese helped us from the first day and they started to turn towards the finish, not all, like the Criados that were with us, they stayed loyal until the finish but

39:30 strangely enough the New Guinea natives got an awful lot. You’ve heard of the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels [New Guineans who aided Australian troops on the Kokoda Track] on the Owen Stanley Track? They call it a trail now. This country’s becoming that Americanised but it was the Owen Stanley Track in 1942, ’43 and Keating put a half a million dollar medical complex in at Kokoda and the Timorese got nothing. We put a memorial

40:00 into them at Dare and we raised five thousand dollars amongst ourselves and Gorton was Prime Minister at the time and he loaned us, he gave five thousand dollars and the West Australian Government put in five hundred dollars. Well that memorial is still there today above the heights overlooking Dili but that’s all. The Timorese got nothing.

Tape 10

00:32 Well that patrol we ran into no trouble. All we ran into was hunger and for three days all we had to eat between the eighteen of us was one pumpkin and one vegetable marrow. We boiled that in water in a clear dish, container and we even drank the water. We never got any tucker until we got back to Coban, but the biggest patrol I ever went out on in New Guinea and this is practically being, now

01:00 A Platoon was entirely different. Dexter made sure he had a sub-section on every outpost. The sub-section was well armed and had a Bren gun and two Owen guns, they’re automatic weapons, beside the riflemen. Now the Japs came over to do one of his sections over up towards Matahuasa, a place called, just up from the Ramu River.

01:30 Maley was one of the camps and what the other one was, the name evades me. Now there was two men on guard and the man on guard was a man named Ken Monk, a Victorian and a Western Australian named Marshall, they heard a noise and Marshall and Ken Monk just leant over and whispered in Marshall’s ear. He said, “I don’t think it’s a pig”

02:00 and sure enough it wasn’t a pig. It was a body crawling on hands and knees with a white patch on his back and another body behind him crawling up the track. They shot him, tossed a couple of grenades over, raced over to where the outpost was, yelling out, “The Japs, the Japs, the Japs,” so they were all ready and there was enough of them to deal with the position.

02:30 Word went back to Maley, that outpost was called after a man named Jack Maley, it was called after him and he came down with the rest of the sub-section. He was a corporal and they had an officer from the 2/7th Company with them. A man named Hawker, yes it was Hawker

03:00 and he was going to cross the Ramu River on a patrol with a man named Bing, Peter English. They came

down. The Japanese just lay doggo, didn't do anything. The men in the outpost relaxed after two or three hours after daylight and they decided they'd be sitting down having a mug of tea and that's

03:30 when the Japs attacked. They were marvellous, the Japs. They waited and they had the patience until the men got off guard and the blokes were separated from their rifles because they had to go over the side of a ridge. Tommy Foster, he jumped into a weapon pit and another man from Queensland, Joe, Joe, oh

04:00 God I know his name, I know it well. He had a very attractive wife I remember that when he came to one of the reunions years later, but Joe Palm, he also grabbed a rifle and got into a weapons pit. Now Tommy Foster and Joe Palm they drove the Japs back three times, with grenades and Tom Foster had an Owen gun. That was a sub-machine gun

04:30 and they drove them back three times. The Japs must have been very hungry because it was the cook house they were racing for and trying to capture the cook house and any rate Jerry Maley and an officer named Andy Beverage and Hawker and Peter English, they had gone out onto the open pit first so they were separated when the attack came in the daylight,

05:00 they were some far distance away and they were making their way back to discover what had happened and Jack Maley was killed. Hawker was wounded and if I remember rightly the bullet went in here (demonstrates) and followed his collar bone out and came out here somewhere. That's the kind of things that bullets will do. They do the strangest things. Any rate Andy Beverage had no chance of getting to this sub-section at the time, it was his section,

05:30 he had no time to get there, no chance of getting there and he had Hawker wounded and at any rate he finally got in touch with Tom Foster, the Japs pulled out and I don't know how many they killed and the Japs took most of their, took their wounded and dead with them but they missed a couple because a couple of bodies were found. But there was more than two Japanese killed that morning there. Now that was Dexter, that's how he organised.

06:00 And you'll probably think I've got Dexter up on a pedestal but he was, he was a great officer. He was taking our platoon over after we came back from New Guinea but unfortunately for us we went to New Britain and we didn't have Dexter. They gave him a company. I think he should have got a company much earlier myself because their gain was our loss. Anything Dexter touched was a success.

06:30 He ambushed the Japs at Kesewai, killed forty of them and Number Two Section again and he'd hardly move without Number Two Section, Number Three Section. He couldn't attack the Japs in Kesewai so he enticed them out. He sent a man named Joe Poynton who'd already been awarded the DC and the Dutch Bronze Cross for his bravery in Timor. He was mentioned in despatches twice. He sent him and a man named Arthur Birch, Joe was a West Australian. Arthur Birch was one of the

07:00 reinforcements we picked up. He came from the north coast of New South Wales. They were sent down to Kesewai and they were told to kick up plenty of noise and let the Japanese see them. Now it was a pretty brave thing for those men to do and they did exactly that and they pretended to panic when the Japanese fired at them. They pretended to panic and ran back down the track making sure they left plenty of tracks. The Japanese in

07:30 Kesewai came out to investigate what it was and they had a native leading them to follow the tracks and they came down to where there was no more tracks and they all bunched up and that's when Dexter gave the order to fire. He had two Bren guns there, he had four Tommy guns, Owen sub-machine guns. He was leaning on one side of a tree shooting and

08:00 Joe Poynton was leaning on the other side of the tree shooting and Dexter got wounded five times and Joe Poynton never got a scratch and that's what it's like. They really, they really slaughtered that Jap patrol but that didn't stop the Japs either. They carried on with the fight. They must have lost bundles of men in the first burst but that didn't stop them. They still kept fighting

08:30 and our blokes had to get out. They carried Dexter out and Peter Campbell, he had a Bren gun and he was one who helped to carry him out and those men never even got a mention in despatches. We must have been the least decorated unit in the AIF. We got a few mentions in despatches, a couple of Military Medals. I think we got three MC's, two DSO's [Distinguished Service Order] and the rest were just mentions in despatches, that's all. We got very little

09:00 decoration at all yet we were in the Ramu Valley five months before, four months before the 7th Division got in there. We were in there on our own but we were spread down the valley. I suppose we were spread over a few hundred square miles of mountains but when the 7th Division got as far as Dumpu, they concentrated the whole unit at Fighter. Now A Platoon had been out and had a spell, C Platoon

09:30 had a spell at the start but B Platoon hadn't had a spell at all so they sent us up to Goroka and we spent Christmas 1943 in Goroka. They sent us up there for six weeks and that was the first break we'd got in almost six months of operations, that was the first break we got. We came back and we moved, B Platoon and C Platoon were moved from Fighter. We went to a place called Isurava across the river and that's where Number Six

10:00 Company had been there and they lost a man on a patrol around there and I was forward scout on this

particular patrol and I saw this wooden cross. I know he was a South Australian. What his name was I can't remember because he had his army number on it. It was SX which meant he enlisted in South Australia but I was forward scout and I see this wooden cross facing me and I dived into the scrub. Now they'd been up there maybe two or three weeks before

10:30 because they'd gone. When we came up they were taken out so it must have been two or three weeks before when this bloke got killed and when I dived off the track and the rest behind and we started to use our eyes we could see the fire vines that had been cut and everything else. That was at, that wasn't at Isurava, that was at another place. When we looked I even saw, I found the hole that the bloke

11:00 fired, the Jap fired the shot that killed the South Australian boy. I could hardly fit into it so God knows the size of the Jap but that's where he got killed. Uria, that was the name of the place but we went up to Isurava, we took over the 6th Company who pulled right out. They went back to Australia and we were left behind and then we were on the right flank of the 8th Brigade, on Shaggy Ridge,

11:30 on their left flank. We sent a patrol out. It was the biggest patrol I ever went on and it was towards the end of the campaign in the Ramu River Valley campaign and the Finisterre Ranges. There was Four and Five Sections from B Platoon. We couldn't have Six Section because they'd already been out on platoon and they'd belted hell out of a team of Japs that they'd caught up with. They'd found them in bed or asleep in the middle of the day but they'd had a brush with a Militia Battalion company

12:00 a day or so before so they were probably pretty exhausted themselves, the Japs and these two Australians went in there, Mal Herbert was one and Tommy Martin was the other and they were both Tommy gunners or Owen gunners and they see these Japs asleep and they're arguing the point whether they're alive or whether they're dead and Mal Herbert is rolling a cigarette. He says to Tommy Martin,

12:30 he says, "They must be dead," he said, "They wouldn't be that careless." Anyway one of the Japs woke up. They were dead then and as soon as they opened up on them they were Japs sprung out of places everywhere and they had a field day against them actually because the Section, the rest of the Section was there too. But they were telling me about one Jap, he's zig-zagging up the hill and practically everyone of them was shooting at him and

13:00 he was zigging when they were zagging with the, he got away and I'd say good luck to him as it's one of the Sixth Section blokes told me, he said, "Paddy, you would hardly credit it." He said, "Look at the good shots we've got in Sixth Section." He said, "But every time we went here he went the other way." He said, "He must have been psychic," so they weren't with us but we had Number Nine Section instead. And we didn't have an officer because Mick Morgan was sent back to do a school in Australia and we had Doug Tapply. He was a sergeant and he was leading our section

13:30 and honestly to look at it I remember when we left Isurava there was a bloke named Snowy who went on the Bren gun guarding the track and he was always, he had a face like a, always laughing Snowy and he's still laughing today.

Can you tell me?

And he wishes me luck and I said, "We'll be right." I said, "Look at us," and he said, "Yeah, look at you." There was three sections, that's fifty seven men plus headquarters, a couple of men in headquarters, the doctor and two RAP corporals and we had,

14:00 must have had sixty odd men and sixty of them would have been fighting men and away we went. The first day was uneventful. The second day was fairly uneventful except we got into a position Kisa and we had a look around and you had to hand it to the Japanese. Anyone would think I was a great admirer but we had a look

14:30 at their defensive positions there and they had it up on a knob that was pretty flat and it was just honeycombed with trenches. They could get from one side of that knob to the other without even poking their head above and we thought, "Mother of God are we lucky." Orgurana was the same. When we got into Orgurana they'd pulled out and they pulled out of Kisa and we were supposed to go to a place called Japper and we get down,

15:00 across the river and we were forward section at the time and when they crossed the river our sub-section, that was Norman Thornton, we were told to cover the river crossing, they went across. Now a man named Alex Stewart was the forward scout and a man named Broxton, Harris Broxton was second scout and they were out of Nine Section, out of C Platoon but they were a very good section,

15:30 good section. They had an excellent officer, Jack Denman, he'd already earned the MC and he was a good officer. The other section had Jerry Green who was also an ex sapper and an excellent officer. We had no officer at all but we had a very good sergeant. Anyway they crossed the river and they could see the Japanese footprints in the river Harris Broxton told me years later. He said, "Paddy, we could see the water seeping back into their footprints." He said, "They'd

16:00 just pulled out. Alec Stewart was forward scout and they hadn't gone that far up the track. They'd only been about maybe three or four hundred yards from where we were left. We'd have been crossing later. They'd sent a message up for us to cross later and so we weren't in that at all. Alec Stewart, he sprung the Japs before the Japs sprung him and the Japs fired and

16:30 missed him and instead of jumping off the track Alec Stewart just went straight towards him with his Owen gun shooting and of course the other bloke had a machine gun, a light machine gun and Alec copped the first, I believe it went across him like that. Harris Broxton was the second scout and he was on the opposite side, the other side of the track so the Jap couldn't see him and he couldn't get to, he couldn't

17:00 get to Alec Stewart. Any rate they spread out and they took the hill. They went at the hill.

Where were you?

We were down by the river but one of our sub-sections was up there with Doug Tapper but Norman Thornton's sub-section was, we were left at the river crossing. We had to hold that at against anything that came

17:30 because they had to get again, if they had to get back. At any rate if nothing happened we'd have been caught up with them and we'd have proceeded with them. At any rate the Japanese pulled out but before they pulled out one of the Japanese came down along the side of the scrub and took Alec Stewart's Owen gun. Now he was a pretty brave man because there was plenty of lead flying up where they thought they were and of

18:00 course no-one saw him because they'd left the track and were moving forward through the scrub. They came back that night, they came back, it got dark and we camped that night, set a booby trap. Our records say it was north east of Japper. How the hell it was north of Japper I don't know when we were south of Japper and how the heck that booby trap was supposed to be north east of Japper I don't know. It certainly wasn't north east of Japper but that went off in the

18:30 night time so we knew the Japanese were still around but no-one was really worrying. When it went off it woke me up but that's all it did, just woke us up. We couldn't do anything about it until the morning but what amazes me is in our reports it said, "Six or eight Japs was wounded." Now by the name of God how anyone knew there was any Japanese wounded with a booby trap I don't know

19:00 because we didn't even go back down to the river the next day. We changed course and went across country on a different tact altogether. We didn't go back over that river and we spent the next night sleeping in a creek. I can remember that quite well. Our feet and everything else was in the creek and we were on down below alongside the creek. We crossed a river and I never used to drink water until the end of the day and we crossed the river and I thought, "Oh." All we had was bully beef and biscuits,

19:30 one tin of bully beef and one packet of biscuits for three men and I drank the water with the bully beef.

Tell me about leaving New Guinea?

We left New Guinea shortly after that. We went out on that patrol. We were out for three weeks. It was the biggest patrol I ever went on. It was the, probably one of the best manned patrols

20:00 we ever had and I never saw a patrol achieve less. I know where the blame lies for all that but I'm not saying it here. Why there was never an inquiry into what happened, we lost the doctor, the RAP corporal and the captain. Now we didn't loose them, they lost us. Whatever happened to them I don't know. The RAP corporal is still alive today and he never say's anything about it and he must have know what happened. Surely to God

20:30 they must have known we weren't following them when we got sprung again on the river and a bloke named Smith, a Bren gunner out of Five Section, Ray Parry out of Five, they went into the river and they opened up. The Japs had four light machine guns and that's what was blazing across the river. Once again I was lucky and another bloke and I were left up the track to cover the top because that's where we'd been fired

21:00 on first and they'd been retreating down to the river, a different river altogether and this Hilliard, Dick Hilliard and I were left up the track and they told us they'd come and get us. And Dick said to me, he said, "Paddy," he said, "Do you think they'll keep going and forget us?" And I said, "No," I said, "Not with Norm Thornton around you." I said, "If the whole world leaves us Norm Thornton won't leave us up here." He would come and get us. We heard

21:30 all the shooting down the river and we were expecting the trouble from where we were. It didn't happen that day. The Japs didn't come down the track. They went round the track and they went down to the river crossing another way and that's what happened. They let the forward scout cross the river, Kiwi Harrison, they let him cross the river and the rest were coming down to the river when they opened up and Ray Parry went into the river and so did Ross Smith. And they opened up

22:00 on the light machine guns or where they could see the fire coming from and whether they quietened them or not I don't know. They probably, they quite possibly could have and then it was pitch black later. We went down to the section and they came up and got us and went down and we didn't know what happened really but Jack Denman and Jerry Green, the two officers, sat down with the light of a torch and the map

22:30 and they set a compass course and we went straight across country and we got away from the tracks and everything else. We didn't know where the captain was, where the doctor was or where the RAP

corporal, we didn't know, or one of the other headquarters men, no-one knew where they were. Jerry Green and Jack Denman, the officers, they took it in turns in front of the man who was out in front cutting the track and they took their turns at cutting the track as well.

23:00 And we came out exactly where they wanted us to come out and immediately we got there Jerry Green sent patrols. He took over and he sent patrols out in all directions. We were never going to be caught again. We'd been caught twice and Jerry Green and Denman were running things and then the captain turned up, the doctor turned up and they were in control once

23:30 more. They left us out there for about another week. We patrolled the whole countryside but it was clear of Japs. The 18th Brigade had captured the Ridge, Shaggy Ridge and the coast road was open and the Ramu River campaign was over. We went back to Kisa first and then we went back to Isurava. We went from Isurava back to Dumpu and

24:00 we were not in good condition. We'd been eleven months in the Ramu Valley and most of that time was spent in patrols and action and the doctor, we had a lot of hookworms, so. They come in through the pores of your skin and they settle on the intestines and they suck all the vitality out of you, take everything out of you. The only way they can get rid of them is to give us what they call the, "Bomb," carbon tetra chloride, something like that. A big dose of salts and

24:30 nothing to eat and the doctor, all of us gave samples of our spool and that was sent down and they found traces of hookworm in practically a hundred percent. They gave us the bomb. You had nothing for your tea, for breakfast you got a dose of salts, and this dose of carbon tetra chloride and you got a bit to eat that night.

25:00 That forms gases in your stomach and you could feel them going to your head and we were all, we were all half drunk on this stuff but we weren't drunk and you'd belch and you'd feel the fumes go to your brain and that, the salts would act on you and the gases made the hookworms drop off the lining of your stomach and that's how they got rid of them. Well they had to give us two doses. We went from there to

25:30 Wau and I'll never forget we went up to Lae by transport planes and they unloaded us at Lae. The Yanks wanted to take us to Wau but the Australian Army said, "No," we're going to spend the night out of Lae actually, at the Markham River, up from the mouth of the Markham River. I remember crossing the Markham River the next day in barges and there was,

26:00 our blokes, some of them eighteen, nineteen, twenty years of age, and there was these base troops, majors, and captains out of what they called the headquarters of 11th Div and men much older than us, smooth, with their moustaches, well fed and we looked about scarecrows. We got into the trucks and it was only a hundred miles, ninety miles up to the road to Bulolo, Wau,

26:30 and it took eight hours to do the trip. I'll never forget the drivers on those trucks when we got into Wau. It took eight hours driving and those blokes were fagged out because we were going up through the gorges. I can remember one place I was, I had malaria and I was as sick as a dog from malaria and I couldn't care what happened but I could look over the side of the truck,

27:00 two to three hundred feet down to the river we'd go and that's how wide the road was and those drivers were doing that week in, week out.

What kept you going?

Oh I don't know. We were fit and pride. I was very lucky. My health was always pretty good really. I had my things but not as bad as other men really and I was also very fit.

27:30 The work I did in the bush and the work I did on the wharves and I lived a pretty clean kind of life, not that I'm saying that had anything to do with it at all because the minute you stop leading an unclean kind of life and you go into training and everything else you're just going to be as fit as everyone else. But I was and I always had miles of stamina. I could keep going for hour after hour after hour and even until my back, an operation on my back and everything else and I could walk out of this

28:00 house before then and I'm talking about 1995 and I could walk ten miles no trouble at all and I was into my seventies then and I was always like that. I don't know why but it was just the way I was and even when I was a kid and I was doing a thing and I was tired I'd always make myself do that little bit more. Like my mother

28:30 used to send me off for the groceries with a Gladstone bag and I had to go, do you know the Rocks area at all, Essex Street? You go up, well it used to be all these steps in the park in the middle in those days and no traffic came down Essex Street from Harrington Street, except from Harrington Street down. Well I'd have this bag of groceries on me shoulder and I'd want to change and I'd say, "No, I can go a bit further. I can go," and that's how I lived, even when I was a kid.

Did you feel like you were a part of an Anzac tradition?

29:00 No, not to me I didn't. I am perfectly well aware that the war that men fought in the First World War, our war was a picnic. I've always been well aware of that. What the men's stamina would not be a great thing in World War I. It was trench warfare but I'll tell you what, courage was a great part of World War I.

29:30 Courage and tenacity and courage to stay there even if you've got men getting blown up left, right and centre, getting killed just trying to capture a few yards. The 12th Light Horse on Gallipoli, they were ordered to attack a Turkish position and they knew they were never going to get there. They made a film about it but of course the film never follows history. There was two

30:00 hundred Light men killed in an area as big as a tennis court, that's World War I. Our world war, in New Guinea it was fought at close quarters, that was the kind of fighting in New Guinea and in Timor you had to be pretty close for the ambush to be successful but I think myself we didn't suffer one fraction what the men suffered in World War I, not one fraction. And

30:30 yet we had a couple of World War I blokes with us and they preferred World War I. One of them was an artillery man and maybe that would have been easier than infantry but I believe the 13th Battalion on Gallipoli was reduced to about fifteen or twenty men. We suffered nothing like that and Gallipoli, everyone talks about Gallipoli, Gallipoli was a picnic compared

31:00 to what happened to them on the Western Front, the battles of the Somme, the Seine, (UNCLEAR), those battles. I mean sixty thousand Australians died in World War I. In World War II, that's not counting the, that's counting the AIF in World War I, that's counting the army. We don't know what happened to the navy or the air force but in World War I the AIF lost sixty thousand men killed, just on. They won sixty odd VC's,

31:30 I don't know what other decorations they got and in World War II we lost twenty nine thousand men from all arms, the navy, the air force and the army. Eight thousand of those men died as prisoners of war of the Japanese, so you can easily see which division suffered the most. I don't care who you talk to, we can talk about Timor and we can talk about New Guinea, they can talk about Tarakan and Borneo, the men that suffered the most out of the Australian Army in World War II were the

32:00 men of the 8th Division who were captured by the Japanese. Eight thousand of those men died out of twenty one thousand, eight thousand of them died, there's no comparison as to the suffering. I think myself independent company work suited me, suited me down to the ground. We were like armed civilians. We rarely had the officers,

32:30 in lots of cases it was just a corporal or maybe three or four of you by yourself but if you ran into the Japanese you attacked them or ambushed them but you were never expected to stand there and fight to the finish. That's what I said, ambushes suited me fine and I must be a coward at heart, you open up and when it gets too hot you get out but it was very hard on the nerves. You knew quite if you were.

After the war finished did you find that you suffered because

33:00 **of the difficulty and things being hard on the nerves?**

Well the only reason I suffered I think after the war is with this wound was the cause of a lot of it. While I was in the army I had plenty of company around and everything else, not a worry but when I came to civilian life, sleeping in my own room on my own, my ear would start singing and it would sing all night.

33:30 The temptation to go and drink was enormous but I wouldn't. I thought to myself, "No, it will go eventually," and quite frankly, and I was getting a lot of malaria too. I went timber cutting when I first came back. I didn't go straight back on the wharves. We went to New Britain after New Guinea but it was an easy campaign. It was more like a holiday. It wouldn't have been if we'd have had to get the Japanese out of the Gazelle Peninsula. We wouldn't have been able to do it. The

34:00 Australian Army, the whole Australian Army wouldn't have done it and with a few American divisions they mightn't have done it either. Rabaul would have been the bloodiest battle in the south west Pacific if they'd ever tried to take it. The Japanese had eighty nine thousand men in there and in the Japanese army every man is a fighting man whether he can fight or whether he can't fight, not like he's trained to do the jobs he can do if he's a mechanic or a driver or a medical RAP and he's trained but he'll do his infantry training first.

34:30 They had five thousand acres of gardens and they had no notion of surrendering. I don't think we could have captured Rabaul. Thank God MacArthur was, and his island hopping, Doug was a, he didn't like Australians, didn't like us one bit. Didn't like us as fighting men, he looked down his nose at us actually but quite frankly when it came to infantry fighting I don't think the Americans could hold a candle to us.

35:00 Out of tanks and everything else, and in the air and in the navy, right, but they had to be in some kind of machine to fight. Ask them to do the kind of fighting we were doing on their two feet and they couldn't do it and they didn't do it. The Japanese, the Yanks landed in Sio and the Japanese that were retreating from Madang and from Lei they were passing within a couple of hundred yards from the American positions and they did nothing. They never went out on patrol.

35:30 They set up their perimeter and they stayed inside it. They did the same thing in Guadalcanal. They just got enough territory to put in an airfield so they had a anchorage there and they had a perimeter there and a fly couldn't get through it but put the curtain on fire and they couldn't put it out. They were the world's worst patrollers. They talked and they smoked and I believe up in Vietnam they were on the drugs. A man that served with the SAS said, "Paddy, they were bloody hopeless."

36:00 He said, “Theoretically,” and an awful lot of Americans died in Vietnam. They had fifty-nine thousand men killed and another SAS man told me, he said, “I never saw the bravery that the American Marines exhibited at one action in Vietnam,” but he said, “Paddy they were fools, the Australians wouldn’t have gone about it the same way at all.” Honestly, I’m not talking about their technology, we’re nowhere near it. I’m not talking about their armour,

36:30 they’re no good on their feet. I don’t care what anyone says. They can talk until the cows come home. Put them on their two feet and ask them to fight and they’re bloody useless, if they’ve got to move on their two feet to fight. The same thing happened in Korea. Ray Parry got the Military Medal in Korea. He joined up and he went to Korea and he reckoned, he had only a section and they held that section, that section held that ridge through attack after attack by the Chinese.

37:00 The Americans never took to the hills. They went down the roads. The Chinese came down the hills. That was when they pushed the Americans right back to P’yongyang and then Korea became a stale mate. They’re still up there. They’ve still got the dividing line and the Americans are still there, the North Koreans are still there but the Americans aren’t breaking their neck to attack Korea.

37:30 They’ve had one dose of the North Koreans and they’re a bit cautious about a second one, even though they’ve got all the technology. As for World War II when I look around and see what’s happening today, the things that Hitler was doing, sterilization of the unfit, euthanasia and everything else, those bloody things are advocating themselves today. What the hell did we go to war for?

38:00 Hitler couldn’t dominate the world, there’s no two ways about that. Hitler could have been the dominant, Germany would have been the dominate power in Europe but they couldn’t conquer the world but you’ve got a man in America today, the President of the United States, Bush, and they’re changing governments in countries. They’re going into countries and causing revolutions and they’re changing governments in countries. They’re putting sanctions on top of countries, trade sanctions, economically, financially, and militarily they’re the most powerful nation the

38:30 world has ever seen and they’re using it. We’ve signed a free trade agreement with them. We’ll know what it’s all about when the fine print is gone through. I went from being very, very pro-American to very, very anti-American. In my book there was two nations causing all the trouble in this world, I made a mistake, the Russians and the Yanks. I thought when Berlin fell I thought we’d get peace in the world.

39:00 Now I’m beginning to think it’s the worst thing that happened. There’s no counter to America, there’s no counter to them and the Australians are only agreeing with it because we’re on their side. We’re literally crawling up their rears and I feel not very proud of being an Australian when I hear blokes say, “It’s alright.” It’s not alright, it’s all wrong and our Government is doing it all wrong.

Tape 11

00:31 **Where were you when you heard about the Japanese surrender?**

We were in New Britain and I had been selected and another couple from B Platoon, we were sent back down the coast. We were in a place called Centrepost. We had a very good position there. Jerry Green was looking after the platoon at that time and it would have taken a bloody big force of Japanese to shift us out but we patrolled the

01:00 country. We were the only ones that did any patrolling. There was a brigade inside the Wide Bay defences and they didn’t patrol. We patrolled up to the Gazelle Peninsula to the north coast and I went on a patrol over to the north coast and I was inside those blokes’ positions and they didn’t even know we were there. On the way down I saw some Japanese tracks in the river. There was only Alf Hodge, myself and Alec Garbett and

01:30 a bloke named Jack Stafford, who was a top soldier. He joined the army when he was seventeen under his mother’s name. He was in Korea, he went into the permanent army after Korea and probably of all the men in the Australian Army I think Jack Stafford would have seen more action than most.

So how did you hear about the surrender?

We were sent down to the coast. We had to front what they called an officers’ pre-selection board. They

02:00 wanted some men from the 2/2nd to interview them and there was two colonels and a brigadier and I think there was six of us fronted them and of the six only one man was recommended to go to an officers’ school and it wasn’t me. It was Bob Smythe and Bob Smythe would have made a good officer. Even Joe Poynton and Joe was highly decorated but they wouldn’t have known Joe’s work. Like

02:30 Joe finished school say at fourteen and got an apprenticeship and that and Bob Smythe was far better educated, far better able to resist the questions etcetera.

So you were down there and what happened?

We were down there. Well that night I had ten or twelve bottles of beer saved up because we’d been up in the mountains for six or seven weeks and I thought, “Who will I drink them with?” Not thinking of

saving them and the rest of the platoon were up

03:00 in the mountains and I thought, I picked on Jim Griffin. Jim Griffin had fought in World War I in the 5th Division and the 5th Division was the only Australian division in World War I that was formed overseas. They took so many men out of the 1st and 2nd Divisions and Jim was one of them and they formed them as a nucleus for the 5th Division and the reinforcements that had come over from Australia

03:30 made up the rest of the division, so that was the only Australian division that was formed overseas.

So your friend there had been in that division?

And I picked Jim to have the drink with me and I couldn't have picked a better partner. We go down to the beach, it was a beautiful night, full moon and here's me with old Jim Griffin, about fifty years of age, sitting on the beach and we're talking and he told me about an incident in World War I. He said, "Paddy," he said, "It was the only time we ever went over the top in the evening."

04:00 They went over at six o'clock of a summer's evening. He said, "On a demonstration," and I said, "You mean a diversion don't you Jim?" He said, "Paddy, I mean a demonstration." And I thought, "I'll let it go," we'd had a couple of bottles by that time and I thought, "He does mean a diversion." Jim was right, it was a demonstration. They were going to put in an attack further up the line. They sent the 5th Australian Division over the top

04:30 as a demonstration so as the Germans would draw troops from further up to strengthen their lines where they were. They had seven thousand casualties killed or wounded and that was just in one thing and was not even an attack, just a demonstration, that's what they lost in one evening.

So when you went down the beach with him had you heard the war had ended?

Yeah, no, we hadn't, no. We polished off the beer and Jim was

05:00 out of the 2/40th Battalion and we were sitting talking there and he was talking about New Guinea and Timor and how Jim, Jim was in A Platoon but Dixon wouldn't have got rid of Jim for a million quid. There was something about Jim, talk about Anzacs, there was something about Jim that we didn't have at all. He was like a leprechaun, he wasn't a big man but a magnificent sense of humour, plenty experience of life,

05:30 cattle stations, sheep stations and World War I and Jim would have seen plenty in World War I.

And he saw the end of World War I and then he saw the end of World War II?

And then he saw the end of World War II in too. We didn't know it was finished then when we were drinking the beer but we ran, we finished the beer off and we were staggering back to our lines. Jim was in A Platoon but I wasn't in any lines at all because B Platoon was up in the mountains and we

06:00 were passing the tents and Harry Bottrell had left our section then as a sig. He'd gone into A Platoon because Happy Greenall and Jack Savanti had gone to A Platoon and the three of them had been inseparable. They were three very good sigs and he was on duty in the sig tent and we'd passed there, "Hold on, hold on," he said, "There's a message coming over." And he took the message and we knew before the CO knew. He said, "The bloody war is over."

06:30 That was the 15th of August. He said, "Japan surrendered unconditionally," and I said, "Dinkum?" And he said, "Yeah." He said, "I'll just go up and tell the board now," but Jim Griffin and I and Harry Bottrell knew before anyone else in the unit. That's when we found out about the end of the war and of course we'd drunk all our beer. They had a bit in the sergeants' mess but we couldn't get in there and someone put a burst of Owen gun through one of the tents and everyone was

07:00 hooray, hooray and we sat down and started to do a bit of thinking. We'd heard about the atom bomb being dropped too incidentally. We knew nothing about it but we'd heard it had been dropped and anyway we were picked to go up and occupy Rabaul but the militia troops went up there too. I don't know what brigade it was. They were West Australians, 16th Battalion,

07:30 and 20/32nd I think it was and any rate we went up to Rabaul and we weren't the first into Rabaul. Some of those boys were in well before us and we occupied Rabaul and we were out along the coast, not far down where they set the hospital up later but we had nothing to do really.

08:00 **Did you encounter any Japanese there?**

Oh yes, there was eighty thousand of them there but they'd surrendered and that was it.

How did you behave towards them?

We weren't good. No, there were some nasty incidents, and I think one of them was murdered, taken into the bush and throttled. Now I don't agree with that and I wouldn't have agreed with it then. I didn't know about it anyway until well after the war. You can be in a unit and things can happen that you're never told about.

08:30 What I do know is the provo [Provosts - military police] corps was there to stop us getting into the Japanese lines but we had no trouble getting around them and we were going into the Japanese camps

and helping ourselves to swords, if they had any swords, or watches or whatever was there. We were looting actually and I was just as bad as the bloody rest of them. I was there too but the best story of the lot was this Roy Martin who was in our section

09:00 and Bob Knox who was also in our section. Bob came out of the armoured division. He wasn't with us in New Guinea or Timor and they went out and they held up a Japanese staff car with a flag flying on the front of it and ordered the driver out. There was a colonel or a brigadier or a regimental commander in the back, a couple of them and they were objecting and Roy Martin was a big hunk of a fellow and he just reached in,

09:30 pulled him out and threw him out of the car, took the car, drove off and put it up in the bush. They said, "Now we'll leave this up in the bush until things quieten down because this isn't going to go past without being found out." Any rate lo and behold two blokes out of one of the other units found the car and jumped into it and drove off and by that

10:00 time they didn't know what had happened at all. They didn't even had a clue what had happened. By that time the provos were looking for the car and of course they drove straight into the provos, were yanked out of the car, put under arrest. The Japanese had certainly objected to divisional headquarters and Ether was the general in charge of Rabaul at that time. He'd been in the 7th Division and he was a very good soldier too and

10:30 at any rate they bring the Japanese in to identify the two culprits and the Japanese colonel said, "No, no, no," he said, "Big man, big man," and he said, "Not them," so they got out of it and Roy Martin lost his car.

How long did you spend then in Rabaul after the war?

We went up there, we must have gone up there in September,

11:00 there was two men left our unit in September, they came home under the six year plan. If you'd been in the army six years and spent two years overseas and there was only two men in the unit qualified. Keith Dignam was one and Dick Hilliard who lives over the other, was the other one. They qualified and the rest of us didn't but we were in Rabaul for Christmas 1945 and we got up there in September, October and November, and January, in December they

11:30 sent the first batch home from our unit. You'd go home on a point system. Now I had a lot of points up because I claimed my mother as a dependent, so that gave me a few more points too. But then again, although I practically, I'd been in the army over four years then by January, just over four years really but of that four years I'd spent over three years overseas.

12:00 And yeah, I spent three years overseas of that four years and I'd still done no army training. That's honest and I was on the next batch to go home and we left Rabaul on a ship called the Suba and there was a big bundle from other units as well. But we were camped up on number two

12:30 hatch, number one hatch and there was men from the Provo Corps there too. Now there was no trouble amongst us but if there was going to be any trouble I'd have caused it because they were removing the colour patches off the arms and I said, "What are you doing?" And he never answered me and I said, "Your mates tell me you spent your army life in the unit," and I said, "Now you're ashamed to go back to Australia with them

13:00 now the war is over." So if there was going to be any trouble I'd have caused it. They just said nothing but everyone of those provos took their colour patches off their arms and I thought to myself, "Well maybe I didn't join up early but when I did join up I spent most of it overseas but I would not have spent my life in a unit that I would have been ashamed of," I can tell you that now.

13:30 I'm very proud of the unit I was in. There's been lots of exaggerated stories told about it but as I said previously it was the only unit in the whole south west Pacific that never surrendered. A quarter of a million men went into Japanese prisoner of war camps and we refused to surrender and I know how they got the Tommy gun that that Portuguese had in Timor. Smash Hudson was attacked by hostile natives, they grabbed his,

14:00 he put his Tommy gun down to use his binoculars. He was on a patrol on his own in Timor and they attacked him, they grabbed his Tommy gun, he beat them off. He was a powerfully built man, Smash. He beat them off and he got back a bit and he threw a grenade and the grenade went under a bloody rock and that's where it exploded. If it had exploded amongst the natives Smash would have been alright. They beat him,

14:30 took him into the Japanese, the first Japanese officer, this was during August, the first Japanese officer that saw him gave him another hiding with a steel helmet. There was a captain there and he gave the Japanese lieutenant a hiding with his helmet and sat down and he said to Smash Hudson, "I want you to go up to Atasbi with a surrender note and order the surrender." He said

15:00 "I can't order the troops to surrender," and he said, "I'm only a corporal." He said, "No-ones going to take any notice of me," and the officer said to him, he said, "Will you take a surrender note in?" He said, "I will," he said, "But I won't come back," and he said, "We're not worried about that." He said, "We'll have you in a few days anyway," and he offered, what Smash said to him, he said, "Why don't you shoot

me?" He said

15:30 "we don't shoot prisoners." He said, "You shot our prisoners in Dili," and he said, "Well I wasn't in Dili," he said, "I've come in from Dutch Timor." He said, "I was in Kupang," he said, "And we never shot any of our prisoners down there, that were captured down there." He said, "We never shot any of them." There was a few shot just the same for escaping and being captured so he offered Smash a drink, he dressed up the wounds he had, offered to have his wounds dressed, offered him a drink and Smash wouldn't take

16:00 it as he thought it might have had a Mickey Finn in it. And the Japanese captain just laughed and he said, "Well I'll drink it," and Smash came back to Atasbi. I didn't see him. I was in B Platoon, this was D Platoon, C Platoon, and he was in pretty bad shape and he gave the message and he did tell the Japanese captain, the Japanese captain said, "Well how many Australians are there up there in Atasbi?" He said, "About two hundred with about fifty machine guns," and the Japanese

16:30 officer just laughed and he said, "You're lucky to have two hundred men in the field, let alone at the one place at the one time." So their intelligence mightn't have been too bad either.

Sorry, looking back on the war, do you think it was worth it?

Well I'll put the Japanese part in. We had to fight the Japanese. A lot of Europe, Hitler had to be stopped too. There's no two ways about that

17:00 but we enjoyed very good conditions because of the war, working conditions improved, wages improved. We were very lucky in the Prime Minister we had at the end of the war Ben Chiffley. Ben Chiffley had a vision for Australia. He had a vision. He had a vision of an egalitarian Australia where there could be rich people but there wouldn't be poverty stricken people either. Unfortunately for us Ben Chiffley died.

17:30 Menzies had no vision for Australia and despite all that he ruled this country as Prime Minister for just seventeen years, counting the period before he lost the Prime Ministership in 1941. Menzies had no vision whatsoever. He'd tried to stop the Snowy River Scheme. Australia was booming and he did nothing to consolidate it. I mean some would say, "Oh that blokes a commo, a red dragon"

18:00 and there was nothing done to consolidate this country against any bad times that might come under the Menzies regime. He never rocked the boat. He tried to break the wharfies union. I was in two strikes. You were talking about strikes. The only two real strikes in the time I was on the waterfront and that, you can include the time I was away at the war, the 1954 war was an Australian wide strike and the 1956 was an Australian wide

18:30 strike. 1954 was a bit of a run, Menzies was looking for some reason to break the power of the union on the waterfront. He didn't achieve it in 1954. In 1956, now Jim Haley was a man I admired. As I said I never voted for him in my life while he was General Secretary but Jim Haley was a very good union leader and Jim

19:00 Haley reckoned if you can't win a strike in three weeks, forget it, go back to work. We were on strike for three weeks in 1956, the whole Australian waterfront was stopped and in 1954 it was stopped for two weeks and the papers were screaming about the ships lining up in the harbours, cargoes not being loaded or unloaded. We unloaded any perishable cargoes or any medical. The wharf labourers supplied

19:30 labour for those two, that was all. Jim Haley saw the writing on the wall in the 56 strike. We went on strike against the award that was given us in 1956, the 1956 award. As a result of that award we lost four men out of each gang. We had fifteen men gangs and they were reduced to eleven men gangs. We lost a lot of conditions.

20:00 They saved what they could. Jim Haley saw the writing on the wall and handed the dispute over to the ACTU [Australian Council of Trade Unions] and Monk got all the blame for what happened to us. It wasn't Monk's fault. The strike was over really. Jim Haley made sure he wasn't leading us when it collapsed. We went back to work. We walked off ship after ship after ship and I was married then and

20:30 I'd go in and I was on one ship and they had a dispute. A bloke I went to school with, Mickey O'Brien and Teddy Sykes, they had a fight with the Com, one of them and I think Mickey O'Brien broke a couple of his ribs. Now that man was a communist, a very valuable member of the communist Party. He was Yugoslav and he spoke five languages. He was a very valuable man so when he

21:00 got assaulted we went out on strike, but only the ship that we were on and I was on that particular ship. Crispy was the man's name and why the fight started why the man he was working with on the wharf complained, "Where's my mate?" And he was supposed to be there and he wasn't and he was down with the crew, the Yugoslav. He was down with the crew drinking wine. All the Italian

21:30 ships had that grappa, very sour wine but it was on like we drink coffee, they drank it and of course Crispy was down there drinking vino with the crew, he could speak Italian, he could speak English, he could speak French, probably spoke German too but we were, that thing was isolated to that ship. And I was not earning any money and when that thing finished I went onto another

22:00 job and there was a dispute on that and it was only confined to that particular ship. I was on strike for

six weeks. Nora thought I was never going back to work and I was reared on the waterfront and I was bought up on the waterfront and I knew what the waterfront was like and when I got married and even when I was single I always made sure I had a bank balance and I did practically nothing for six weeks, yet we didn't lose one week's wages in this

22:30 house. We lived on our savings.

You've had some connection, especially with Timor since, in the last few years, why do you go back to Timor?

First of all I went back to see what was happening there in 1990. Now I can tell you quite frankly no-one knew I was going to Timor except Nora and we had a national reunion at Nuriootpa, in

23:00 the Barossa Valley and I had asked Jack Carey a few questions in a letter, about a certain Indonesian. She was Australian woman in Kupang and he put two and two together because he said to me, "Are you going back to Timor Paddy?" And I said, "Yes, but for God's sake don't tell anyone." I said, "All the women will get onto Nora and they'll be telling her 'don't let him go to Timor." And see my wife is different from Australian wives, she might ask

23:30 not to do anything but she'd never tell me not to do anything, there is a difference. But Ray Aitken found out about it and Colin Douge found out about it and they wrote me a letter that I got before I went. I got it in Alice Springs and both of them advised me not to go to Timor and if I did go to Timor to say nothing about being there before. Now

24:00 that was the wrong advice and not good advice. If I was going into Timor while the Indonesians were there I had to have some excuse. They had only opened it in 1989. I couldn't go in 89 because I went to New Guinea and got a massive dose of malaria and it was nine months before I was alright but I went and I can remember when they pulled me up at Atupupu, wanted to see my passport and started to throw the questions at me. I was shivering like a

24:30 leaf and I was sweating and it was a hot day but I don't blame the heat for the sweat. And any rate I got through that and I got to Batugade and I was pulled up again and I was questioned again and I got out of Batugade and I went up to Balibo and when I get up to Balibo I was questioned for three

25:00 hours and this was getting worse and worse and I thought, "When's this going to stop." When I was up at Balibo there was an Indonesian priest there from Flores and he asked what I was doing in Timor and I told him I'd just come over to have a look, being here during World War II. I told the Indonesians that too. You had to have some bloody excuse to give them. Why would an Australian just drop out of the clouds and go into Timor? It had only been opened in 1989.

25:30 Anyway I was up at Balibo and he said, "Where are you going from here?" And I said, "Maliana," and he said, "No," he said, "Please don't go to Bobanaro," and he said, "The position in Bobanaro is not like the position here." He never said any more. He said, "Things are entirely different," and I really knew what he meant.

26:00 Any rate I was going up to Bobanaro anyway. I meant to go to Bobanaro and I'd never been there when I'd been in Timor before. And I went up to Bobanaro and I got questioned again and the policeman said, "Where are you staying?" And I said, "Oh, I'll sleep there on the verandah of the house," and he said, "Oh no, you can't do that." So he took me into the house he was in. He had his wife and mother-in-law there

26:30 and about five other policemen. Now the Indonesians weren't looking after their men that well either because one of those men got a wound from a cut, a bad cut and it was a nun from the convent that dressed his wound, a Spanish nun from the convent. She spoke perfect English and she dressed his wound and the only medical supplies those policemen had in Bobanaro was what the nuns from the mission supplied,

27:00 so that was a bit of an eye opener. At any rate I asked him, I said, "Well how many of you are here?" And he said, "Well there's so many provinces in Timor and they follow the same provinces as the Portuguese had actually and.

Did you manage to meet up with anybody you knew from Timor in World War II?

Not there, not up in Bobanaro. I met none at all actually by then.

27:30 At Bobanaro the policeman said, "You stay in our house." Now I wasn't all that keen on staying in his house because if Fretilin [Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente (Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor) – political party] was around and they were going to attack any places, it was going to be that house and I didn't want to be in it at all. At any rate I stayed there and his wife spoke to me, most of the police came from Bali and I asked them why and this was only later that I asked this question. This was way up in Viqueque

28:00 a couple of weeks later because all the policemen I ever struck and I was questioned by all of them, all of them came from Bali and they weren't as savage as the Javanese either incidentally. And I later found out why, and the policeman up in Viqueque told me, he said, "Well the police academy is in Bali and most Balinese if they're going into the police or the army tend to go to the police rather than the army."

And they didn't go much on the army either, strangely enough, the police but everywhere

28:30 I went I was questioned. Sometimes two or three times in the night and I never saw any ill treatment really, what you'd call ill treatment. If you call giving the Timorese a kick in the bum in Aileu ill treatment well there but I wouldn't be calling that. The nearest I came to it was at Cailaco. They pulled a truck up and they took three Timorese

29:00 men and a young fellow about fourteen off and they took them off to question them. They took me up to question me too but the thing that amazed me was they allowed me to stay after questioning me and they were questioning the Timorese and the two, and one minute they'd speak nice and gently and softly and then they'd bark at them. And the young boy he'd give a bit of a grin and the men were dead scared. They

29:30 were older. They were middle aged men too incidentally and they had reason to be. They knew what had been happening and I didn't but the boy was grinning so they gave him a punishment to do. He had to jump and down two hundred times, alternatively flicking one knee and he wasn't very good at it so they called in one of the policemen to do it.

30:00 It must have been a kind of punishment they had for their own as well and he was expert at it and during the questioning they'd bark and they'd yell and they'd scream and then they'd become gentle. Anyway they let us all go in the finish and when they get back down to board the truck, I was still in the back of the truck with them, they began to laugh but they were shaking like leaves when they were in there. And now you saw, I went into Dili

30:30 and I didn't stay in Dili long. I got out of Dili and I went up to Aileu and Maubesse and down to Ainaro and when I got down to Ainaro, I was questioned in every place and Aileu they questioned me three times and in Ainaro they questioned me three times and they followed me up to where I was staying and there was some young Timorese come in with surveying equipment and they were doing a survey of the road for the Indonesians but

31:00 when the Indonesians finished questioning me and they went, one of the Timorese, Dalmeteriz actually, Portuguese Timorese mixed, and he said, "Bastardo," bastards. At any rate they were going down to tea and they asked me to join them, well I'd already had my tea but I went down and had a cup of coffee with them. They told me what they were doing and he said to me, "We do

31:30 not want the Indonesians here," and then he added, "And we do not want the Australians who are drilling for oils down on the south coast." Broken Hill Proprietary were drilling for oil, Timor oil on the south coast and they found it.

We're coming towards the end of this tape now so what I just wanted to ask you was if you could leave a message for the future about serving the country and being in a war, what would

32:00 **say to people in the future?**

Well I'd advise any young fella in the future to be pretty careful in the kind of war he goes to. That's what Australia's reached in this day and age. We shouldn't have gone into Timor either. It was a neutral country. You can have confidence in your army leaders but don't believe all they tell you either. If you're serving

32:30 your country in a war that's a just war and which you really are defending your own country in have no qualms about it, if you're fighting for your own country. If you're fighting in some war that other countries are getting into be very careful about the justice and the cause and the people you are going to be tied up with because I'm afraid Australia has been tied up

33:00 in a lot of unjust wars. And I honestly think myself I wouldn't even argue with a person if I think I'm wrong. I certainly wouldn't fight them if I was wrong because I'd be no good but if I was right I'd keep on fighting them until I couldn't fight any more and I think if you're fighting for your country and that's how I felt when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour. I had no interest in going to the other war.

33:30 I felt the pangs of it because of the men I knew that had gone, men I'd played football with and men I'd served on the wharves with, worked in the bush with, and that was the only drawback. As far as going to war for fighting in Europe and the Middle East, I would not go and fight for the British Empire anywhere. I'll tell you that now. I saw what they did to my country from 1916. I could only see 1920 and 21

34:00 but I knew the history of my country and I had no intention of fighting for any England. Thousands and thousands of Irishmen went off willingly to fight but I had no intention of doing it, none, none whatsoever just as same as I had no intention of taking that Oath of Allegiance, none. Maybe I'm wrong. It's not that I've got anything against England. I've had English friends when I was in New Zealand

34:30 and I was knocking around with a couple of English blokes. When I was working in England in 1951, I got on very well with everyone I was with but I've got no time for the Governments, I've got no time for the establishments , none whatsoever. I think they're the most devious people on the face of the earth, their establishment. The things that they have done, what they have done to their own people, what Maggie Thatcher did to that bloke Striker who was sent into investigate the Royal Ulster Constabulary, what she did to him and what they did to

35:00 him when they found out he was getting too close to the bone and he was an honest man and he was reporting it. They blackened his name and said he had gone on holidays with homosexuals and he'd gone on holidays with them. They blackened his name to the hilt.

Okay, we've come to the end of the tape so I'd just like to thank you. It's been a great day.

INTERVIEW ENDS