

Australians at War Film Archive

Hugh Anderson - Transcript of interview

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<http://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/1682>

Tape 1

00:42 **OK, are right to just introduce yourself?**

I was born in Townsville in Sale Street, Hammond Park. I better say that I was 6 weeks premature because you didn't exist too well after that

01:00 6 weeks premature but anyhow, this was a good place to live. So six weeks premature, you only had midwives in those times but anyhow I survived I am still here. My father was a rigger, when he was going to school I don't know what he did

01:30 the teacher put a whip on him a teacher by the name of Smith so his uncle said, "What do you want to do go back to school or come with me?" So he went with my uncle on the teams bullock teams to Tully, and he worked up there. I think at 14 he was overseer of Dotsford Station. Later on when he come to town he

02:00 got a job on the Harbour Board he finished up as a winchman on the dredge, head winchman he controls the dredging. If you are going too fast and the stern chains get mud on them you are not dredging properly if the stern chains don't get mud on them you are right. If the chain gets mud on them it leaves a heap of mud on the floor, well when they are taking the depth they take the minimum depth.

02:30 See that's the science in that. I had worked there but they wanted to do, if you were on the office staff and you went into the army they made up your pay. If you were on the floating plant and you went into the army they didn't make up your pay. This has always been on in this country.

So where were you born again?

Here in Townsville Hammond Park Sale Street.

03:00 **What is your earliest memory of your childhood?**

The earliest memory is what we used to do down the creek is to get kerosene tins you see them swim in the creek we'll teach ourselves to swim in the creek. Finished up about, they used to call the place Anderson's Bend down there, big creek here now, it's all gone and the mangrove right down to the causeway it's all gone. The mangrove was that thick that you know one of the

03:30 circuses an elephant died, and you know what they did with the elephant? Buried it in the mangroves. And how we found out we didn't know we were down there I don't know whether we were after hockey sticks or not and here was this big elephant dead there laying in the mangrove. There would be very few streets, the fellow who lived up there he is dead now he brought an elephant down into the street.

04:00 Had an elephant down in the street.

As kids when you found that elephant what did you do?

We got the shock of our lives, although it was hidden because the council hadn't known. Then we used to see drays they never had trucks like they have now, drays and just down there past the buildings there they would shovel sand out of there into the

04:30 drays to take out of there to fill other places. You'd think to yourself what in the blazers are they doing that for making a big hole there to go and fill, that is what they used to do with the dredges.

What were the dray teams like?

Oh no they only had one horse, one draught horse take that that is what they used to do. The fellow up the street here he had a cab in Livingstone Street and

05:00 he used to drive the cab.

You were talking about going down the mangrove to get hockey sticks?

Oh yes, well you couldn't buy hockey sticks you couldn't afford them. Sandshoes 1/11 a. pound you couldn't afford them, barefoot.

How would you pick a good hockey stick?

Just bent on the bottom so long as it had a piece on the bottom, you'd cut it off. All shapes and sizes if there were 60 kids down here there would be 30 a side.

05:30 and a hockey ball used to be a cricket ball, yeah an old Cricket ball.

How often would you have impromptu games of hockey?

Hockey, swimming, everything nearly every day when the tides were in and that, canoe fights in there, mud fights. No one ever got drowned we all taught each other to swim.

How did you teach each other to swim?

Kerosene tins, no floats, you had a kerosene tin. Of course if a kerosene tin

06:00 leaked a bit it was heavy work pushing it along and you would hang onto the kerosene tin and kick with your legs, and then it wasn't long before you were kicking with your legs and then you were moving with your arms.

How did you make your canoes?

Galvanised iron, flatten it out and just put a piece in the back wood in the back and a piece of wood in the front

06:30 and. paddles we never had proper paddles we had just pieces of wood and paddle with them.

Did the mangroves ever flood?

Oh yes there were floods here. What happened here the fellow we used to call a woman who lived at the back she was red haired and was married to De Silva, a Ceylonese from Ceylon,

07:00 he was a bottle merchant and we thought she was a witch. But anyhow, when they built that causeway in there down there, his wife said to him, "We are going to get a flood," well he said, and I'm going right back, "We haven't had a flood in 20 years," and we got a flood, the engineers did it, the engineers had did it all you know.

07:30 Yeah we had a flood.

Was there a story about a postman who got swept away once?

Yes, you see up there now they close that Church Street off, there was a low road and there was a foot bridge, the foot bridge was high and in the flood he got swept off the foot bridge into the creek and where we had posts in for a spring board we used to get a fellow

08:00 who lived in this house in the railway would bring old board home for a spring board and that postman hit the post and hung on there and they got him out of there in a boat.

I guess all the mail was lost was it?

Well I don't know if we had much mail then, I wasn't thinking of the mail then. Then you see the fellow had a dog there and we were down this part of the creek then swimming

08:30 and the dog had jumped over the other side and we were in there and this dam chain thing and that had his legs and we pulled the chain up and there was his dog drowned.

Did you have a dog?

Later on I had dogs.

Did you go fishing?

Yes you could fish in there, oh yeah. I remember as

09:00 two banks I remember us crabbing on a bank and we were getting no crabs this side where we are and they are getting crabs all on the other side and you wouldn't believe it, we took our crab pots and put them in between them and we still never got any crabs. They were still getting crabs in their pot, and we never got any. We used to get crabs and catch fish then the fellow had race horses, Sonny Marriott,

09:30 he used to be an ex-jockey but I used to go with him and we would go under the causeway bridge over the crossing and take a couple of horses swimming over there.

With the crabs that you caught were they muddies?

Yeah Mud crabs.

Did they have the same rules back then they have now?

No way.

What were the rules then?

No rules, you didn't like female crabs

10:00 but we had no rules just eat them and cook them put them in a kerosene tin.

Down the creek?

Down the creek or light a fire at home.

What about fishing in there?

We used to do a bit of fishing there but fishing was better down past the causeway bridge down that way. You would get fish in that.

What sort would you get down there?

We would get flathead and you could get bream and

10:30 barramundi.

Do you reckon you would have any luck down there nowadays?

Well I don't know I haven't been down. The last time I remember down there when we were crabbing with the brother and that was a hammer head shark after us. I didn't know anything about hammer heads it was swimming behind us, but he couldn't eat us anyway. We moored the boat there in what they used to call the Moor,

11:00 the dam shark had a go at us: he bit a paddle. So they were around.

What other things did you get up to as a kid?

Well we tried to smoke you see and learning to smoke and I think while Woodbine cigarettes were 10 for 6d. [shillings] but you never had the 6d. to get 10 but if you got 10 and you divided them up they were cork tips and they weren't

11:30 bad on your tongue on your lips so we used to get coconut fibre roll that up and smoke it. But then you used to be able to go down the baths swimming 1d a time down the baths, and when we took up swimming we lost interest in smoking, takes your wind so we never smoked,

12:00 that saved us.

You mentioned using a cricket ball for hockey what about the games of cricket as well?

Oh yes we played cricket all the time we used to play behind the school too with a bat and that but down here on the flats with a kerosene tin standing upright and then another one laying down that was the wicket and we would bowl there and we would have pieces of coconut

12:30 palm for a bat until later on when we might get an old bat but that is what we played. See we made all these games up chalk chases, paper chases, swimming, canoe fights everything they used to call the place Anderson's Bend down there.

Named after you guys?

My mate Harold Horwood, we used to ride with him he had a cart and a billy goat and these were when we were kids

13:00 he had a bell and everything else you know a stirrup to get up in the cart and all rigged up and we were the billy goat the two of us and that is what we are doing. But he got shot down over Europe in the war. There was plenty to do as kids because we would make all our own games, no chalk chases and

13:30 paper chase.

Can you tell us how you played chalk chase?

Put a marker on the road.

And then you would split into two teams?

You've got to try to get them, find them.

Would you cheat?

You couldn't really cheat.

Would you point the chalk in a different direction to where you were going?

No we never thought of that, too busy trying to find them we didn't think of cheating.

And how is that different to paper

14:00 **chase?**

Well they used to drop pieces of paper and you would pick them up if you could of course. I was telling the taxi driver about that but he said we all helped ourselves in those times and helped each other. If another kid couldn't swim you taught that kid to swim. And I know there was a young girl they sold the place up there now,

14:30 she got out not too young because she got down the bank, and she was drowning down there so all I could do was dive down and grab her by the legs and cart her up on the bank a bit so when I did that she was right. But no-one got drowned we looked after each other. Not that they asked you, you just did it naturally, like I've got

15:00 four great grandkids now and it's a picture to see them with each other they are all about the same age.

How many kids were in the group that you hung around with?

Well all told there might be 10 or 12 or so I think.

And were there girls as well as boys?

No only the girls would come swimming or that, well you couldn't play, girls

15:30 didn't play cricket and they didn't play hockey at that those times. I can't remember a girl going down there with a hockey stick it would be too big so they stayed home the girls, all boys it was.

Did you build cubby houses and things like that?

No what we did we wouldn't build cubby houses we had a circus or we had a play and we would build the tent out of the hessian and that

16:00 and play on and all the neighbours would come down the women and everyone would come down and have to look at the play, whether the play was any good I don't know that is what we used to do write our own plays, do our own plays.

What can you tell us about primary school?

Well I got not much recollection really of primary school but I did all right because

16:30 I was doing all right. I think later on I think I come top or second top, but we used to you know the President's Revolution the President's Revolt we staged that up on the back of the West End School hall, hessian on and everything, swords and god knows what, red ink on the swords for blood and we had the President's Rebellion there

17:00 we did all those things.

What can you tell me about the West End School?

I was just going to tell you a story. There was no thieving there, not like today because the teacher got an apple and put on the tank stand and you know what happened to that apple? It stayed there until it rotted, no-one would touch it, it wasn't theirs, that is one part

17:30 of the honesty. We had an honour gate up there, I think the honour gate is still there, people all used to come from all round town to see the kids marching out of the honour gate four abreast. They had the role for the first war they had the names there and four abreast you would march. So you didn't thieve and

18:00 I don't know that you cheated at school. I know one teacher who used to rule the kids with the cane, and I think they were cheating off each other so they didn't get the cane, he hardly got any passes I don't think he got any passes. And of course the teachers were more violent then, they would dig you in the back, or a fellow when I was doing algebra he would come along and dig me in the back, so I was no good at algebra. Till I went to High School, then I got passes there

18:30 and that is what they used to do.

How many teachers were up there?

I couldn't say I think there was about 1000 kids going there I'm not too sure all told.

So it was a pretty big school as far as Townsville was concerned?

Yes.

What were the other main schools in the district?

There would be the South Townsville, the Railway Estate the Hermit Park each to the suburbs Central State School.

19:00 **Did you ever do anything with the other schools like inter school sports and things?**

Yes football and cricket as far as I know. I know at the high school when we played football, we couldn't afford football boots and the Grammar School we would play them and they would have football boots so you could see where we were at a bigger disadvantage.

19:30 I think there was a fellow then Lindsay Menzies he was very fast and he got away with the ball and I got him, but I went down to get him and my knees hit his legs here and sent him a beauty while I was getting down to get him. But we might get beaten 30-nil or something

20:00 I finished up with football boots. Then we played cricket C Grade cricket and that and we used to have swimming. We got hell belted out of us one afternoon, and we had to go and we were going to Bowen to open the Bowen swimming pool and we had to go down there, and I tell you by the time we come back from the Bowen you could

20:30 hardly stand up you were that tired.

How did you get down there?

Went down by train. See everything by train then, not like now. You used to have the picnics out at the Black River there but you went out by train.

Can you remember, other than algebra what other subjects you did at school at West End?

I didn't do, well English and Maths and that of course.

21:00 I wanted to pull out at seventh grade but they wouldn't let me I wanted to go to work, they wouldn't let me the teachers stopped me. At those times there was no way you could go and get work, there was no work around only labouring and that.

What were the main industries in Townsville at that time?

Well you see living as kids here you would be

21:30 more or less isolated. When I went down to the wharf and saw all the horse drawn lorries and everything down there and all that activity I nearly fell off the wharf I got that big of a shock. They had big trucks with solid tyres, I remember that. See the wharf had been one of the main, and it might have been the meatworks I think and the railway.

22:00 **So when you first thought of finishing school and getting a job what sort of work did you want to do?**

I had no choice, you got on the pick and shovel. We put a big cable in I think out to the Powerhouse from here all on the pick and shovel. The foreman come along and said to me, "You don't want to be working so hard, you will kill yourself."

22:30 **That was better than school?**

Well actually no you see, but you didn't know there would be only two kids go to senior. I still think that we are getting conned you have to be genius now, you have to get this degree and that degree, and no one person can know everything in the world.

23:00 You just can't know it. You have got fellows that only went up to class 7 and that, and they made fortunes and that, if fortunes are what you have got to have but now we've got society, we have made a composite society it's not simple you don't look at the sky you don't look at the trees you don't look at the flowers

23:30 no more you see, you have got to get this and get that. Then later on you have got to dump all this stuff and then you've gotta get more and that is what life's about now.

The one or two kids that went on to do senior where would they do that?

They'd do senior at the High School.

Did West End have a High School as well?

No that was the High School in town that is the town high that's over here now.

24:00 You would go there. At the town high I kicked the ball and I broke the window or cracked it or something a football but I couldn't hack school too much there either. My boy there, he is deceased, he was going playing pool, I didn't know he was going playing pool, but we had him and his sister to the Seventh Day Adventist School,

24:30 a bit of snobs I think because when I was disabled I could have got a job up there as a janitor but they said if I went up there they would leave school. I knew the principal up there, George Herring, he was an ex air force bloke he had troubles too, but he said, "They can't pass senior if they are smart" all our smart men are going

- 25:00 on the pick and shovel, this is his words, because they can't pass senior unless they work. Then they tried to change the system where they would have to all work right through scholarship and everything and junior right through and then into senior and they'd would learn to work. I don't know if the wife's got his photo there, but that boy of mine he got what they call a P pass in
- 25:30 senior. I knew Jimmy Wheeler down the Commonwealth Employment and that and I got him to get him tested and he had an IQ [Intelligence Quotient] of 120 you know. Well I went in and Brian said to me, "I don't want you to come in," and I said, "Well I have organised all this, I want to come in and see the results." So Brian was sitting down and he
- 26:00 he turned to him and he said, "Why are you loafing at school Brian," and he nearly fell off the chair but he said, "You can become a doctor of science and I can help you," but he never became a doctor, he got a bachelor of applied science. But what they did, the CSIRO [Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation] called for so many people to work at the CSIRO
- 26:30 and they said we don't want to hear anything about your tests or anything, they will test you, and he got picking cotton some bloke shot him in the eye with a shanghai and if we could have said that a stone flew up from a truck he would have got a lot more compensation he lost the sight in one eye he only had 5% sight. And anyhow, the fellow said with the CSIRO,
- 27:00 "Don't appear too confident when you go in," but he said, "You have either job with the CSIRO." I suggested to him about doing that text about putting it over on the island and then he got transferred down south. He left home. I didn't touch his compo [compensation] or that. I had to borrow £30
- 27:30 to start this house but I never interfered with his money, he went and did all this work himself and then he got to do a bit of study. This is how things work in this country, he would man the Uralla Booth for the Labor Party, and do you know how many would come there, none, but you see the head of the CSIRO was a labour man
- 28:00 but he retired I think and the boy they wouldn't let him into Armidale, because he was a labour fellow and I think he went to Wagga Wagga, but he got so many passes. He got five high distinctions. He become a scientist with the CSIRO Animal health and he could have got
- 28:30 two more scholarships they wanted him to do he would have become a veterinary science bloke or but he said sheep disease he used to study he said sheep are finished and he wouldn't do that. They told me he had his own lab there, they told me he was a very smart chemist these fellows. And what he used to do
- 29:00 he had his own lab and he was doing research on cholesterol, and he wouldn't use a computer, you know why? He said if you use a computer and you are not getting the results you want to cheat, you want to cheat the results and he wouldn't use it. Apparently that is what some of the scientists do they cheat the results.

When you were a kid you said when you left school you would probably just work on a pick and shovel, you still must have had a

- 29:30 **dream job that you would have liked to have done if you had the chance, was there?**

Well you see I couldn't, my father only being a rigger not like other kids he couldn't give me advice, he was a good worker on the Harbour Board, but you wouldn't know you see that is how I was trying to get into the air force, I wanted to be a pilot.

- 30:00 You wouldn't realise that but I was good at woodwork, I was getting 90% in woodwork so what I did when I come out of the army I got a course as a carpenter I tried to get a course in the stock exchange but they couldn't get me one but anyhow I became a carpenter and I designed and built this house. But anyhow that's by the by and you see I shouldn't have become a carpenter because coming out of the army
- 30:30 a doctor said we don't recognise rheumatic complaints, and I had a disk legion see they don't tell you. Then they suggested later on, that is how I become a janitor at the Town Hall over here, and that is how I become a janitor there because when you were disabled, you could go and clean the Commonwealth Buildings
- 31:00 and get enough money working of a night to feed your kids and that. But I used to work for the Crown Law Office and the Bankruptcy, but I used to work. The fellow who was there before me he would just collect the papers and walk out. So that is what I used to do there and sometimes I would get a bit of time there to read a legal
- 31:30 book or so or a bit of a legal book. But then the doctor said you had better job you had better get a clerk's job. I had to sit for this exam and I had to teach myself to write again. Anyhow I topped the exam so I could get a clerical assistant job. I failed the medical so the Crown
- 32:00 Solicitor he said, "You have got to have something radically wrong with you" he said, "How much pension do you get?" And I said 20% and this is how these sharks don't want to give you anything. He said, "I'll have a try to get you in," he said, "I know the Commonwealth fellow he is a personal friend of

mine," but he couldn't get me in so I had to stay at the Town Hall then because I couldn't sit down long enough to be a clerk.

So you were medically unfit to get a government job

32:30 **but not medically unfit enough to get a pension?**

Well I was only getting 20 and then they upped it up to 40 you see but I can tell you something, that when I was 25, I had better go back there called up in the army because I was rejected for sugar diabetes see and then I told you when I was

33:00 all right the doctor thought it was excitement sugar see, and I put into the army again and got into the 11th Infantry Brigade. But while I was in the 11th Infantry Brigade before I went there I was doing a course for training and munitions because I did a bit of fitting and turning at school and they gave me time off there from the army to go

33:30 there because they said ammunition workers were more important than soldiers.

We might stop there Hugh, and we will definitely get to all of that stuff, I just want to fill in a bit more stuff about your childhood first. What was your dad like?

My Dad he was OK, he used to drink a bit I suppose like all riggers. A fellow came down

34:00 from around about Atherton there and he said, "Your father was a good horseman." There was a horse up there no one could ride, he said no one could ride it and he hopped on and rode it. His uncle was Bunting, Bunting was judging cattle when he was 90 at the Townsville Show, and he was in there because his father. What happened with his father,

34:30 how I come to get the 60th and that for the Queen because I have really a dual nationality because my father was born in London and my mother was born in Galashiels see. I'm not too sure whether she was born in Galashiels or on the sailing ship the Duke of Buckingham. His father, my father's father was a master draper

35:00 and Lennon the draper here, he was a great friend of what turned out to be my grandfather I never met him but he said if you come out here he said I will put you half shares in the business so he came out here and he never put him in half shares at all. As long as he got him out here then he forgot about putting him in half shares and he broke his heart and he died.

That was your granddad that came out here at first from England?

Yes

35:30 that was my granddad I never met him and my other grandfather he was dead at 32. He was a master baker he had about 5 kids and I had no grandfather and you really had no input.

Did you see much of your dad?

Yes because I wasn't born until he was working down here in the dredge in the town. He used to smoke a cigar

36:00 he used to go to the races but he was OK, he would have a go to do things, put doors in and everything but there was no, at those times you just let your kids go where they could get in.

What sort of hours did he do on the dredges?

I think he, well I don't really know

36:30 I think he would go in the daytime, he might have had double shifts and that I don't know.

And did he do stuff with you fellas?

He played cricket and that in the backyard the brothers and everything. He played those games all around the house.

Who was the disciplinarian at home mum or dad?

I think my

37:00 mother was but she wasn't physical because she used to just clap her hands and we would have to go. My mother was really a smart woman. My family is involved in tragedy see. My mother, this was her second marriage, I don't think my father got married until he was about 30 odd.

37:30 Her first husband was named Fitzgerald and he got killed shunting in the railway and he got killed and she was pregnant, and before the baby was born and all the money she got was what the men collected on the job that's how it was in those times. They said to her what they would do they would give her son a job in the railway any time he wanted it.

38:00 That is all she got, she had to go work book binding and different things she did do.

That was your older brother was it?

Yes he was a half-brother.

How did you get along with him?

Good.

There was no differential treatment?

No. When he was working I think he gave me 3d. a week I think father would give me 6d. a week there wasn't much money there but you could get a raspberry bar for about 3d. I think.

38:30 His uncles were barbers in business, well my father's brother was Jack Anderson the Jeweller and watchmaker. When Shorty the gangster was robbing the places my father went in and slept in his jewellery shop, with a revolver, because his brother couldn't use a revolver but my father could and he went in there and slept in there.

39:00 That is what they did.

What else can you tell us about your mum?

My mother bought the house next door see and she bought this house here, this is not the house now of course, but she bought them and paid them off. She was a dressmaker too, she could make dresses. I used to help her with the

39:30 things and I thought to myself, by gee I wouldn't mind becoming a... no good me designing dresses or that because they didn't like men designing clothes or that and I used to help her to fit the clothes and she would do that. She would do poker work [form of decoration] and paintings and different things like that.

Why did you enjoy the clothes making thing, did you think of becoming a tailor?

No. My brother he wasn't a tailor but he had a tailor's business one part of it, no you didn't think of those things.

Tape 2

00:32 **You were just telling me stuff about your mum what she was like?**

She knew finances and everything, you know, no drama to Mum she was one of the first few I think working women up at Mossman she worked and she worked down here. She knew money she had a sewing machine and I think, I still got things there the first hire purchase a sewing machine motor.

01:00 Still got it there, hire purchase but it is there record is there she used to pay it off interest 7.5%.

Up until then she just used the old foot powered machine?

Yes that the old foot one's and that, wear them out.

I guess that would have been fairly new technology was it when she bought that?

Yes, it would be

01:30 the first one out.

Does it still work?

We don't have it now, I have still got the old machine out there, she had a Barberfields and a Singer.

What sort of food did she used to cook up?

I tell you I can't remember the food much early because we had goats then. We had a goat and you milked the goat, she'd milk the goat,

02:00 you'd have goats milk, the cows milk they deliver around in a billy, you could get it delivered around the place. Hammel, the milk bloke, and he used to deliver it, and you'd get that. When my Dad became ill, he got leaded and that, she got into all the sillage and everything she got into all of that.

What other things were you self sufficient in?

02:30 I don't know.

Did you have a veggie patch out the back?

Well I had a veggie patch because I was the first bloke to grow Soya beans here, beans up the side. We used to grow beetroot etcetera, tomatoes but I remember these Soya beans. I used to do a bit of

cooking I had the first pressure cooker in Townsville.

03:00 See the pressure cooker was made of aluminium lids on you know and safety valves etcetera but they have gone out now but I think you can still buy them you can still buy the Hawkins. I was just talking to a fellow now old Charlie Jersey he is 89 now and he had a wood depot but out there this fellow has been getting in, you see these shops and that

03:30 they would throw out all this bread and throw out all the carrots and that, I was out with the son on Sunday, two barrow loads full of bread and he would feed them to the horse, and when you got them out of the packets all the bread was soft, people are starving and we throw bread out. We throw carrots out, so what he has been doing with his carrots,

04:00 you listen to this story, this is a true story, he had been cooking the carrots in his old pressure cooker because when he tried the microwave I think they would only cook on the top so he says but anyway, in the pressure cooker he is feeding these carrots to his horse. Do you know how old his horse is, 33 years old and do you know what that horse is doing since, he has been having carrots pig rooting all round the place.

04:30 33 and the horse wasn't his in the first place because he was over the town with me as a cleaner, and the syndicate gave him the trotter to look after and the syndicate broke up and he never heard any more about it, he got a trotter.

Did you have WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK s at home as well?

Yes we always had WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK s, Rhode

05:00 Island Red. We had WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK s there, but I don't think you are allowed to keep WAS DOUBLE QUOTE CHOOK s now. We used to grow bananas too because the water from the bathroom you could grow bananas Fiji Red, sugar bananas common not allowed to grow them now though.

Can you explain how they were connected to the runoff from the toilet?

You only had the gutter down and like a drain, an earth drain would run down around the roots

05:30 and what we used to do which you can't do now we used to shoot the flying foxes and make a shanghai with the rings cut out of a tube, motorcar tubes, and a wire fork and you go down to the railway to the workshops and you get the slugs from the boilers and that, and the dam flying foxes as soon as they come to the bananas, I remember standing

06:00 behind one, and got one in the head that was the end of him. What we used to do in the mango tree we would get these mangoes and put a nail in and tie them up in the mango trees to get all the flying foxes around so we could shoot them. Then the flying foxes wouldn't come until the moon had come out and we had gone to bed but they used to eat the mangoes. We put a nail in the mango and put a bit of string on it and tie it up in the tree.

06:30 What would the nail do?

You put a nail in the mango so you could tie a bit of string around the top of the nail and hang it in the tree the mango. That's what you'd do, you wouldn't bend it over but that is how you do it.

Did you boys used to go bird nesting as well?

I can't remember us going bird nesting I can hardly remember me and Harold Hall you know the fellow I used to go for a ride with

07:00 we were shooting up around the Methodist Church there I think I might have had an air gun but it wasn't too good because you could see the pellets out of it but anyhow we were shooting here, and this is Sunday and he tried to shoot a fig bird see you used to eat fig birds and parrots and that if you could shoot them, and he slug hit the church and come back and you know where the slug finished in the top of his toe.

07:30 And a bleeding toe, you wouldn't credit that would, you used to eat fig birds and that if you could shoot them.

Can you remember the council ever having a bounty on any birds?

No. You got you see what you had here I will tell you the story about the Mt Spec pipeline. I was about 18

08:00 and I was down in my uncle's shop and all the plans were there for the Mt Spec water scheme, and people out of work see, I think Humes would have put the pipeline in employing about 100 local carriers or about 100 men, and that was to put a 24 inch main in, bitumen and hessian wrapped under the ground with a break down reservoir

08:30 I think passing through a turbine at 1500 feet. Do you know how much money? £875,000 the council wouldn't have it. By the time the conservators, the uncle had to pay to Tom Rankins had to fly Tom Rankins up to get his casting vote to get the water scheme of a 20 inch main water scheme, you know

how much it cost them, and you see

09:00 why they rejected that Mt Spec because Samuel Ellis wanted to supply the cement to the council to build another weir it and this is what happens in this place. See he was going to build what he wanted to do the uncle and they would say he was a jeweller how would he get the information because he got his information off his brother my father because

09:30 he was overseer at Dotswood at 14. He told me on the Star Basin, you could put your hands in front of your eyes and you couldn't see your hands it was that dark. The Burdekin and the Herbert get within 10 miles of each other. What the uncle wanted to do was go up to the water, get the Mt Spec scheme going go up and dam the Herbert and then dam the Burdekin. Now if that had been done we would have been sitting pretty.

10:00 You know yourself we would have been sitting pretty but it wasn't done.

You mentioned the church before did you have any sort of religious upbringing?

We went to Sunday school might get 3d. buy a 1d. worth of lollies and put 2d. in the plate that is what we did at kids. I used to go to the Church of Christ there

10:30 and then the Adventist place but the Church of Christ there, that fellow Brother Bowes I think he was he was a fair dinkum religious man he was he had about six kids but you couldn't get a better bloke you know his suit was faded and everything, but he was fair dinkum. So we used to go there.

What about Townsville itself you mentioned you saw how busy the wharves were

11:00 **it amazed you?**

Oh yes because you, when you are living like us out here you have to walk everywhere it is only a mile and a half from here to the centre of town but you would have to walk and that, then if you had a bike you did a bit of bike riding but you went more out into the bush with a bike. While my mother I could have got a job at a pub and that

11:30 but she wouldn't let me around there, she wouldn't have me drinking.

How many pubs were there in town?

Oh I don't know a fair few I know there were about 32 in Charters Towers. I will tell you a story about Charters Towers, the artillery the garrison artillery used to be here in Kissing Point. Alf Creedy told me and he was a fellow who drank a bit of beer

12:00 well he told me about the beer in England it come around in a cask and they but it. They were up there in Charters Towers giving a demonstration with the gun with the artillery see, and they got a few grogs aboard and they got stonkered [drunk] see and they put this round in the breach and they didn't realise it was live the dam thing went off but they were lucky because the barrel was up and the round shot right

12:30 over the roof the business rooves of the place they got the shock of their lives, but that's what he told me.

What else was of interest to a young Townsville lad when you went into the city?

I don't know that we went into the city too much.

Were there picture theatres?

Yes well there used to be the Strand there

13:00 and if you sat in what was the pit that would cost you 3d. I think if you sat in the canvas chairs that would cost you 6d. So all the kids used to sit up in the pits boards like that and sit up in the pictures go to the Strand you could afford to go there now and again. I think you might go there of a Saturday or something, Saturday night. What they used to do, kids used to throw

13:30 pies and that down there some kids I think used to bombard them some of them not all of them only be a few I think.

That would be waste of a good pie wouldn't it?

I don't know they might have eaten a part of it and it wasn't much good or something I don't know.

Can you remember any of the films you might have seen there?

No.

Did you have favourite types of films like westerns and things like that?

14:00 You had the westerns, yes they were the favourite, cowboys. You would see I forget the names of the actors you would see now, yeah you would see them.

What about after seeing a movie like that would you blokes run around here playing cowboys and indians?

Well no I don't think we, I don't know that we played 'cowboys and indians' much we didn't play it much because we

- 14:30 were too busy playing hockey and football and crabbing and everything and swimming. So you haven't got much time to play cowboys and indians.

Did you have any sporting heroes?

No I don't think so, Bradman of course in the cricket. I remember listening to the cricket on the radio I think I was doing homework

- 15:00 and I jumped on top of the beam over the door and hit my head and nearly knocked myself out in between doing the lesson. We had Bradman and those fellows Oldfield and that as young kids. We never had the footballers we had the cricketers were the heroes.

Did any of those teams ever come and play any games in Townsville?

I don't know, I don't think so, they might of.

- 15:30 **You had a wireless set at home did you?**

Oh yes we had a, yes. Kingsford Smith, I saw him and Bert Hinkler. I was interested in those planes out there. I saw Bert Hinkler and Kingsford Smith and that I forget the other bloke I saw he had a one engine plane. My Dad took us out there to see them

- 16:00 we were interested in them, we went out there.

Is that what sparked your interest in flying?

Well I don't know. I will tell you a story, when I went to Sydney and that when I went down to Armidale there was a plane there and the pilot said to me, he said when you come down again come and sit next to me. I turn around and there was a fellow a light aircraft flyer

- 16:30 one of these planes that just crashed lately he flew one of them and we would be coming into land and he would be telling me how difficult it was to land, this and that, telling me he was frightened but he was telling me and then he said you have got to take a turn to go into the Coolangatta Airport and to go in down south when we'd go in there and anyhow that is what the pilot said to me. So the next time I go down we are going to

- 17:00 Armidale see from Brisbane, my wife said she didn't like those small planes but anyhow she came with me and I sat near the pilot and he was on auto pilot and my wife was over there asleep and you know you weren't too high up because of the rain clouds and that you were down low, might be 1000 feet or so.

What do you remember of the Depression?

- 17:30 I remember a lot of sad things about that Depression I will tell you why, well we were in it. The people over the road course my father the Depression didn't effect us much but the wages were that low and what I remember, of course my father law I told you he fought at Gallipoli and in France but he'd never talk about it, no way. The most
- 18:00 I would say the most one of the worst military campaigns ever conceived was there. Do you know what they did to the men there, they wouldn't do it with him because he was short but he had to do special exercises to get his height up because before he left England he was getting a man's wage in the coal mines. Full ammo pouches and that, they
- 18:30 told them to jump overboard and after taking them all this way and they were escorted by Japanese war ships, after taking them all that way do you know what they did? Jumped overboard and got drowned. Lot of them got drowned but he didn't get drowned he was too short to tell him to jump overboard but he would never talk about it, no way. All he told me he said dodge the mustard gas,
- 19:00 have nothing to do with it. The returned soldiers league, was the returned soldiers privates league of Australia you listen to this, that is what it was he told me they formed it. The privates formed it the Returned Soldiers Privates League of Australia. The officers said, "Anything the privates suggest is never any good." When it was a success who
- 19:30 took it over, who has got it now? They allowed the Army Corps to be split and if you couldn't go and serve where you want to and that's because when it was split the other Army Corps that stayed here didn't get much money, they didn't get much support. I know the 26th Battalion out here when
- 20:00 the Coral Sea battle was on they got orders to man the slip trenches at Shelley Beach, they expected the Japs [Japanese] to come out of the water. The officers were in town on the grog and all they had for ammo was what they had in their pouches because they dumped ammo boxes alongside of them but they had nothing to open them with, and how do you open an ammo [ammunition] box? That is a true story,

20:30 but it'd never get in the paper.

What else do you remember of the Depression?

Well I was going to tell you, if you were on the dole you had to go from place to place to get rations and that and all these soldiers in hats and everything, ex soldiers, diggers, they jumped the rattler [tram], and if you jumped the rattler to get from place to place

21:00 who would grab onto you, the police and hit you on the head with a baton I saw them when I was a kid hitting them on the head with a baton, mounted policemen. You have got to understand how the hell are you going to get from place to place in a country like this? You would have to jump the rattler wouldn't you? I think you would get about 5/-d. worth of rations or something. I remember them belting those soldiers like that.

21:30 **What did you know about World War I?**

What I know about World War I was what I have learned since, because my father in law wouldn't talk about it. And you know we got all those soldiers with Monash, we got Monash and that, they marched 35,000 Australian troops across the open plains and

22:00 into withering German machine gun fire I think it was in three quarters of an hour or one and three quarters of an hour they were all dead, 35,000 the flower of the Australian nation.

As a kid at the West End school did they teach you anything about the war?

They must have I don't know but they must have because we had the honour boards at the side of the gate with names on them we'd know the names anyway. I would know some of the fellows.

22:30 I don't remember them they were teaching us more about the Peasants' Revolution [Russian Revolution] and that and all those things, history was more important, that old history so they say.

What about Anzac Day, can you remember Anzac Days when you were a young fellow?

We never associated with Anzac Days I don't think they were ever really of much importance then it is only lately of course I haven't gone to them because I can't walk in them anyway.

23:00 See I don't believe in medals and that myself.

So your dad was still working all through the Depression?

Yes.

But you were saying that wages were pretty low?

Oh yes wages were low. Well he had three sons to keep on his own and then my half brother he was working he was an insurance clerk with Victoria Insurance.

23:30 But he wanted to go and work in the railway and I don't come from working people, we are the only working people they are all business people my uncles and that were barbers and that and they wouldn't have him going into the railway, how dare you want to work for the government, they wouldn't have him working in the railway but that is where he should have been he wanted to become a railway electrician.

24:00 When they sent him to the Grammar School, he went to the Grammar School, wouldn't let him go to no government school, had to go to the Grammar School. I've got photos of the grammar school there somewhere, a couple of old houses it was, and the dam principal there he used to toady to all the rich people, not so much to my brother and that is where they sent him. Interfered with his life.

24:30 He was head clerk of the Victorian Insurance he knew more about insurance than anyone even his cousin but some bloke did the wrong thing and he put him in one of the knobs. They said if so and so come up and yes he did the same thing but they finished up leaving him out, the Victoria Insurance.

25:00 They said we will go into life insurance and that well he said if you get out of fire that is the end of the Victoria Insurance Company. Mark my words the Victoria Insurance Company will be no more and it is no more either. He was a staff sergeant orderly room sergeant, he had two jobs, pay sergeant in the unit

25:30 and they wouldn't make him a lieutenant because he was 40. The Pay Corp said to him come to New Guinea with us, he was going to New Guinea with the Pay Corps and he was on draft and you know what happened? They wouldn't let him go they pulled him back, you can't go where you want to, they pulled him back to the unit because they didn't want to lose him, he could do two jobs.

26:00 **Did your mum and dad have trouble making ends meet during the Depression?**

Well I think, everything what I say 1/11d. a pair of sandshoes you couldn't afford them. First football boots I got I think was off Wat Peasley he was a fullback he was a footballer he loaned me a pair.

26:30 You lived, but you couldn't say you lived choicely but you lived that's the point. We had 3 feeds and everything.

So it was school in bare feet. A lot of other kids?

Oh well I think all of them up at the West End school were bare footed. It was only if you went to the Grammar School. All I know is that the Grammar footballers had boots that is all I know.

27:00 **Did you see people, you must have seen people around town that were pretty bad, that weren't fairing too well?**

Well I don't know because when you had no bike or that and you walked you wouldn't be walking too far you would go up the hill and go hiking up the hill, and up to the top of the hill and different things like that or go out to Pallarenda fishing and out Three Mile Creek we used to call it

27:30 and you would go out those places but you didn't get around into the town too much. There would only be 4 or 5,000 people here I think some of that time because I know this fellow I was telling you about Charlie Jersey, he had to go to work to pay off the rates for his mother he had to work for the council or something he wasn't getting much money

28:00 but he wasn't too old either.

Did you see the people that were on sustenance?

I don't think there was any on sustenance. I don't remember them being on sustenance they might have I don't know. I had a job with Carbertson and Lino, do you know what the wage was: 1/6d. a hour. I suppose if you

28:30 never had too much to go on so you did all these other things and of course if you went down to the baths that would cost you a 1d. You would get into those things.

Did people swim off the coast near the Strand there?

Yes we swam off there. I don't know how many swam off there but I know we were in a race for the Red Cross

29:00 We swam out there when we were in the Railway Swimming Club. There was the Railways and the Tourists, the Tourists was the knobs Swimming Club and the Railways of course was the workers swimming club. We went in and swam in the carnival and never swam a relay in our lives but we went in it and swam there anyway I don't know how we finished but anyway. We did that, you'd go into those things. I had been over to the

29:30 island after the war swimming with the sharks I was swimming with the sharks I would go in and swim there but I come back in the mangroves coming on dusk you would see the big fins coming in and the sharks. The sharks coming in and I said to my brother, "I think I had better give that swimming away there the sharks will have us," but then we swam around the mangroves at the back. Oh yeah they would come in.

30:00 Bronze whalers and that.

You mentioned the other swimming club you called them the knobs?

Yeah, the Tourists, my uncle's sons they were in the Tourists and we were in the Railways. I tell you what though with the Tourists we could have been down in the Tourists too I suppose but they used to have learn to swim weeks there

30:30 and they would put all the kids in on this end of the pool and they would start the kids jumping in swimming and you would say how are these kids going to learn to swim in a week, how can they do that? And damn it all you would be watching the kids and they're all swimming, swimming in a fashion in a week because they were seeing each other. They would get in a leap in the water.

31:00 I was never coached in my life, I couldn't turn properly but in the last race we had was at Bowen the open event, Bowen Swimming Club and we won the North Queensland championships where they raced, they used to call it a relay then, yea we won it, that was before the war.

In Townsville was there a real, two sort of classes, the working class and then the elite class?

31:30 Well I suppose there always was, I don't know if there was. According to my uncles there was because they were part of it. One of my uncles, he was a bookmaker and a barber, anyhow the fellows in the railway would come and book up bets with him.

32:00 **So you reckon your uncles would have actually been part of the upper class would they?**

Yes I used to play with the kids and that but they stopped the brother from going into the railway, no government for them see and they dominate they were the mother's brothers.

So it wasn't really enough for them sort of thing with the kids?

- 32:30 Well we made everything ourselves, you got in and helped yourself. There used to be 60 kids coming down there, and we had all that fun ourselves mud fights too. The girls used to come and swim we would look after them when they were swimming. Then down here we had the fellow at the back and I have a New Guinea stone axe there too,
- 33:00 he was a bottle merchant his name was De Silva, and there was another fellow over there he was a bottle merchant too his name was Alli and then over there and then over the back was the fellow Simmon, I think he might have been a Buddhist. That fellow would have a big mullet net 12 foot do you know what he could do with that mullet net
- 33:30 he could throw that over his head. He used to go down over Sandy Crossing and get his fish with that neck if a shark would come with him he would put it up there and throw it over his head. That is how good he was and he would sell fish to the Chinese and that. The Chinese used to have puckapoo you would pay 1/- for a ticket or 6d. for so many marks and if you get em they would come up, he used to sell fish down there.
- 34:00 Then there was another fellow old Johnny he was blind in one eye, and my boy said to me, "You must have had a lot to do with Aborigines," I said, "Never seen 'em," and he reckoned I was telling lies.

Never saw any in town?

Well we didn't go in there to see them. When you did that

- 34:30 you wouldn't get around too much elsewhere would you.

It sounds like you had it pretty fun growing up?

Yes we made it all ourselves. Then with fire crackers my brother he was unlucky, he was going to marry this woman Cicy Tillip this is a true story. The mother started to interfere and he said,

- 35:00 "I am not marrying you I am marrying your daughter," anyhow they finished up breaking up and she never got married, she never ever got married. Then he met Jelar Moon, now Jelar Moon was Chinese but my brother he was fluent in Chinese, you listen to this, he could read and write Chinese and speak it, he could stand near a Jap and know what
- 35:30 a Jap was saying so when they called him up they thought they would send him to Singapore and they put him in the Works Company. Anyhow he was going to marry Jel and we got on well with Jel and being Chinese didn't make any difference to us, she would work and that. When they had the cracker night they had the stall at Moons any crackers that weren't sold send them down and we would have another big cracker night we would have cracker night going all the time.
- 36:00 Finished up, he was unlucky, he finished up and he built a house at Pimlico and he was going to marry Jel and she went to Cairns I think and the fellow Billy Howes he talked her out of marrying him. But if he had been up there my brother he would have bumped her off, he used to go down to Flinders Lane they call it there and there is a bloke there. Now this is a true story
- 36:30 he was a big lump of a bloke and my half brother he was only small, and he used to bully him and everything and so he had a gut full of it, and he used to go shooting kangaroos and that and he went down there, he told me the story, and he had his revolver. Anyhow the bloke come along and he turned on him and he jammed the revolver into
- 37:00 his gut, and he said, "Right-oh you have 5 minutes to say whether you live or die, you please yourself." He said, "You stay off my back forever or you're a goner," and that bloke shook like a jelly he said he shook like a jelly but that was the end, he left him alone after that. When we were fishing we built a big fish trap over the island there in 258 feet of water and 110 yards well he
- 37:30 had 75 yards each wing and fellows were coming thieving the fish we had the trap and the boxes he was right up and you could let the box right out of the water and let the fish out. He rang the harbour master he said, "I have word for you" he said, "You warn all those fishermen that if come near my trap thieving from my trap I will shoot them." He said, "You wouldn't do that," he said, "You try me, you just try me."
- 38:00 We had to put a lock on the box but that stopped a lot of it, a chain and a lock on the box. We used to go around with those darkies and that and talk to them when we were kids and that and over the back where we thought the red headed woman was a witch, we'd go there, and
- 38:30 that fellow he had been to New Guinea and had brought bottles and this fellow. The first girl who kissed me was a black girl Maisie Aylight, I didn't know anything about kissing, you were never taught about sex and that. She kissed me.

What nationality was she?

I think they were Indian descent or Ceylonese descent, they weren't Aborigines. So I tried it on the girl over the road I gave her a

- 39:00 kiss and she went and took off to her mother so I took off too, but we knew nothing about those things

those days.

There were more Indian and Ceylonese in town than there were Aborigines?

I couldn't say, only around here, I couldn't say because he was a bottle merchant and they had a big...

- 39:30 I wanted you to see that slab down the back, that's where, that what's his name was and I have a bit of a negative that shows the coconut trees around, and they had tamarind trees there and the De Silva he would cook, they had a bean tree there those long beans and he would cook me a curry. I would go in with him. How they grated coconut, they grated the coconut and they would squeeze the milk out with a hand into the curry like milk.
- 40:00 They used to boil coconut kernels and skim the top off for, what's his name, they still do it and put it on your head. He used to do that but he could cook a decent curry, they were always clean washing their hands and that no fooling around there.

Tape 3

00:31 **Who was Shorty the Gangster?**

Oh dam it all Shorty the gangster, I tell you how good he was you would go out the show and Shorty would turn up and he would have a bloke there selling all these watches and everything. This is when I was a kid because when I went to the show the father pointed him out to me.

- 01:00 That fellow had his felt hat and he had it all full of notes from what they knocked off what they sold at the, selling there. I don't know whether they ever caught him or not, but my father that is what he said he went into the jewellers shop and slept on the floor there in case Shorty came and robbed the place he would have shot him.

- 01:30 My uncle was a watchmaker he could make a watch, case and everything he could make a watch he wasn't a jeweller but Jim Bucksart was the jeweller. He could make a whole watch the uncle you wouldn't credit it that. He used to have a drill there and I tell you with the Yanks there and there was something they had and the jets would block and he had drill fine enough to

- 02:00 drill a couple of holes to keep it going he used to do that. These watches and that he wouldn't give me any to sell he would give them to the Yanks and that to sell in New Guinea and that. They were good watches but they might be out of date and that and he would sell them but he never give me any. Then another bloke he said he would have sold me Whiskey for £2

- 02:30 £2/10/-d I think, so I could have made money, I could have made money all right but I never knew anything about it.

Was there much crime around do you remember?

I suppose I don't really know I don't remember, only Shorty, but he was a tall man of course. With the newspapers I suppose you might get the Bulletin and

- 03:00 in the end you might have a radio but here now when you open a newspaper all you get is disaster you get nothing else the human race is all disaster bumping this one off there and that one off.

Do you remember what you used to get in the paper back then?

Not really. We used to get the Star the Star was an evening paper, an afternoon paper I think that might have

- 03:30 cost 1d. You can rest assured what you would get in the paper would boost all the big men all the businessmen and that, that is what I said when that pipeline that Mt Spec pipeline when my uncle could have got that built for £875,000 a 24 inch main bitumen and hessian wrapped under the ground

- 04:00 through a generator at 1500 feet, the council wouldn't have it because I remember the uncle telling me he went into Green, the editor of the Bulletin, and he said, "Why aren't you supporting this Mt Spec scheme," he said, "Mr Green, when you are taking water from

- 04:30 Mt Spec to give to your sick daughter." He said, "Get out of my office Anderson and never come back!" He opposed because he was in business they opposed that, and when we got a 20 inch main it cost us 1½ million. See and the people that really own that Mt Spec scheme now the Thuringowa get all

- 05:00 the use of it, hey.

The Townsville show that you just mentioned, did you go every year?

Yes we went every year as kids. I remember old Slim Dusty there standing there on his own like a shag on a rock [alone], Slim Dusty. I don't think I went up and spoke to him but I was a bit shy as a kid, but I saw Slim there.

Where was the show?

Out here

05:30 the showground out here was the headquarters of the ASD [Advance Supply Depot] during the war. It fed 110,000. There were fellows in our unit all they did during the war was saw up wood. They used to get cordwood and then they would saw it up.

06:00 You don't know what done me with the army when I went in there with that Works Company my brother got, he put in to get me with him but what I couldn't get over. Can you imagine men having to handle barbed wire bare handed?

We will just go back and I will ask you a bit more about the Townsville Show. What do you recall about it can you describe it for us?

06:30 You would see all the boxing, they used to have boxing troops there fellows would go in and get their head knocked off, boxing troops, and if they got a few grogs in they would want to go in and take on the troop and get their block knocked off. It was my father's uncle he used to judge all the cattle, he was still judging when he was blind I think at 90. There was

07:00 all the cattle out there, then they'd have pavilions and they would have a fruit stall, local grown fruit and they would have all that there. A lot more down to earth than it is now really. Sideshows because relatives of my uncles Les Pinks, they had been show people for years and they would be out there.

Did you have a favourite thing at the show?

07:30 No I don't think so I might have a go at the balls and that, knocking over a target to win something a box of chocolates and that but I remember a bloke there he is a solicitor, Wheeler Mick wheeler he was a solicitor a skinny bloke too and you would hit this thing bang, up it would go and if it would ring the bell and you would win.

08:00 and these blokes were whacking there and doing no good at all and up comes this skinny bloke he gets the big mallet and bang rings the bell. You couldn't get over it, that took your eyes. He rang the bell quite a few times we used to do that and go to sideshows. I don't know how many sideshow you would go in but you would see a few you know.

What sort of things were in the sideshows?

08:30 I don't know. They would have Spiderman or something else or some other things you would see. You could go and see the crocodile, I remember they had a crocodile out there 18 foot.

A live one?

Yes go and see it. My daughter is on the farm up there

09:00 at Abergowrie there and we used to trap crocodiles up there. I would go round and helping them to set the traps and my nephew he was there and you could tell a crocodile on the water if you look across the water and you see the eyes and the nose would be just along there and you would see the eyes. He fell in the water we had to get him out.

09:30 But anyhow I had a crocodile a baby crocodile I brought it down here Lex gave it to me I don't know whether one of his died and I took it over to the school and I had to give a dam lecture to all the kids in the school. Had all the kids coming through about 6 at a time having a look at the baby croc so I had to think up something.

How do you trap a crocodile?

10:00 It all depends I didn't set the trap, but they set the traps and they go to feed it and they get caught around the head. We had I think the son in law he was going to get them one night and I suggested something to him and they had these jaws when the croc came up to the light they would jam these jaws over his neck that would work but

10:30 what happened you see with the rod there and when you go to try and get the crocodile and the crocodile would turn and the rod might hit something and open the jaws.

What were they trapping them for?

I don't know sell them I suppose. I know the son-in-law the Digeridoo Zoo he sold one down there for £60. He has crocodiles up there now the kids go and see.

11:00 **How old were you when you ended up leaving school?**

I went to the town High that is all playing the wag etc. Done junior, didn't sit for junior I don't think.

How did it come about that you did leave school?

I always wanted to leave school at 7th grade but they wouldn't let me but then you still couldn't get any work so it made no difference.

11:30 **When you left school were there a lot of other people leaving at the same time.**

Yes there was only two doing senior, in the whole school there was only two doing senior so all the rest would leave.

What was the job that you went to out of school?

None. I used to dig in the creek and dig through

12:00 the sandbank to get the divert the creek you would have no work and then I went on the pick and shovel. You knew nothing because when they spoke about flower beds in Flinders Street I thought they were beds with bags of flour in them, not plants you were a kid you didn't know because you hadn't been to those things.

12:30 In a way you might have been free to work with other kids and that but otherwise you couldn't get out, couldn't expand out.

When you went to work on the pick and shovel did the council pay you?

I think it was the council because it was the big power station out at Hubert Wells I think, that is what we were putting the big cable in for.

13:00 **What was a typical day for you then in that job?**

It might be 9 hours, 8 hours, you had to work Saturday morning too I think. When I was working for the CCC [Civil Construction Corps] on the Allied Works you were working 10 hours a day. I remember working at Armstrong Paddock 7 days a week 10 hours a day

13:30 of course that was when the war was on I did a lot of things.

When you were on the pick and shovel you were literally digging all day with a pick and a shovel?

Yes. Jack Ferguson a mate of mine he taught me how to use the pick he said, "Don't take the pick over your head, keep the pick up to your shoulder, and bend."

14:00 Of course there's tricks in the trade he told me. I was working with him when we went over the (UNCLEAR) with Whinnie the war winner, Whinnie Needham, 'up the drum and down the Japs [Japanesel]' that was his slogan. You would work as a Drum Inspector and any trucks that come in army trucks or any trucks you loaded them up

14:30 and then in the night time I think you might have been working if you worked until 5 I think you worked later because in the night time you would work until 10. The wagons that come in you had to load them, might be distillate or fuel or that because it was taken away from the fuel tanks out to Deeragun, out the

15:00 They would go out there but that was a highly efficient organisation there. The oil companies wanted to make more money so they got by pod into the army. When that by pod came in that was the end of us they called us up.

When you did the pick and shovel work how many guys would go out?

15:30 Oh god there was a lot because you are digging a trench from in town here right out to the Hubert Wells Power Station right out Aitkenvale I don't know how many men all told might have been 20 men or so.

Mostly young blokes like you?

Yes I knew a few but as I told you my mate he told me how to use a pick so that wasn't so bad.

16:00 The Leading Hand used to stand there with his arms folded like this alongside the trench he was the man that saw you work but he said to me you had better not work so hard you will kill yourself.

Were there different jobs in the pick and shovel team?

Not there no, out here when I met the Yank air force

16:30 there were different jobs, me and Jack were pipe hands. We would assemble these cast iron pipes in pairs so that the one would go in the other not turn around the other way the right way so we used to get 1/6d. a day extra as pipe hands that was a skill and we would get 1/6d. a day extra.

How much were you getting paid when you were on the pick and shovel?

Can't remember.

Were there any other tricks that they taught you to

17:00 **make it not quite so back breaking?**

That was the only one with the pick and shovel. Of course it come in good stead to us because when we went out to Armstrong Paddock and the Allied Works camp were putting on the water and that for the Yank huts and working 7 days a week 10 hours a day it soon knocks you.

- 17:30 So I done a lot of work even before I was in the army. The easiest job I had was with the CCC I got a note in there that I wrote, you were making camouflage netting for guns and everything, and you would thread all this hessian through the wire but you were standing in the shade doing that.

Were you working on the pick and shovel

- 18:00 **when there were rumblings of war?**

No I was working there down the Harbour Board then I think.

On the pick and shovel, I'll just ask you a couple of other things about that, so literally you were digging a trench out of town so there would be 20 guys there with the pick and shovel

- 18:30 **then what would happen?**

You had no machinery like you have no. I don't know who would fill them in, someone would come behind and fill them in. But you dug the trench might have been that deep and you would throw the soil to that side and then it had to be filled in. There was no machinery like there is now. In the war do you know how many cranes I saw, one Australian Army crane.

- 19:00 **How do you keep your spirits up when you are doing back-breaking work like that?**

You have got mates you talk to each other and you crack jokes and that. You don't worry about it you are really only after the money trying to get, you might get £3 or £4 a week I think. I know when I was a

- 19:30 Ship Repairer and that I would get £6/10/-d. a week and I would give my mother £3/-d.

What was the Air League?

That is like they have got now, kids being in the air force, mini air force really.

- 20:00 Air Cadets actually the Air League but you could have been an older age than a cadet, you could be a man in the Air Cadets.

You joined the Air League?

I used to go there but I don't know about joining it. I went out before 5,000 men to volunteer in the air force and I never got in.

Tell us about the Air League how often would you go?

- 20:30 It might have been once or twice a week we would be there.

What did you do there?

I forget what we used to do, we had aircraft and that.

Where was that?

I think you just go in town here somewhere you wouldn't be going out the drome, would have you out there.

Did you have a uniform?

No never had a uniform.

- 21:00 **So you would work all day doing the pick and shovel and then a couple of nights a week go to Air League?**

You might on one night a week might have been doing that after we left the pick and shovel I don't know. But you see during the war if you got out of work they would grab you for the army and you had to stay in work. I know one time we were cutting grass

- 21:30 for the council until we could find another job and the dam bloke said to me I forget his name, Kershaw he said, "I have got a job for you if you want a good job." He said, "You can go on the sanitary cart," I said, "Like hell will I go on the sanitary cart." He said, "If you go on there you won't have to go to

- 22:00 the war or anything see." I said, "No way." I thought to myself no way am I going to the sanitary cart he asked me and Jack Ferguson and another bloke would we be interested 3 or 4 of us. We got square with him we resigned. We didn't resign in mass, one of us would go and resign and then another one would go and resign and another one, he finished up having nearly no gang.

- 22:30 I think from then I think we went to the Vacuum then. I was a drum inspector of fuel and that and what we used to do was leave it in the drum and put it outside the fence so that the railway workers could get it. There was an RTO [Registered Training Organisation] place there and they used to get it and use it

for their vehicles. And then they made us out it inside the fence.

23:00 but I'd push it up so close to the fence so they could get a bit.

Where was this?

This was down here at the Vacuum Oil down the wharf there.

Was that part of the Harbour Board?

No the Vacuum Oil Company, was the Vacuum Oil Company not the Harbour Board.

That was a better job than the pick and shovel?

We had no choice but better than the pick and shovel, the drum inspector the fellow Jones with me he was smoking and I said, "Frank

23:30 I am not going to work with you" and he said, "Why?" and I said, "Well you left the lid out of that petrol drum and you are smoking a cigarette I said you will blow our heads off." He was a lot older than me and he woke up and he gave up smoking then because the fumes would come up. You had to leaks and rumbles and different things you would have to chalk and pull and

24:00 go through the rumblers was and that yeah.

Can you describe what your job was as a drum inspector?

You would examine the drum for leaks, examine the drum inside for water and you would mark it for rumble and that whether it got clean or it was filthy with water inside you would mark them all and they would go to the blokes doing the rumbler. Clean them all.

What was the rumbler?

24:30 They had some gadgets there that would spray in the drums and put something in the drums if they had to and rattle them around and then they would have welders to weld them.

What was it like being down on the wharf down there?

Down on the wharf. I went on the wharf after the war but I couldn't handle it but when I went down there

25:00 to find out how it was to work on the wharf because of the way we used to work on the wharf in the army. We were only damn novices. But I was a ruined man then I had a crook back, I finished up I was only a permit worker I could work a fortnight at a time when I hurt myself.

25:30 We handle the wharf with two days training and the only one who had been on a ship was me so where did I have to go down the hold I was number one holder. With interference for the RSL [Returned and Services League] they said these fellows there they are at the base

26:00 they should be on field rations because the soldiers have got to be on field rations and you are working 12 hours a day on the wharf. They worked us 4 days and I think we went cork and the doctor said they had to stand us down for the 5th day, when you are working down there how the hell are you going to live on field rations. You would get M and V [Meat and Vegetables] and that and by cripes you weren't fed.

26:30 when before we went on the wharf as Docks Operating, we had a corporal as a cook and he was a good one he used to be a cook for a cane gang, and we used to put in 6d. a week I think to get a bit of ice cream because when you are in the army and you are married you are only getting 1/-d. a day.

27:00 **Before we get onto too much more of your war experience because you have a great story of Townsville before the war?**

Well I worked in about 17 jobs I suppose.

We will try and get some more of that information before we move onto your war experience. How long do you think that you worked down at the Vacuum Oil for?

About six months.

Did you enjoy it?

When I did a job

27:30 I would find something that I would enjoy I wouldn't let it get me down. I had that many different jobs and I was ship repairing down there with the Harbour Board and then you got different work there painting in the water line and....

When did you move onto the Harbour Board?

28:00 I wouldn't know the time that was before I went in the army again you see I was waiting to get that call

up for the Munition Works, I didn't all I got was the card to say they deferred it. I got to the Munition Works you know when I was down at a Trade Training Depot

28:30 I put in for a Fitters Course for the air force, and a fellow said to me he said, "You want to become a pilot you had better get into the ground staff first." You had to do a dove tail in steel, never done a dove tail in steel in my life but I done a dove tail in steel and I broke the hack saw but a fellow had left another hack there saw so I was right so I got 60% trainee

29:00 in the Fitter and then they made me a trainee Turner.

What were you doing as a ship repairer?

You would have to off side for boiler makers, the ship repairer you would have to knock the rust off the boat, get the rust off and then you would paint it with red lead or red oxide. Help the

29:30 boiler makers to put a plate on the ship.

Were these merchant ships?

This was the dredge and the barges the floating plant, and you always went on the overhaul if you were a deck hand on the dredge you always went on the overhaul.

What do you mean by that, you went on the overhaul?

Just to overhaul the boats the barges and the dredges.

30:00 Repair them an knock the rust off. The engineer would come along and on the side of the ship with a big chalk mark that is your job, but I woke up to that because you had these air guns like air guns with hammers on and to knock the rust off and you would have a look at the rust and if you worked around there with the right rust the big lump would fall of so you could sit there doing nothing if you wanted to

30:30 because you could just then run it over a bit you could knock the rust off. See there is tricks in every trade.

You were just telling us off camera before about a guy when you were a drum inspector.

That was old Frank Jones he wanted to blow us up smoking a cigarette.

This was a story about a really big guy?

The big boxer fellow, I forget his name

31:00 **Can you tell us the story again so we get it on camera?**

He would never work, he would hide in the room, the only time he would work when Mr Needham the head came down Winny the War Winner because he used to say up a drum and down a Jap that is what he would say and we dubbed him Winny the War Winner. This bloke would come out and as I say the distillate 635

31:30 pound, he would bend down and grab that and lift it up, and that is what he was doing 635 pound because he was putting his chest out and old Winny was suck holing to Winny but he was too big for us to put down I don't know whether the word ever got to Winny I don't know. But he was a relative of Jack Ferguson my mate, the other fellow but that goes on everywhere

32:00 where you go there's bludgers everywhere.

Did any of the other blokes ever have a go at the bludgers?

Not that I am aware of. The time you come in loading up and that you would be doing all this other work and then you would have to do the loading up until 10 o'clock. You didn't work Sunday you worked all day Saturday.

32:30 **Was that a pretty regular occurrence that most jobs worked Saturdays?**

Yes well the war was on and you can't loaf down on the wharf.

What do you remember about the war breaking out?

All I know we got bombed here lifting

33:00 me five inches off the bed here when they bombed over there. What we remember about is when I was in the 11th Infantry Brigade Headquarter Company and rode in a horse wagon, and what I remember there is a fellow telling me that he had to go, one of the soldiers had to go round to these houses and find out about all the occupants and make a note of it.

33:30 he said it ruined his life he didn't think there was so many disabled men, disabled kids in Townsville, ruined my life he said, his exact words ruined by bloody life. What they did they must have been preparing them see I don't know because my brother had told them when he was being educated by the

Chinese professor the Japanese were fortifying the

34:00 Marshall Islands and he passed that onto the army but whether the army took notice of him I don't know. Anyhow with the 11th Brigade I was only telling old Charlie the bloke with who had the wood depot the other day, that when we were on night manoeuvres we'd be on night manoeuvres four nights a week, they used to feed us apricots so that we could see at night. We would be around the bush in the night.

34:30 **Do you remember before the war actually broke out was there much of a rumbling around town about it?**

No I don't think so I wasn't I don't know what I was doing then I don't remember too much about it. All I know is I remember those diggers being hit on the head with a baton when I was about 13 or 14

35:00 during the Depression because they had to move on to get rations I don't I think they might have got £5 a week they were chasing them with mounted policemen. They are the heroes we are calling them now. I couldn't get over it. Now I am a pacifist I don't believe in war.

What is it that made you want to join up?

35:30 Well patriotism. My father didn't tell me to join up but my father died in the war he had lead poisoning but when those two ships got sunk at Singapore it knocked him rods.

What were you hearing about the war before you joined up?

I don't think we were hearing too much about it.

36:00 All we knew there was a militia where you became a conscript and I got smart, all this is my own fault, I thought seeing I got rejected I should have stayed rejected, but I thought I had better go because I want to get into this air force but I better try this army first and I would have been prepared to go to Morotai and that because of Major Douglas well I had

36:30 worked with him before. Then they put me out and they told me I was discharged so I think I am discharged and I'm not at all I am only demobilized. I got the same army number all the time and I couldn't get over it then and old Gulliver Fryer he wanted to

37:00 go to Singapore. Gulliver Fryer said to me, "What about you and I joining up," and he said, "We can get to Singapore," if I had been gone I would have gone. I said, "I am going to wait for these lieutenants," Lieutenants Christie and that and I wasn't crook on them, we were getting 5/-d. a day, and I said, "They are getting more money than us and I want to see them join up first." They didn't join up first so I didn't join up.

37:30 I don't think Gulliver joined up. I don't think so and I didn't join up see.

Tell us about when you actually first tried to join up?

I was just called up and in the medical I got failed with sugar diabetes failing solution.

You were called up as a conscript?

Yes.

How did you get word of that?

38:00 When I went for the medical as a conscript I was failed so I was an ex-medical.

Where did you have to go for the medical?

Here, locally. The 11th Brigade Headquarters was here, 26 Battalion, 31st Battalion they were all attached to it.

Were you happy to go and join up when you first went?

I wasn't unhappy.

38:30 When I tried it and got in a horse drawn wagon I thought this is a damn incompetent place this and when we got the Chevrolet through, we got transport through but I am not blaming any of the soldiers and that there was a damn big gun barrel dropped here instead of Darwin and they had it out at Kissing Point so good training for us we had to go on guard and guard this dam big gun barrel of a night. Fly around the place and everything

39:00 and I remember that because the dam bloke who tried to lift that gun barrel he come with a big truck and hauling the barrel up the skids and that to put on this big truck you know what happened he twisted the chassis. What we were doing this is what got me, we were training with full packs on the beach

39:30 at the double getting us ready for desert warfare. A good desert: they went to Morotai!

When you were rejected at that medical, had you any idea that you had diabetes?

No it was excitement sugar, I didn't know anything about the army or going there.

What did you think when you got that rejection

40:00 **saying that you had sugar diabetes?**

I didn't think anything, I went to the doctor I know, so he fed me beetroot and he done all these tests and after a bit of time he said I can't have sugar diabetes so I wrote to them and asked them and they called me up again and that is how I got in. In hindsight I shouldn't have. I know when I went down to join up as I was saying I was doing all this work

40:30 in the Allied Works and that you know, and this doctor said, "I don't think you had better go in." He said, "I think you have got silicosis. You're developing silicosis." I didn't know what the hell Silicosis was, anyway. I said, "I think I had better go in," because I was dead set getting into the air force. I had air force wings on the wedding cake.

Tape 4

00:32 **What happened then when you got called up the second time?**

Well the manpower, see when you were at Vacuum you were under the manpower. All those other jobs I had I was under the manpower except that job when we had the weeds but we were under manpower. We couldn't leave that job until the oil companies wanted to make more money.

01:00 Because one of the blokes in the oil companies they made him a corporal in the ASD, a corporal in the BIPOD [Bulk Issue Petrol and Oil Depot] and the was an oil company worker and they made him a BIPOD worker, and they made money out of that more money. So then the manpower had control of us and called us up. And I know three of us that went down the bloke with the fella Northey

01:30 he said to the fella Northey, "What are you going to join?" He said, "I am going to join in the Field Artillery." Anyhow this Ned McCullum he said to him and when he went up and they said what do you want to join and he said the Field Infantry, they said, "Well there is only one infantry laddie and you are in it," he never got in the artillery.

Tell us about actually going to enlist that second time?

02:00 When I got called up I was engaged I was getting married everything was arranged for me to get married. The Red Cross was making the wedding cake and air force wings were going on that wedding cake and the dam bureaucrat here he sent me down with 7 days leave recommended from the army.

02:30 I think I am discharged of course, I think I am going back in fresh but I am being re-mobilized and I had to travel 1664 miles to get married because the bureaucrats sent me from here down to the recruit reception depot there in Brisbane, and from Charters Towers down to there was 832 miles

03:00 and you had to come back and sleeping on the floor of the train or anywhere where you could get in, or onto the hat racks. Because of those bureaucrats I had to travel 1664 miles to get married. You wouldn't credit that would you, he could've held me back for a week could he? When I was down there when I was in the air force when I was training

03:30 the air force said to me, "If you come into the air force you can't get leave for 6 months." I said, "Can't get leave for 6 months?" I said, "I have got everything arranged to be married." He said, "Well, we can't have you in the air force," so I couldn't get in the air force so after all that. When I went down I had been in the army

04:00 before I went down and I got an extra 7 days because I reckoned my back was crook see you get an extra 7 days they were going to pinch me you know. Anyhow I got an extra 7 days and I took the wife back with me. The wife there, I'll tell you an inside story, the wife there got a miscarriage because she stood there at Paddington under a siren,

04:30 and that siren went off and she thought she was going to get blown up and miscarried. When I had been to that con [convalescent] camp and had this axilla gland out, I was boarded A1 right axilla move, I got a compassionate transfer on that. When I got to Cavendish Road the doctor had a look at me and he gave me a month's no duties, that's how much A1 I was.

I just want to go back and clarify so

05:00 **you initially tried to enlist in the militia?**

I had enlisted in the militia to find out how it was how the things worked.

That was the militia medical that you got knocked back from?

No what happened when you get called up into the militia you go for the medical first and if you don't

pass the medical you can't get in.

That is where they told you that you had diabetes?

Yes failing solution.

Then it was

05:30 **then you wrote to the doctor, and then you got in?**

I got the doctor and then I got treated, he thought it was excitement sugar because I'd never had anything to do with the army he said it was excitement sugar this is what he said I don't know.

After that they let you into the militia or the AIF [Australian Imperial Force] then?

I didn't volunteer for the AIF I was still only thinking about the air force never mind the AIF but I got in there

06:00 because I thought if I went to that call up and got in the army then I would get out for this Munition Works because I had been training with the Munition Works and the army thought it was that important they let me off so many times to go during the week during for munition training.

When you did initially after that first medical confusion and then you got into

06:30 **the militia where did you go and do some basic training?**

Yes at Kissing Point.

What did that entail?

Like headquarter company night manoeuvres etc. Instead of me looking through the hole I was too nervous I looked through the slit, we had First World War rifles and Lewis gun.

Where were you,

07:00 **your barracks?**

Down here at Kissing Point on the flat there the tents.

This was with the 11th Infantry Brigade?

I would have been to Merauke, I would have been promoted up there because I knew the major.

They were the militia the 11th Infantry?

Yeah they went to Merauke.

07:30 They called me up because the fellow told me I was discharged, and I think I'm discharged, so I didn't worry about my army number, my army number was Q11014 as Major Nicholson the AAG2 said to me, "Four aces to disaster." Four aces, yeah.

That basic training that you did at Kissing Point

08:00 **how long did that training go for?**

That generally goes for about 3 months and then they sent them to Merauke. I had worked, see when I was out and doing munition training and that I didn't worry about going into the army, see it is only, I thought if I just for that militia training you could get in it, see they generally let them out.

08:30 after they kept 'em in 3 months they let them out and then I could still do that training it didn't work out that way I did that training, and they discharged me and then when I was doing the trade training at the central tech [technical college] in Brisbane that was right near the Rocklea Munition Works. I saw the Munition Works there but I wasn't there.

The munitions training that you had been doing up here how did that come about?

09:00 Well you could do a course in munition training they were looking for munition workers and you could do a course and I did a course in it. My brother did a course in it too and we both qualified but they deferred the call up.

Who ran those courses?

The government, I think the government. Munitions workers were more important than soldiers; they had no ammunition.

Can you tell us about that training for the munitions?

You went on

09:30 leaves and everything, and you did the theory I think I have little cards in there I'm not sure now.

What sort of munitions were you being trained?

You would be trained to use Capstan lathes and that see they are virtually automatic. I will tell you the story - I got ill and I went into the hospital I got ill, and the fellows there that did the course you know who did their practical for them?

- 10:00 The munition workers, they all cheated and they all got through, yeah they all cheated. I know one fellow who wouldn't cheat because he was a turner, but he didn't have to cheat but all the other fellows cheated and I wasn't there I was in hospital. I was getting all these leg sweats and I had a fortnight to go and I was that crook I couldn't go.

You had a fortnight to go on your munitions training?

Yes I had all these lumps over me like top hats with all red rings around them.

- 10:30 I said to the doctor, "I am crook." I said, "All my glands are up," and he said, "how do you know you have got glands?" this is how they treat you, I finished up in Greenslopes, I finished up in Toowoomba, I think I was away about 6 months all told. How did I get up here my mate Eric Braum when we were at the trade training he was training as a clerk and he always liked to get out of a night
- 11:00 I was nicking out of a night to go home and see the wife because I had the wife at Paddington. When we would get out he would do a war dance, 'beat you that time you b's' and he was a clerk and we wouldn't we might ride in an open tram in the back so we could see we wouldn't get arrested demonstrating against the Yanks [Americans] and that we didn't want to be in that because in the night, in the morning,
- 11:30 there was a big lot coming back to the Gabba [Brisbane Cricket Ground] getting over the fence to get back into camp.

Just before we move onto your experience going to Brisbane, what do you remember that changed in Townsville when the war broke out?

I was doing, I had to do that much work I was doing that much work and that I couldn't really say.

- 12:00 It took awhile because I think the whole population of the town was about 35,000.

Do you recall the Yanks coming to Townsville?

I met the first Yanks that come here. I told you we were putting on water at the WAAAFs [Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force] place out the air force 1/6d. a day piping

- 12:30 we put the pipes on that. I said to my mates in the morning we could smell al this perfume, this is before we started work and I said to them by gee we had better go around and have a decko there might be all good sorts here the WAAAFS might have arrived. When we got there, it was these Yanks and all their perfume we couldn't get over it and they told us they said, "Just as well we found this place to put our asses down" that was
- 13:00 the first time I heard that expression. They said the 119th Bombardment Group out of Corregidor from the Philippines, I don't know I have my doubts that they were invited here. I think they might have just came here but anyhow the 119th Bombardment Group and I met the first Yanks here.

What was your impression of them?

I never had too much time to have much impression

- 13:30 they gave us such a shock saying they were the 119th Bombardment Group out of Corregidor. They were all well trained, they had to be. We didn't have much to do with them of course after that but we met them we knew they were here.

Do you remember there being much tension around the town with the Yanks?

- 14:00 Ooh yes plenty of tension around with the Yanks. I will tell you the story of what the Yanks used to do, the Yank lieutenants and that. We would be going by in the army trucks and the lieutenant, the woman driver was an Australian woman but working for the Yanks. They had their hands down under the seat as they were feeling them between the legs, that was to antagonize us because they were after the woman. I have never, when I was on
- 14:30 the Yank boat, loading in the Yank boat I went down to sell a couple of bottles of beer, and those sailors were on that boat and sexy films. I have never come across more sexy fellows in my life, they were mad, sex mad. So I know about them and I tell you what the 1st Independent Company, this is a bit of secret information, they
- 15:00 sharpened all the edges of their tin hats and they were coming to town here to do the Yanks over and you know what happened to them, they met them and turned them back, they were coming over they were going to annihilate the Yanks, they were going to hit them with tin hats. That is how, don't say there wasn't tension here because they had out the West Estate they had all the houses linked up as hospitals. My main

- 15:30 dealing with the Yanks was the top men because I forget the name of the ship it was the General Anderson coming here at 36,000 tonne, and I forget the name and the name of the captain he said to me, "Have I got any chance of getting a slouch hat?" I said, "What size do you take?"
- 16:00 He said 7-1/4 and I said, "If I'm on here tomorrow I will bring you one." And how I got that 7-1/4 hat I parked it up from Warwick up here the corporal there I don't know whether he was getting out of the army, but he come home a bit full one night and he wanted to give me all his money, giving me all his money. I was only getting 1/- a day and then I said to him in the morning
- 16:30 I said, "You dropped this money," and I handed the money back to him because I wouldn't take his money and he had given me this hat and it hadn't been worn, a 7-1/4 and I said, "What the hell am I going to do with this? I don't wear 7-1/4." I parked it up in Brisbane to Townsville with me and I think that captain, I am not sure but I think he might have given me a couple of cartons of cigarettes.
- 17:00 It was worth about £2/10/- in our money if you could sell them for that hat. With those blokes if you deal with the top men you get a liaison with them, you don't get a liaison with the ordinary blokes. When you are doing the work down there and loading those ships it is the captain that wants the ship loaded not the ordinary blokes.
- 17:30 I struck a fellow there and he said I looked a bit disgusted because I went down that ship to sell a couple of bottles of beer and this fellow said to me, "What are you downhearted about?" and this fellow said, "I don't buy black market grog," I said, "This is not black market grog, this is my own grog." I am not sure whether he gave me £1 or £2 for the two bottles of grog,
- 18:00 for the two bottles of beer he was one of Harry Bridges men on the boat. Harry bridges the big union bloke, anyhow I got rid of that. But then it finished up with cigarettes, if you took them ashore to sell them you weren't allowed to take them ashore. You had to sell them on the ship to your own blokes so you only did that to get a bit of money. 1/- a day you had nothing to spend.
- 18:30 **Do you know with the tension that happened between the Aussies and the Yanks did they try to keep them fairly separate in town?**
- I think they were, I had a lot of dealing with the Yanks I had a fair bit of dealing with them but I always got on all right with them. The darkies, the dark Yanks we thought they would send them, the wireless operator I knew here in the north eastern command,
- 19:00 he told me there was submarines around but I found out the Japs had no submarines I don't now if that is right, but they thought those dark men thought they would send them back and they would get them sunk on the way. I never had much to do with the dark fellows. All those fellows when I met the captains and that because I was a number 1 holder they were very interested getting the stuff loaded and that is the equipment we
- 19:30 the Commonwealth Hire Equipment Pool and that is when we had the cranes and that down at the boat. I remember saying to one fellow there, you see with the ordinary boats not the big boats I forget off hand what they call them I will think of it after, but you had to go down in the hold by ladder
- 20:00 down the hold there might be only one hold right down the bottom and these fellows were there this fellow said and this big tarp had been drawn over the hold he said, "I think I will go down here and have a look to see what happens." I said, "I don't think you will go down there at all." I said, "If you are thinking of going down there, you get two men beside you and you see what happens." Anyhow when he went to go
- 20:30 down he would have fallen right through to the bottom, they grabbed him and pulled him back aboard. You had to go down there and you loaded the bombs down there 500 pounders, 1000 pounders, 250 pounders loaded the bombs right down there.
- You were saying you never had a problem with any of the Yanks, do you remember anyone else getting into fights with them?**
- 21:00 Well I never went out to town you see when you were doing all the work I was doing in the day and you are back at camp you didn't want to be out in the night not me seeing I was married and that not me I had the daughter. I had been getting in trouble with my back because I had to sneak out and get my wife to iron the brown paper on the back and iron it with
- 21:30 an iron. I know when coming back to camp when we moved from Cluden Race Course up onto the top where the engineers used to be, there was floods on, and how are we going to get back to camp we will get pinched. You know how we got in we rode along the railway tracks on push bikes
- 22:00 rode along the railway tracks, because we couldn't get through the water and when we got to where we could get clear we went back to camp and we got there. You wouldn't credit men riding push bikes along the railway tracks but we did.

Hugh what can you tell us about the Japanese raids on Townsville?

I will tell you, I don't think I'd better mention the name, you might be able to find out the name

- 22:30 but the laundry bloke here was an ex-naval captain and I think one of the mates I knew he married his daughter that fellow's daughter, that's why I don't want to mention his name. I think they interred him, but he was going around like these boats dispatch boats he had a boat like that made.
- 23:00 He was going round testing all the water measurements, they were there giving him a hand they didn't know, and I maintain the Japs wanted to invade this place I don't know but that is what was done. I know what I was told and I maintain I
- 23:30 never saw, I know there is a place there that Crystal Creek bridge I know where it can get blown up like that but I know that all the barbed wire we had after the war you have never seen so much barbed wire around the place miles and miles of it, down and side and up so they could delay them getting through. They were going to withdraw all the women and kids
- 24:00 back through Mount Spec and keep all the men here, they were going to conscript the men to delay the Japs.

Was everyone aware of that?

No they wouldn't be aware of it who would tell them. A friend of my family, he

- 24:30 was an aircraft inspector here and the Coral Sea battle he wasn't allowed to sleep in the same place twice every night he had to sleep in a different place, they were frightened of him getting bumped off every night he had to sleep in a different place. He said that something very big was sunk out here east of Townsville something very big in the Coral Sea Battle
- 25:00 but there has been nothing about it, never anything about it and I know the Yanks lost a lot of men there in the Coral Sea Battle, I don't know how many they lost. And I told you the 26th Battalion got orders to man the slit trenches because they said the Japs are coming out of the water here I know about it because my brother was in the 26th Battalion before he come into the Works Company and that was the orders they got.
- 25:30 They had all these places and all this barbed wire and the Yanks were further back past Cluden, past the engineers where we all were all the bomb dumps. The fellow said in the paper that they were after the bridge over the Ross River but I say after this place, because they used to bring all the bombs there was a low level bridge across the Ross there at the meatworks,
- 26:00 the Ross River meatworks and they used to come there night after night. They would take bombs through of a night time not of a day time, night time, night time, night time.

You briefly mentioned before about experiencing a bombing raid here in Townsville?

Yes that was over at the experimental station not far from here it was coconut trees railway estate experimental station. That was done

- 26:30 I think it was on a winter's night and the tide was high, and those bombs there the vibration and that lifted a man in the bed. My father said it is too cold to go down stairs, if we go down in the slit trenches we will die in comfort that is what he thought of the business.

What did you think when you were lifted out of your bed like that?

You couldn't think really you would get a shock that is all.

- 27:00 I don't know whether the ack-ack [anti-aircraft artillery] used to go of a daytime I don't think it was our fellows with the search lights and that our own mob I think it was reconnaissance flights. I counted 23 across here in a week, I don't know whether it was our own or Japs. I think it might have been Japs because why would our ack-ack go?
- 27:30 This bloke had chartered all the waters, why would they charter the waters? You know damn well if the Japs had got here they would have won the war.

Was there much of a panic around town after a bombing raid like that?

Yes I know with the bombing raid I tell you

- 28:00 when I was at the people couldn't sleep of course they couldn't sleep they told them the vacuum tanks were empty and we had a million gallons in there, they couldn't sleep. How do I know I have heard a soldier say that those bombs fell out to sea into the mud and that but I was down there I went over the fence and I had a piece of shrapnel that long that was at the retaining wall of the vacuum the tanks up from the sea,
- 28:30 and all this small shrapnel that is a bomb from exploding inshore. And I checked up with the ack-ack batteries and I know the two Coastal's the 500 toners the Kintore and the Innisfail used to hide in the shadow of the island over in Picnic Bay and that because the moon would come across that way and throw the shadow. When they bombed this wharf that shadow came across the wharf
- 29:00 onto high water, and he scored a perfect strike on the shadow of the wharf. I was down there I saw the

craters in the mud I know in the harbour it has got a clay bottom. I checked up with my mate he was the wireless operator with the north east area command and he said they scored a perfect strike in the shadow of the wharf.

29:30 If that had hit that tank it had hit the other tanks we would have been history. You don't know the truth and I know the truth about I had a 25 pounder shell case given to me by Lieutenant Bartley of the engineers, and we were due to go to Bougainville but the other Works Company thieved that much out of a boat a wreck on

30:00 the wharf out on the reef they sent them instead. But major what his name, my mate was witness to General Blamey and General MacArthur talking about Bougainville. Now if you study the maps of the time you will know this is the truth. Blamey said, "General MacArthur, we want to make a stand on behalf of the Australian Army; what

30:30 about us going to Bougainville?" General MacArthur he said, "General Blamey we are finished with Bougainville, we are on our way to Guadalcanal. Bougainville can stay there until it rots." What did Blamey do but send troops to Bougainville my mate here of the engineers he said the engineers suffered more casualties in Bougainville than any other engineers in the war. History of the war.

31:00 When they declared peace in Bougainville they were outnumbered by Japs 10 to 1. Bougainville was finished the Japs couldn't do anything they had no transport they had nothing and we have been tangling with Bougainville ever since. You don't hear the truth and Blamey said, he said to me, "The choccos [chocolate soldiers - militia] are a pack of dingoes" and that was the choccos up at Buna and Gona because we had

31:30 tradesmen coming down to be blacksmiths and that to get out of New Guinea get down there and these fellows told me I don't know whether it was Buna he said. The lieutenant said, "The Japs have landed on the beach go down and meet them it is like taking a piece of cake off the sideboard." We went down and we couldn't see the Japs they thought the Japs would be dressed in khaki

32:00 like them, the Japs were in greens and they were up in the trees and they opened up on our blokes from the tree tops that is why they couldn't see them but our blokes broke and ran but I tell you what they come back and fought them. Blamey's 'dingoes' [AIF Australian Imperial Force] come back and fought them, and that's his words. A fellow said to me I wouldn't believe that unless I knew for certain they were his words he told me. You know the Buna and Gona campaigns

32:30 they knocked a bit of business out of the Japs there. I know had been on the convalescent camps and the fellows down there had been getting on the grog so they would bring malaria on and not go back.

After the bombing raids here in Townsville do you think many civilians here left town?

Yes.

33:00 Of course they left town, you wouldn't think they would stay here would you?

Where did most of them go to?

I don't know they might have went to Huendon or somewhere west, I heard quite a few of them left.

Do you know of any organised evacuations?

I don't think so. The organised evacuations would have occurred if the Japs had've landed. That Coral Sea battle where the Japs got laced that

33:30 stopped that evacuation because all the women and kids would have gone back, and I know what they can do to the Crystal Creek bridge I know all about it. Charge in the right place and that is the end of it. They had all this barbed wire and that around that was to delay the Japs

34:00 the boy said to me there they weren't going to invade this place I said I don't believe you I said well I saw different things than you know about.

When you were with the 11th Infantry Brigade, what was the first sort of task that you were given to do with them?

I think I had to move some rubbish from the headquarters which was at the top of Denim Street

34:30 and go and get this rubbish, it wouldn't be the first task but training you know it wouldn't be the first task but in this horse drawn wagon, that is the only transport we had. You have got a war on and they weren't trained definitely to go to Merauke, they weren't trained to go there, they were trained to go to the desert.

35:00 That is the way it is but I know that is the truth about that air raid there because I had the shrapnel I know. I would be the only one in Townsville that would know that because the father in law he was at the garrison. I will tell you another story because he had a lot of kids that's the wife's father and I am there and they don't know who I am, the lieutenant said,

35:30 "He's got too many kids it is costing too much money." He said, "We will make him a lance corporal so

he will get fed up and pull out" this is what they said. I saw that they didn't know who I was. I could have smuggled that out if I had known that I had been demobilized I would have smuggled that out because I reckon that was mine I got I would have smuggled it out of the place

36:00 and I would have been able to show you. The 25 shell casing I can't show you the shrapnel I can't show you .25 bullet that a fellow gave me from Lieutenant Wright who was a mate of mine in New Guinea I haven't got it, I haven't got those things but anyhow. So I was going to write a book about the war from a Private's point of

36:30 view but they wouldn't let me and they wouldn't let me keep a diary and I have no doubt about them because I know the inside running of the Works Company, how they allocated labour, 8 tonne a man a day. And the corporal sitting on his bum but it didn't say how many times you would have to move the 8 tonne a day a man. And then when they were short of men, 10 tonne a day a man and a leave pass when you finished. Out here you can go along drive along

37:00 Blakey's Crossing and you can see a hill there that is Jimmy's Lookout, that is where we loaded 60 ton of mortars, 6 of us, only thing we had was rollers 60 ton of mortars on four Australian semi-trailers too high so you have got to say that 30 ton of them had to be lifted up twice. That is the work and you could get a leave pass when you finished: get a leave pass when you finished; I couldn't crawl out of the camp!

37:30 **Was there a story about you seeing some Americans digging up their dead to take them home?**

Yes I happened to be there. I can't understand how I get in all these places but I was. I happened to be out of the camp with our own army cemetery out there putting water on, when they were digging up, I couldn't see the bodies

38:00 you could smell them you knew what they were doing they were out there digging up all the bodies. No way would the Yanks tell you how many they dug up or how many they left, you wouldn't know that was their business they wouldn't know they wouldn't tell you. They definitely dug them up nothing had been in the paper about it no memorial stone or anything.

They were American dead?

Yes they were American dead not our dead because 16 of our blokes

38:30 died around here they are all in the army cemetery, our cemetery, they were all American dead.

Why were they digging them up?

To take them back home, they take all the bodies back home. They are not leaving the bodies in Iraq they are taking them home, they take them home they don't leave them.

Where would they have been killed?

Coral Sea battle most of them.

39:00 The life of a rear gunner they told me was 5 minutes. I counted we were doing some job out at Woodstock drome there and I counted 113 Kitty Hawks under the gum trees. See they dispersed there they don't leave them around to get blown up.

39:30 113 out there. This Townsville was really a Yank operation. Kitty Hawk fighters, we had Beaufighters the 'Whispering Death' they used to call them. Then we had the Wirraways, they were sending Wirraways up to meet the Japs: that's a joke!

40:00 It is like putting a shanghai against a machine gun, the Wirraways were that poor.

Tape 5

00:31 **When you said you went to Brisbane when you were down there I think it was when you were sick and your mates went off and jumped on the trams and that, you said there were some demonstrations against the Yanks in town was there?**

It would be, yes for sure in Brisbane.

What did you see of those?

I didn't see any of them, we always used to ride on the back of the tram, the island tram so when didn't get pulled up we could get off

01:00 so the MPs [Military Police] wouldn't get us we didn't want to be in any demonstration.

What do you know about the demonstrations there?

I don't know much about it, only that it was in the paper.

When you got sick what was wrong?

I was a suspect with Hodgkin's Disease which is cancer. Thought

- 01:30 they investigated me and put me in Greenslopes and everything and then they sent me to Toowoomba so they decided to operate on me when I was getting somewhat better to take the right auxiliary out here it nearly killed me, the anaesthetist nearly bumped me off, because I can confirm that because I told the wife I had been operated on and I was OK. You see that's the gland there you have got a right auxiliary, I haven't.
- 02:00 I was laying nearly dead and they sent me from the place they operate in Toowoomba they sent me back to Downlands where there is about 400 in the ward so I abused that sister in my mind because she tied a big knot under my back with that operation then I worked out she tied that knot there to keep me moving to know that I was still alive.
- 02:30 She would be at the front of the ward and she could see that I was moving that I was alive. And they said it was Sialadenitis but that was a big cover up because I reckon myself I had glandular fever. I had all these lumps under with all these round rings around them and some of the top men said I never had Hodgkin's and others said
- 03:00 I did and I didn't so when they boarded me to cover up they boarded me A1 right auxiliary move I should have thieved the table that had A1 right auxiliary move in the back what the hell would they put that in there for. It was a cover up anyhow I got to the AAG2 [Second Assistant Adjutant General], Eric Baum was a clerk and if I had been a clerk I might have done all right and he got in the Victoria Barracks General MacArthur's headquarters.
- 03:30 I said when you get up Eric there is always a back way in. Let me know and he got the medical history typed out by the warrant officer you know the clerical lot typed out and I went up there and I never had a leave pass and I was AWL [Absent Without Leave] but he wouldn't know and he didn't want to have anything to do with it. I said there is only one thing I will do I will leave these papers with you before I go and I worked on the point that if I saw those
- 04:00 if he had those papers there, and he had a spare moment curiosity he would have to read them. He read them all right because the next thing I get summoned up to Victoria Barracks I'm up there and he investigated me and I could have put the lid on the training mob I could have put them in but I shut my moth. He said, "2110014, four aces," he said,
- 04:30 "I have been in contact with your brother and," he said, "I am going to send you up there to him." So he sent me up there with papers. I could have walked out of the army. I didn't know if I had walked out with those papers they wouldn't have had a trace of me. When I went up there and that is how I got up here. The RTO fellow because this was a damn forward area a war area and the RTO fellow he said he wasn't an army bloke he
- 05:00 has going up there with his wife and they're going up there together and this business of his going there and she is going there that doesn't wash, so they sent me up on the train without her. You always find when you get the top men you get better treatment.

What was the back way into MacArthur's Chambers?

Right on the side of the fence right up on the hill.

- 05:30 **You were telling us earlier off camera when a few of you blokes were picked to go with the Americans to move some ordnance?**
- This is true we were sworn to secrecy the unit didn't know, no one knew the major just said to us, the other fellows said to me "What are we going to do?" I said, "I will tell you what you are going to do you are going to do what you are ordered if you don't do that you will get shot. You are here you are with the Yanks now
- 06:00 not in the Australian Army you are with the Yanks and that is that." The major said to us when we got on the wharf he said, "When you leave here you have never been no-one is to know you have never been," and we never told anyone until the Secrecy Act was lifted, they didn't know in the unit, wouldn't tell the brother. Wouldn't tell.

What exactly happened?

That was it, it was poison gas.

- 06:30 **You told us off camera, we haven't got it on camera yet, what you had to exactly do with the Yanks there?**

Well I was the number one holder with another fellow we had to stack them 6 high, they were three cylinders and 6 high we had to stack them because he said if you drop one you we're dead that is all I know, and that is what we did.

It must have been scary work knowing that?

- 07:00 Yes of course it's scary work. I had a bit to do with Yanks on the ship lieutenants and that they used to make the blues that our blokes made on their ships too. On the Liberty ships what we used to do we had 8 men in the hold, what I would do I would try to knock one man off to give him an hour's kip they used to get that exhausted but there was only enough room to get up on the bunk
- 07:30 and overhead was the crane, and you could get under there and go to sleep you would be that exhausted and pull you down again. You couldn't do that you can only do that on Liberty boats like the General Anderson you could do that. I happened to come out of the hold you never had time to count how much you were handling but m and v, and I said to the bloke our fellows couldn't make
- 08:00 slings and that they put them in the net and I said how many are you putting in there, the fellow said it won't hold 92 and they are sending 92 cases of meat and vegetables coming down four or five decks and you have got to run them, you can't run them on the end of the crane you gotta cart em to put them at the end of the holds and stack them. Never had time to count how many you were handling,
- 08:30 but that is their job with those ships on there.

At the end of the day how many cartons of M & V did you end up moving?

I wouldn't know we never had time to count them we were only interested in getting the job done that is what we had to do. Clear the net get them out and get them again. Then we had a job what I told you with the Liberty ships we loaded 1000 pounders, 500

- 09:00 pounders to 250 pounders and then for the Borneo campaign, I think we loaded 3648 tonne for the Borneo campaign plus 4,000 sleepers. That was the Borneo train from the wharf to the sleepers we loaded that for the Australians. We used to load air force trucks
- 09:30 25 pounders we loaded do all that work.

Were the civilian stevedores still working?

Yes because I knew Tom Batho, you would get a supervisor down there, we might have a sergeant down there now and again, there was a sergeant down there with a saw, sawing the timber, but the saw was blunt. I remember that, the saw was blunt.

- 10:00 You never saw any officers there, the captain would say how are you doing down there that is all. Because they were all trained for war, we had no equipment whatsoever to handle any of that stuff, all we had was these bare hands, and I tell you what made me take a hand in to trying to promote things
- 10:30 or do things for the blokes we had to handle barbed wire with bare hands. Have you ever handled barbed wire with bare hands? We had coils of barbed wire, and we had the other coils with the timber, like that tight so I thought to myself what a bloody nuisance how can we load these? You are pricking yourself all the time. I think there was some gloves came some gloves there,
- 11:00 engineers gloves, I had never seen engineers gloves so I helped myself to a pair and I had them and I think the other fellows followed suit. But of course other things if you did things like that you would see blokes would be going back to the sergeant major. Those fellows were only trained for warfare they used to examine your rifles and that and you had to go what good was a rifle down the shoot. Then in the harbour the harbour was full
- 11:30 and the frogmen came in, they didn't see them and the frogmen came in from Kissing Point and this was a military exercise and limpet mined all the ships in the harbour, in greens like frogs and they swam under the water they must have been doing that to go to Singapore or something.

Were there any civilian wharfies that were working on the wharves?

Yes.

- 12:00 I will tell you a case first the sergeant major was trying to get me, he was a Pommy [English] sergeant major you see, and you have got a Pommy sergeant major you can't have a private using his brain he must do as he is told. Anyhow, that is when it happened and they were on strike the wharfies
- 12:30 and it must have been the 9th Div [Division] how I got onto this I had been to the races by gee, no that is when we were up past the racecourse you had to have a leave pass to go to the races and when I come I hadn't taken my leave pass with me and when I went to pick it up he said your leave is cancelled you have to go down and coal the boat. It was the 9th Div coming back from New Guinea. When they
- 13:00 anchored the boat the boat was sticking out to the sea and you had to drop the doors of the trucks flat trucks not coal trucks, and throw the coal down the shoot to coal the boat and when they had enough coal they lined the decks and gave us three cheers, so they were on their way. They wouldn't have been able to go without us doing that.

You told us another story about how you

- 13:30 **used going to the races as a bribe to get some blokes to help you unload trucks?**

Yes that, well you see Blinky Brennan, what helped to make the Army Supply Corps more prominent was the private, the permanent soldiers they had the sprinkling there he had a glass eye Sergeant Brennan. I said to him I have never seen so many trucks and so much fuel he said we got a big push up on up north

14:00 And I said, "You have got enough trucks to handle all this fuel?" He said yes to take very drum. I said, "What about me seeing these soldiers and telling them if they get the job done they can go to the races," see they used to pick them up from the races in an army truck. I said, "Will you give me permission to do that?" He said yes so I told them on this side and I went to the other side and told them

14:30 and by gee did the drums fly on and they all went to the races.

How often were race meets held during the war?

I don't know I think nearly every week or so I think because when we were camped at the race track Cluden, they had to send the Pioneers in to clean the toilets and everything after they had been there. Then we got moved up to where the engineers used to be away from Cluden.

15:00 We had an old coal hold and you had to shovel into the baskets and the troop ships the Kanimbla I think and the Katoomba they coaled through the sides they that were OK and they would have a bit of a staging on the hold and the basket would land and you would have to put the coal in so I was down there this night

15:30 and the fellow driving the donkey, I was controlling the jib coming back with the baskets but it all depends on the fellow if he let it go too soon I would have no control over it. So this time he let it go too soon and on the crane for the jib there was a big ball and chain and a hook and I stopped that a foot from the donkey drivers ear from the back of his skull

16:00 crashing into his skull it would have got him, a foot off him going straight into his skull. The next time, then the next day I am not on that in the night time so I went to see the private he was on the side of the ship the night before a fellow by the name of Coffey and I said to him, "I don't know what they are doing but I am not down there tonight and you're in a very dangerous job. I will tell you something if that basket of coal

16:30 goes to hit you, you drop straight down into the drink the sharks won't drop you, you would go straight in the drink." He called me over the next morning and he said, "Thanks for my life," and I said, "Why?" he said, "Have a look at this," all his thigh was bruised down there he got hit with a coal basket and dropped into the drink like I told him. That is what you were up against.

There must have been a lot of accidents and injuries on the wharves were there?

Well I don't know see

17:00 it all depends on how many men you had. The only people who could really get hurt, all bar I will tell you the Kanimbla it was the troop ship the Kanimbla we were finished the foreword hold that is the hold up the front and this was the top of the ship loading off, and there wasn't that much room but we were loading a sling of tables, army tables,

17:30 anyhow I was looking down with the lot, the bloke driving the winch he pulled the lever the wrong way and the tables shot up to the top of the crane and I said, "Under the combing for your lives!" so they were able to get under the combing and that swing of tables fell right down where we were standing and smashed up and it would have smashed us and if I hadn't have had that experience with the ships

18:00 we wouldn't have known I would have been one with them we would have all got knocked, because they had fallen 62 feet a second all the tables smashed up and you couldn't pull them out because the ship was going away, that's one there.

The coal that you've talked about to recoal the ships where was that all sourced from?

I think Newcastle or wherever they got it from.

It would have been unloaded off ships and then loaded back on the ships?

The coal that had been loaded into that coal hop was machined and you would put it in baskets because it coaled through the side you'd have to put it in baskets and the baskets tip it down the chute. There was a conveyor down to the chute. I went in there once and the coal would get carried into the ship but if the coal was a bit too big you might have to kick it off the belt

19:00 that is where it was coaled. They made a fortune out of that McIlwraith and McEacharn, I think owned those ships and made a fortune out of them.

Did you still maintain an interest in the air force?

I will tell you the story now. After that business and I got in the army I'll tell you a story, I told you and I had put in for the munitions and that was the closest

19:30 I got from the munitions factory where we were training. Me and my mate we were carpenters and we went out to the air force, this is after the war and the air force said what about joining the air force we need carpenters, I said no thank you.

Did you see many aircraft flying around Townsville while you were?

You wouldn't see

20:00 large numbers. My mate they had gun placements all over Castle Hill and he said if we fired them it would shake the town to pieces. They had them over the island I think at Arcadia the pump there I think the piston had to go to grip on the side they would have to tap the cylinder and it would just get the water up to the top

20:30 yeah so the bloke told me there.

You actually saw a few plane crashes there didn't you?

I saw at least two because we were going along the road, this bloke came down right over us but he missed us and he hit the ground and among the trees, and we thought I wonder how that bloke is going and at that time, that day

21:00 we were going out to the army hospital and the army hospital was out along Ross River somewhere we moved from Pallarenda but who did we strike out there was that pilot of that plane they had to take the plane away with a crane and that pilot was out there and you know what happened to him he got a broken nose that is all he got. Then there was two planes collided in mid air over us and they all come down in pieces because we

21:30 we saw the pieces coming down on fire but going by the road we missed them, we weren't stationary there.

Did you stop and jump out?

No we couldn't then, I don't know how high up they fell from you know.

The trucks that you were driving at this stage were they Chevs [Chevrolets]?

They were Chevs yes.

Were they American?

I think Canadian I am not sure but I think they might have been Canadian Chevs.

22:00 **Could you tell us about the CCC?**

That is the Civil Construction Corps. The only thing I know we had a job down there with this wire netting and that, making camouflage for gun emplacements and that. We were threading all his hessian and that through the holes, paint on and everything so they could throw it over the guns. Camouflage the guns.

Is that all they were making there at the time?

Yes that is all we were making there anyway when I was with them.

22:30 **Is that when you were still with Manpower?**

Yes.

Did they maintain some sort of operation during the war?

Manpower, well they did everything that assisted the war, assisted the Yanks because we were putting the water on for the Yanks out at Armstrong paddocks seven days a week. I think 10 hours a day.

23:00 **When you were on the wharves what sort of hours were you working?**

Well I couldn't work them out I think we were working about 12 hours a night, 6 to 6 I think.

Why did they have you working at night time?

The war was on you couldn't stop it in army day time.

I just wondered were there other reasons?

They wanted bombs to go up for the battle

23:30 and you can't delay the ships you have got to get them up as quick as possible. Then you have troop ships wanting to move troops and you have got to put the supplies on them and they've got to get off as quick as you can.

I am assuming the rest of Townsville would have been ion blackout conditions wouldn't they?

I would think so yes but I had no time to witness Townsville in the blackouts.

The dock must have been well lit up?

No the dock wasn't lit up at all.

24:00 all the lights were shaded all down not lit up.

Was it bright enough to work though?

You would get enough light to work you see the moon could be up but the lights were down they were all shaded.

Earlier when you were talking about the Japanese Raids on Townsville you mentioned two one on the experimental field, which is just near here, what exactly was

24:30 **the experimental field?**

That is where they had the coconut farms and doing some work with some State Agriculture in there. With here I say this was the place they were after because if you were using a low level bridge to take bombs down if there was only a hole blown up they could fill the hole in

25:00 but what would you try to bomb if you knew about this place wouldn't you try to get it.

What did you say was here?

This is all the Morse code and that all the communications. The cable coming in was that thick. I can show you the reinforced roof down there and you wouldn't know with all the mangrove here and the isolation of the place and the creek you only saw a line between two coconut trees because

25:30 the top was under a mangrove tree you wouldn't now because there was no trucks around they would dump them and go you wouldn't know.

You are pretty sure the Japanese must have had spies in Townsville?

I know they had one, he was the laundry bloke.

Did people suspect at the time?

He got interned in the end. The Japs wouldn't have a

26:00 naval officer if they wanted him they would use him but he had the Australian blokes going round used to be with his daughter and they'd go around a friend of the family in the pack up there they were left in the place they weren't known they were just doing it.

So you've got the one raid that is most likely going after the Morse code but they hit the experimental field going after the oil tank?

26:30 They were going after the lot they would have got the lot too.

What was the third, can you remember the third one?

Out at Many Peaks out further out. It is hard to gauge how many raids were altogether but they were the principal ones, the ones I know about. See I only assume they were after this place but I think they would be.

More likely that than a few experimental coconut trees you reckon?

Yes.

27:00 He reckons the bridge but one other civilian I know he reckons the bridge but I don't think so he wouldn't know anything about this place.

What's this mountain, the big mountain range out the side here?

Mt Stewart.

The towers that are there now, were there any towers on that during the war?

No.

Were there any communication towers anywhere in Townsville, Castle Hill or anywhere like that?

All I know about this one

27:30 probably to the ASD is the place here all I know the cable was that thick because they were digging up some for scrap.

At the height of the war in Townsville there must have been a lot of Americans here. What was the sort of ratio between Australian troops and American troops?

I wouldn't know.

28:00 When we were docks operating we would meet more Americans than Australians. Out there they had engine pits and everything out there you wouldn't know what they had. But I know that bloke Garvin he was moved from house to house every night and he would be in with the Yanks. I seen they had 100 Kitty Hawks out at Woodstock that is away from the town a bit of the town out there it is hard to say how much they would have here. There used to be Sunderland flying boats come here too.

28:30 You wouldn't know how many they had.

Did you have to do any loading and unloading of those?

Sunderlands no.

Who looked after those?

I don't think they loaded them too much they looked after themselves virtually I think, might have the air force. Sometimes we had to put bombs in the trains for the air force they would take them along and load them into the planes, sometimes we had to put bombs in there.

When the

29:00 **civilian wharfies were on strike how did that make you blokes feel?**

It didn't make me feel any different, they had been loading bombs and that before. When we were loading when we were down there well of course we had no more time but to work you had no time to think about and then we had our own. The Yanks used to use the wharfies

29:30 when we got Ops operating the Yanks wouldn't use them they used us. We would sign on the shipping companies and the shipping companies said you will get this money after the war but they didn't say what because we never got it. Most of our privates and that come from south they weren't around here. I remember a fellow we had so many men working at the post office too I think they would get paid.

30:00 this fellow stole a Yank's push bike what he did with the Yank's push bike, there was a big motor bike seat around the camp and he took the seat off and he posted the bike down to Brisbane to his place. That is only beside the point I remember that. Then there is another thing you would say what would the troops drink

30:30 only with the small money they got have you ever heard of White Lady. White Lady is metho [methylated spirits] you know how you know a blokes is on the metho he walks along talking to his finger drunk from metho. I tell you the story about the unseeing eyes. On a Sunday the camp was immaculate, Sunday

31:00 this bloke was sitting there outside his tent and he is looking up and down and he couldn't see anyone he couldn't see a soul, looking up and down and he grabbed this bottle he was rubbing his legs with it, up and down the metho and that is what he was doing but he didn't realise the whole camp was watching him.

What would happen if blokes were caught drinking metho?

I don't think anything happened to 'em. I don't think officers would know. I don't think.

31:30 Then what some of the fellows used to do if they finished early where the prostitutes were, I didn't know but they would go there and would try and get first in the line, if they got first in the line they would sell that to the Yanks the Yanks would pay the equivalent of £2/10/-d to get in first so they told me. I don't know.

Did you have a ration of alcohol in the army?

Yes you had

32:00 a couple of bottles of beer I think. I never drank it because I needed the money to sell it. I don't drink at all. I am not allowed to drink. I don't know there is something wrong up there with the Locomotor. The doctor said he used to be in the air force apologised for giving me Altoona because it had alcohol in it, alcohol is no good to you.

32:30 The fellows used to get stuck into the grog. Fellows used to be stealing the supplies from the kitchens and selling it to the pubs, so they would get a bit of beer.

What about cigarette rations?

I don't know about cigarette rations I never bought any cigarettes. They tell me now that if you say you don't drink and smoke it puts you out of a lot of pension.

33:00 That is what the Vietnam fellows say but I don't remember I think there must have been a tobacco ration but I didn't smoke. All I would do was trade my grog and my Yank cigarettes and sell them because I couldn't make any money out of selling my own.

What would you do to relax between all the hard work that you did?

- 33:30 I don't know that you really had much time to relax you might have a few jokes and that and a bit of laugh here and there. I know if things got slow we would have a bloke I was telling you about on the White Lady and he was a rabbit trapper and to break the tension and we would say, go on those damn rabbits they hop like kangaroos.
- 34:00 And he would be hopping around the floor like a kangaroo and like a rabbit. He would come home full in the night and yak all through the camp.

Can you give us a bit more detail on what the convalescent camp was like at Warwick?

It was a camp there was buildings there and everything. You have got your doctors and doctor fellows but I don't know.

- 34:30 I could tell you a bloke who was a bit crook one of the lieutenants he told me this at the camp, he told me he said, "I am after this lieutenant I will get him." He said, "You know what he was doing, he is taking AWAS [Australian Women's Army Service] in there and locking the door and raping them." He said, "I'll get him." That's what he told me so I don't know that is all I know about there.

You have a story about a young bloke a 17 year old bloke who came

- 35:00 **in and was sent away again and sent in with I think they thought he had appendicitis and he was sent away again and he ended up dying?**

Yes he is dead.

Can you tell us that story?

I don't like to disclose that but I have the names and everything but he was about 19, and the major,

- 35:30 you had to get things on paper, you don't realise it, the doctor coming to the camp was a major, and he sent this fellow out for an immediate appendectomy, and he wanted him operated on and he sent him out to Pallarenda and this doctor there said, "I am returning this private to his unit, he is a malingerer."
- 36:00 Anyway, the major got onto him and he went crook and he returned him for an immediate operation and he died from perenteritis, 19, dead. They protect their own, they can't touch you. When I reported to him about that truck incident he never put it on the paper, and see all they say to me is I had rheumatism.
- 36:30 It covers them up of course. Then there was another bloke, this bloke there was none of us that we would have all done a bit of extra work to let him go down to his mother. His mother was very ill and they wouldn't let him go and he went AWL and went down to his mother
- 37:00 and he got there too late she was dead, and when he came back to camp his nerves were gone he'd lay in a summer day with a blanket on his shivering. What he done he sneaked away from camp and he used to raid the camp to get food of a night the cookhouses but that is what they did to him. It wasn't necessary he could have gone down there. Then another bloke a corporal in our unit old Joe he had a row and he had old Joe in the jaw and he broke his jaw.
- 37:30 In those times if you got into an altercation like that and you were the cause of it you had to pay all your own medical expenses. This is inside story from my brother, old Joe had wrote everything about the incident he sat in there with the major and the major walked out and left it to the corporal. My brother said to me they protect their own.
- 38:00 I was in charge of troops without a stripe that would have got me court martialled but they were court martialling themselves. I think I decided to stay in town I think I might have had to get tobacco or something and I relied on this bloke I knew and I said hand those work sheets in when you get back, he went off to see his girl and never handed them in until 7 o'clock.
- 38:30 Anyhow, they were going to court martial me so my brother said to them I wouldn't be in that he said if you court martial him you will be in big trouble in the world he said he hasn't got a stripe, but they used to obey me. What used to work if you had a truck to come back into camp well you wouldn't be delayed if you knew what truck it was you could go there and work like a Nigger and get that truck back to camp
- 39:00 but if you worked like a Nigger and you didn't know what truck you were getting and you were laying there idle well you could go back to camp and have a shower and that. I used to always find out what truck was taking us back I had no trouble with them. I got recommended for a corporal but I never got it.

Generally speaking was there a certain amount of blokes worked with you?

- 39:30 Not necessarily, sometimes I don't think it all depends on what job you were doing and I wouldn't see too many blokes because most of the time I was down the hold, and you'd only see 8 blokes or so or a couple loading down below you wouldn't see too many men and you didn't have too much time to talk to them.

- 40:00 **With the drill every morning would you have a parade?**

A parade and a rifle inspection and that is if you weren't working early. What I used to do I made a cover for my rifle and I used to put it in the cover, because anyway you would have no trouble cleaning it then because you would just take it out and you would be right. That was all to those lieutenants and that, that is all they knew

40:30 and the sergeants and captain that is all they knew. They didn't know anything about the work that we had to do, and we had to train each other.

Tape 6

00:35 We had a Maori in our unit, Billy Alden - he was black dark, he was. And then we had another bloke, a South Sea Islander, Wadiker, Private Wadiker, he was in our tent, this is when we were at Cluden, and he would make this home brew. I don't know what he

01:00 put in it, and anyhow we come to camp this time and there is old Wadiker he is blind, this is in the morning. So I said to my brother we are not going to walk out with him we will be ordered to carry him out in his hut we had better let him get out there on his own and we will get out of the road we don't want to be carrying him back our hut mate. They carried him back he was blind. I had a beer with him after the war and anyhow

01:30 by gee all the blokes in the bar looking down at me drinking with a dark man.

Was there any discipline or repercussions on him for getting...?

I don't know.

When you were saying that the guys looked down on you for

02:00 **having a drink with a dark man, when you were actually in camp during the war was their racial tensions at all?**

I don't remember any of it.

Can you describe the camp at Cluden?

The camp at Cluden it was at the back of the grandstand. When they first went to Cluden they had no tents or nothing they slept in the grandstand, the 1st Australian Army Corps slept in the grandstand

02:30 and when they got tents and that at the back of the grandstand over near the stalls and that on this backside of Cluden we had all our lines there and you used to have to do picket duty. Old Blinky Bill the Pommie sergeant major that didn't like me of course, he would arrange for me to get on picket every now and again you would have to stand there with your bayonet. There was a fellow there, he'd get full,

03:00 an Australian soldier and when he would get full he would come walking up to you and he was going to knock your block off he used to grab the bayonet ready to slap him across the side of the head. He come so far up and then he would back peddle and then he would come right back until he hit the fence of the grandstand and he would whack into it.

03:30 I thought one of these times you won't be quick enough and some bloke folded him in the eye some Yank and gave him a black eye.

Whereabouts in Townsville is Cluden?

It's out there now, the racecourse.

Why do you think the English sergeant major didn't like you?

See a Private can't have any input into it you can't have a Private having

04:00 any input into the army. They are only there to be ordered around you don't think you have got to be ordered around. That's the difference, they used to have that Waddie I don't know what happened to him but he used to go and pick the slops up and that for to feed the pigs and that we had pigs there, so the sergeant major he got me and he put me on the job

04:30 so I thought that job only lasted about 3½ hours at that time in the camp so I volunteered I said you had better put me on this for good that was the end of it I was gone that was one way to get out of it. You have got all sorts in the army you have bludgers and everything else.

Did you have other duties at the camp?

05:00 No not really because I don't think I worked in the kitchen only if I was put on picket that's all, too busy working otherwise.

How was it that you were going from Cluden to the wharves every day was it by truck?

We would go with army trucks, army drivers

05:30 would pick us up and we would ride in the back of the truck. That was my trouble you had no seats sort of thing. In one part of the truck I sat over the wheels I should have been right up near the spare tyre box right up front of the driver's seat. Because in heavy braking, I got flung from one side of the truck to the other with my back and nearly over the side that is what done my back in.

06:00 I don't think they would have you riding like that now it is a different army altogether.

What were the trucks like were they just an open tray or?

Just sides on them an open tray no tilt truck or anything no canvas over the top just open. They would be three ton was their load.

How long a drive was that from Cluden to the wharves?

06:30 Not only would you drive from Cluden to the wharves you might drive out to the hospital right out Aitkenvale right to Pallarenda drive out to Jimmy's lookout wherever you were working we went. They didn't worry about the time. You got the input you got the captains and they would walk around with their cane under their arm doing nothing, that was their input,

07:00 living on the fat of the land. I tell you what I had the dearest tin of fruit salad in the country, me and two mates we were out at Stanley and the siding there, the floor is up level with an army wagon, a rail wagon and the corporal there said, "Don't touch that it is the

07:30 officer's fruit salad." I said to the corporal, "Mate I said we have never had fruit salad since we have been in," no they said never heard of it, privates never got fruit salad only officers. So we stole three tins of fruit salad and what we did we opened then under the building and we put the tins under the building under the plate. When we were going the allied patrol comes up

08:00 they got the Yank MP and the army MP, naval MP and the civilian MP you have got them all we got the damn lot coming looking for the fruit salad I said to my mates, "Well don't worry, the only way they will find out is getting us x-rayed and they won't do that." They never found any and when we were going the corporal was scratching his head, if he hadn't have said a word we wouldn't have known it was there. God knows how much that cost them for fruit salad,

08:30 pounds and pounds and that is the way it was all the officers got the best and the sergeants the Privates got the rest and I think it would still be the same.

Generally what were you getting to eat?

Often times you couldn't eat the breakfast they were getting, you might have wheatmeal porridge but often times you couldn't eat the breakfast so you ate

09:00 bread and cheese and jam. When we had our own corporal he was used to be a cook for the cane gang and we had him we weren't doing too bad we were putting in 2/-d. a week to get a bit of ice cream and he would turn out pretty good meals. When he got, I don't know what happened to him but he

09:30 got somewhere else and we got a sergeant caterer and that sergeant cater he wasn't worth 2/-d we got crook food. He used to dress too, he cooked the way he dressed and we would get crook food when we had him and he was a sergeant.

Why was it that you couldn't eat the breakfasts?

Virtually inedible. I remember a bloke paddy my mate I was sorry for this fellow

10:00 because he had been a soldier and he had been trained down as a cook, and he had a cap on and he was there standing up and he had made this breakfast, and I think it was mince patties and he is standing up and we were going to praise him but I don't know what the hell happened with the cooking but you couldn't eat the mince patties they were all stringy like that and everyone coming out abusing the poor kid.

10:30 **When you were at Cluden you were married by then weren't you?**

Yes.

Where were your wife and family living?

I never had a family I finished up with one kid living here with the mother. There was a naval bloke Tims he was living over here too.

How often did you ever get to see your wife?

I don't know, it all depends when I sneaked out, when I

11:00 could sneak out or that I don't know all depends on how the work was. If you are working in the night time you can't see your wife. I don't know just how much we got.

Did you get leave to go and see her?

Yes leave you could jigger leave because if you got back before parade in the morning if you got back say we'd come back with the unit we could get back before parade.

- 11:30 As long as you were on that parade they didn't matter. As I say in the cyclone we rode out along the rail tracks to get to camp. It is just hard to say, all depends how much work you had and what you had on because you see that came first.

When was your first child born during the war?

- 12:00 Yes I forget the time.

You started to tell us a story off camera about someone you used to let sneak out to go?

That was Sergeant Hamilton, Keith Hamilton.

Can you tell us that story?

When I was at the showgrounds working out there with him he let me come home to see the wife and kids or to see the baby but I had to leave there and be back on time.

- 12:30 but he used to let me that wasn't far away but you wouldn't get many sergeants like that. He was a 2nd Div man I think and I used to write to him after the war he is dead now but I still send a Christmas card to his wife and get one from her. He was, as Waldo Emerson said, "One thing a war does it gives plenty of men power and we find out how few

- 13:00 are men," that is a thing always to remember we find out how few are men. Because the power goes to their head and they want to treat you like dirt.

You told us a story not so long ago about when you were loading the coal onto the ship and there were the troops waiting to go on board and gave you a big cheer at the end, did you have interaction with the troops that were going onto the ships that you were working on?

- 13:30 No but this was a troop ship coming back from New Guinea and as far as I know the wharfies were on strike then. As I say I come back from the races this would be in the afternoon I come back to see the brother really and he cancelled my leave the sergeant major and sent me down there. Down we went to put enough coal on the

- 14:00 ship so they could get on. I went through the seat of my pants on top of it too I remember that but you had to shovel the coal into the chutes and drop the wagon sides and stand there and throw the coal in and it was moored a bit too far out.

We have heard a couple of stories that civvie [civilian] wharfies were notorious for thieving or sort of souveniring things, did any of the army

- 14:30 **souvenir anything from ships?**

I don't know I didn't think there was anything to souvenir. Wharfies are different because even the tally clerk he might steal paint stored by the side of the shed but we wouldn't have any paint stored there. How I know the ships detective,

- 15:00 he got caught with his truck, this is after the war and he had a big case of lager in his car he stole that but you know who used to pay for it, do you know what they do with the wharfies, the shipping company would say you could have a bottle of lager or you could have a drink, if they let 'em have a drink down below, the cargo would come out faster but you know what they did with the bottles they would undo the bottle themselves

- 15:30 and break the bottle and that is who paid for the bottle the insurance companies, not the shipping companies. insurance companies paid for that. I suppose that would still be going on I don't know. That is what they used to do then.

Who was the person on the dock who you said was the sergeant major's snout?

Sergeant Major's I don't know.

- 16:00 You wouldn't know you have got to assume they would tell the sergeant major things. Never seen the sergeant major on the ship he never left the camp you only saw the captain now or then I don't know whether you saw a lieut [lieutenant] I never saw a lieut you might see some sergeants you would shame sergeants into working with you out on the job and that you know. We had a bloke that had Saint Vitus Dance I think because he -

- 16:30 I wouldn't work with him because he lifted a thing and he hit me on the shin and that was because he used to shake like that and he was in the army and this sergeant came up to get this bag of flour over his shoulder and he was jerking like that and he dropped it across his neck, half killed the poor coot. I said I could have been dead too of course.

When you first went down to the docks did they give you any training?

Personally I had no training.

- 17:00 I was a number one holder, and I didn't really require training but the other fellows told me they got two days training the winch drivers and that. Two days training.

Do you know what that training would have entailed?

Only the basics because they couldn't make a sling and they couldn't make a burden down the hole and if you had 91 cases of

- 17:30 M & V you couldn't land it on the burden so you had the height to carry it and you had to bend down and carry it all, you were a slave 91 cases and 8 men or might have been 7 men it all depended on who I had rested off. You had to carry it to the end of the hold because you don't load a ship from the centre you load from the end out it's gotta go along the edge of the hold first and then come back.

- 18:00 **There were no hooks for working on the docks were there?**

The only tools we had was bare hands. We might have a hand trolley if we went to the ASD but you never even had a bag hook. I don't know how the wharf is now but it was if you didn't have a bag hook you couldn't work.

- 18:30 Because you can hook into the bags and lift the bags. I know with a big bag of flour if you dump it on the floor whoever unloaded it and you have got to get it back into the army truck you know how many men it takes to get it back into the army truck, three men. You wouldn't want to be lifting 10 ton of that up would you?

If you had the hooks would it have made it?

It would have made the work easier.

- 19:00 they had no clue about that because Works Companies I could tell you a story about unloading hides. The Lieutenant of the ASD he said to me, "Why is it when you fellows come out here I miss something?" I said, "I think it might be to show you that we are an essential part of the army." We had these hides and I reckon the

- 19:30 rope through the hide the loop on the knot you would have to put over the hook, this is what I thought anyway, the blokes didn't they loaded it at the meatworks and then they come out. The butchers never come to unload it our fellows did that too, and put it in the hooks and the story I heard that on the Sunday it might have been a Friday or Saturday but on the Sunday all the hide

- 20:00 hooks had broke and fallen on the floor and the butchers had to go and hang it themselves and the next time the truck arrived the butchers couldn't get there quick enough to hang them because they were out to bludge on us, too but that cured them.

Can you just describe for me step by step, I am just trying to get a mental picture of how you actually load something into the hold, how you would load something into the hold?

You would have a net

- 20:30 and you would have a crane you would have the crane on the jib and the hook we should have had hatch men telling you to lift it and take it across and drop it down, but they would have the net and they would put all these cases in the net and then they would lift the net up and when the hook came down they would hook the hook onto the net, a big hook

- 21:00 and the blokes were that keen that they thought it would hold a couple of more cases that they would throw them on. I said to the fellow, "How many are you putting on there?" he said, "91, it will hold 92" he said. That is how many cases you'd have. When you have 91 cases of M and V and you are coming down with the dam nets you are not going to run it far you have to carry it to the edges of the hold.

The net gets lowered down

- 21:30 **and you physically unload it out of the net and put it where it needs to go?**

You might have the other net empty and you send the empty net up.

Was there a Major O'Grady?

He was ex 7/9th commanding officer of the 1st Australian Army Corps works companies,

- 22:00 he told my brother he said the first self sustaining troops in the history of warfare return more to the government than we were paid he told my brother and he would know. I tell you since the war I tell you Major Muirhead he was a Tobruk Rat he said, "You want to go," he said, "Where were you?" I said in the Army Works Company

- 22:30 he said, "You better sue those Bs [bastards] for all you can get." I said, "Why how would you know?" and he said, "I tell you what I got wounded at Tobruk and for me to recuperate they put me in a Works Company," and he said, "And I tell you what the army killed you poor Bs." That was his view of them

that was Major Muirhead and that was a Tobruk.

23:00 **It must have made you feel very proud though to get that sort of commendation from a man like him?**

I don't know the way we worked I don't know about it was to be proud of I don't know. You never considered those things because within the CCC and the Works Company and that you had to work and you got used to working you didn't think of loafing. We used to have Oscar the Swede

23:30 selecting men to work the way they did in the war I would have all short men. Oscar the Swede he was a professional wheat stacker only a little bloke a Swede fella. When they stored the sugar, they might have been 70 pound bags, bags of sugar they would have them up about 20 feet and up on the top there was only room for a little bloke to get up and throw 'em down.

24:00 We would start talking about Oscar and we would hook him in and we could see his chest swelling and we knew once his chest swelled we would have him going right up the top and start throwing the bags of sugar down, we wouldn't have enough room to get on the top but he would he would throw them down. Then you would get different fellows making stacks of cases and three and one and then the other way stacking them to pick their brains on what they have done

24:30 and you build yourself up. I know I was going into the Occupation Forces in Japan but I got a phone call from the lieutenant of the ASD and he knew about my kid and that that is the fellow told me about the 110,000 troops and that there, I got a secret phone call from him but he said to me, "I am thinking of your kid," he said,

25:00 "There's a worm infestation you can get in Japan, for which there is no cure, so if you still want to go," he said, "We will take you, so if you but don't want to go it is OK," so I didn't go and I think my mate Al Marshall got that worm in Japan because he died. That was the wireless operator bloke. So that's an inside thing anyway.

25:30 **Can I just go back and get a bit more information on some things we were talking about earlier. Just to back track, when you were doing the harbour dredging before the war did they keep doing the dredging during the war?**

They had other dredges here too the place was full of dredges. People don't understand this place was at war and all these things were here, they had dredges dredging around there.

26:00 The harbour at that time was 120 foot wide and from the water to go down to the clay was 28 foot, bucket dredges and they would have suction dredges and all that and I saw them all there. Now that dredge is scuttled

26:30 they are all gone.

I know we touched on this earlier, but can you tell me how exactly did they make the camouflage nets?

Wire netting you might have seen them on TV [television] with the wire netting across them and all this stuff put in to camouflage the guns that is all I remember we were putting this through

27:00 did me that job we were in the shade. When those jobs were finished that was that. You could work with the Allied Works and the CCC and get work the trouble was if you got out of work they would swipe you in the army.

What other things did you do with the CCC?

I think that is only about the things there

27:30 I don't know how long that lasted and with the others like out at the water out where the bombardment group landed out here we had to assemble the pipes and all that I don't know how long we were out there but we worked awhile there and then we went out to Armstrong paddock there working 7 days a week there. You have got to work when the war is, on especially when you don't have any machinery.

28:00 I don't know what they had in those trenches down there they might have had something to cut them out I don't know if the yanks did I don't know.

Did the Yanks take over a lot of places during the war?

I couldn't say really but I know they took a lot of Western estate and made it into a hospital and connected the houses in the western estate.

So they were civilian houses?

Yes I don't know how much because

28:30 as I say around the Coral Sea battle and before we had that much work we had no time to worry what the Yanks were doing.

They took over civilian houses and joined them altogether?

Yes they made the hospital.

Do you have any idea of how they took over the civilian houses?

I think they would commandeer them but I am not sure. When there is a war on the army takes precedence,

29:00 I would think so.

Would those people have got paid for their houses?

I don't know but I would assume so or they might have rented them but I would assume so. I know the bombs they loaded on the wharf came from the back of Cluden from the back of the engineers place where we were right over the back and all the dark blokes handled the bombs, they took them down to the wharves

29:30 **Is that a dangerous job handling the bombs?**

You hope none of them explode. I wouldn't say that it was that dangerous but it must have had danger in them you wouldn't want to drop them I don't suppose. I think they would load them with the cranes about two at a time. Timber between them on the Liberty ships and you'd timber between them and they would have them there like that.

30:00 They would load them onto the bottom of the ship. Then air force trucks we would load they weren't loaded like that they would go down the hold 25 pounders would go down the hold.

You said they weren't loaded like that how were they loaded?

They were loaded by cranes.

When you went to Brisbane and started the course at the Technical

30:30 **College, what was that course that you were doing?**

Trainee Turner.

What sort of training was involved with that?

Doing labour work and everything, and theory work. When they gave you a test I was 6 months away when they gave me a test so I couldn't pass it but all the other blokes passed it because they paid the ammo makers they done their

31:00 practical for them, they done them in their lathes so you had the job done they couldn't say where it came from and they all passed. There wasn't so many blokes might have been 12 blokes or so I don't know.

It was just after that, that your brother claimed you wasn't it.

After that that would be months after, after I came out of the con camps

31:30 before the AAG2.

Was that a fairly common thing for brothers to claim each other?

Oh yes a standard thing.

What did you think when you got word that your brother was claiming you?

I didn't know what to do you see I got to the AAG2 but he got into things I still reckon I should have been boarded out

32:00 with those fellows boarding me A1, and then the other doctor giving me a month with no duties you see that is the whole trouble there's no consensus, and I was I think I came out eventually I got 20% pension and when I failed the medical for the Commonwealth Public Service they upped it to 40%. You know you are worth a lot more than 40%

32:30 but all they say what compensation you get. The point is when you are going down the drain and taking lesser paid occupations you are not gaining anything are you? We had that job there cleaning the Commonwealth buildings and when the government got onto the contracts they put it all over onto private enterprise. To get the jobs you had to be a

33:00 an invalid civilian or an invalid army bloke TPI [Totally and Permanently Incapacitated] to get the job. You might get 17 hours a week or so of a night time and you were expected to live on but then they decided to put it on contract. I put in for a contract there and got beat by £2/10/-d. When they did that Ralph Dean the department of

33:30 Interior fellow they gave it over to contract and ACB [Brand name] Cleaners got it and he gave me the figures and I put the figures into the Labor Council but what they did they would employ a woman and give her 2 hours work and there would be 4 hours work there but they relied her being conscientious

and she would do 2 hours for nothing, get 2 hours pay for 4 hours work.

- 34:00 When the figures got into them the Trades and Labor Council they left town in a hurry, because that is what they were doing.

When you went to the Works Company with your brother did you work closely with your brother?

No he was top man orderly room sergeant and staff sergeant I didn't work with him.

Did you see much of him?

Not much of him.

What were your other brothers doing?

My other brother he come in that unit too

- 34:30 he worked like me but he got, I tell you what, there is something got to be wrong with all those fellows he started and he was having trouble with his nerves. That job I was getting he passed the medical and he got the job and he was a clerical officer for the Works Company he was working with and he had two

- 35:00 women working with him they were getting \$5 a week more than the dole, he was in the Records Office. \$5 a week more than the dole this is when Fraser was in, big economy drive Fraser sacked both of them, \$5 a week more than the dole. So the brother he couldn't do the work the top men in the Works Department they would walk around with their hands in their pockets doing nothing.

- 35:30 He went to this doctor and the doctor said to him he said, "I am not going to send you back on that job you have got to go off on super I am not sending you back." He said, "Why would that be?" and he said, "I worked in the Records Office myself" and he said, "With your nerves" he said, "If you went back there you would be just as ill as you were" and he wouldn't let him go back. The damn Head of the Works Department said we could do with you back out here

- 36:00 and he said, "You are not getting me back" he said, "I told you but you wouldn't listen to me," he wouldn't give him any assistance. I don't think he is getting a pension on his nerves but he should have been I don't know if he put in for it, if you don't put in you don't get.

The Cavendish Convalescent Camp that you went to?

That was at Cavendish Road, that's in Brisbane.

- 36:30 **How long were you there for?**

I don't know I was there awhile because I know I had 4 weeks no duties. Frank Sykes the cricketer he was down there when I was there but he got killed when he went back to New Guinea, Frank.

What did you actually do while you were at the convalescent camp?

Nothing, too ill to work.

Were you bed ridden?

No I wasn't bed ridden but they give you no duties though.

- 37:00 **What was that convalescent camp like compared to?**

I think they are much of a muchness. The trouble is when you came out of the hospital and you went to a con camp like Warwick you had no beds to sleep in and you slept on the floor, on hessian on the floor, and it was that cold there you put on

- 37:30 all the clothes you had could possibly wear and you would shiver through the floor. That was the con camp at Warwick. Out at Cluden there we had no beds we only had hessian. I might have got a bit of straw but I think most of the time we went without straw.

This is when you are recovering from

- 38:00 **Hodgkin's disease and they are making you sleep on hessian in the freezing cold?**

When I came to Warwick yes.

Had you realised how potentially seriously ill you were?

I was nearly a goner. I told the wife I had been operated on and I was OK and of course I was nearly dead, they told me the anaesthetist nearly killed me.

- 38:30 The doctor told me the anaesthetist... he said that is all I know.

Did you have any visitors while you were in the convalescent camps?

No I didn't have any visitors you might get the Red Cross or something that's all.

Did you get Red Cross parcels when you were there?

No I don't think so not in the hospital I don't remember.

39:00 **When the war finished you were still on the docks?**

No we were we had Atebrin and everything in the Q [Quartermaster's Store] we were going

39:30 to Bougainville but the other Works Company there was a ship wrecked out on the reef, and the other Works Company stole that much stuff off there that they sent them they didn't send us.

Why did they send them instead?

Because they had thieved all that stuff.

As punishment?

Yes they sent them there.

What was the ship that sunk?

40:00 No on the wharf we were, they don't want to pay you for going outside the 3 mile limit and that and we were on the army small ships ammunition we were dumping out on the reef and that, defective ammunition. I know where some ammunition was dumped but I would never tell anyone because I wouldn't be able to sleep but it was too rough but we dumped it in a certain place,

40:30 we went out on the small ships and unloaded it out there on the reef.

That was after the war they were getting you to do that with the ammunition?

That was before the war was concluded, before you were discharged and that, yes that was before then.

Tape 7

00:32 **Have you worked out the tonnage per man?**

Yes 8 ton a day.

How would they calculate how things were done?

I don't know because that was a corporal sitting in the orderly room, this is how I found out the truth, I asked the brother. What they would do say 40 tonne of stuff had to be shifted 5 men they couldn't work out how many times it had to be handled, 5 men.

01:00 I told the doctor that and he said you are mad working 8 tonne a day. When they ran short of men 10 tonne a day and a leave pass when you had finished. That is why 6 men loaded 60 tonne of mortars out there at Jimmy's lookout when you are driving around out there towards Ingham or towards the bluff it is on the right hand side that hill there. 6 men because I was one of the men.

01:30 and how I know I used to find out those things.

What would your rate have been compared to the civilian wharfies?

Well my rate I suppose they would pay 6/6d. a day First Class Private 6/6d. a day I suppose 12 hours.

How much tonnage would they have to do in a day?

How much tonnage I wouldn't know because I never took much

02:00 Interest. I think it is 3 to 4,000 we done for the Borneo campaign but we wouldn't be paid that because that was the Australian Army that was the Borneo campaign the Borneo train and 4,000 sleepers. You had men stowing 4,000 sleepers they have got to stow 500 each put them in holds so that would take a bit of time. When you were working for the Yanks well

02:30 there would be 90 cases of sling they would pay full rates. That meant if you went down on the Yank ships I don't think you would sign every day but you would sign the first, and that should run into a lot of money it would have run into a lot of money by now. Most of the people that were in the 1st Works Company never came from around here, they were Brisbane and that.

03:00 **The amount of work you guys were doing would have been more than the civilian wharfies wouldn't it?**

I would think so, you can't gauge the two because the civilian wharfies they were professionals they could make a sling and they could make a burden down the hold. For instance if you were stowing big

bags of sugar down there well what they would build a burden up in the centre of the hold

03:30 and they'd land the slings of sugar down there done in slings with ropes which our fellas couldn't do, and you get a bag of sugar and put it on your shoulder and you'd carry it but with our fellows you would have had that in a sling and you would have to lift it up and that is the difference. They used to lower 30 tonne an hour I think they lowered with that sugar and the Tally Clerk said, "You loafing B's you caused

04:00 all this 30 tonne an hour." When you consider it you have got to make it into slings and put it on a burden and carry it down to the hold how would you be loafing? You couldn't be loafing. When they introduced different methods and they bulk loaded sugar and that, there is no men only in the damn hold might shovel some sugar and that but you had no men working there.

04:30 It is all done manually and that is why they don't have so many men down the wharf now all those fellows are gone.

So lack of training and lack of equipment meant that you blokes were working a lot harder than you needed to?

We had two days training, we had no training and no equipment that is what I say if I hadn't gone down the hold where would have they been that 6 men I was basically selected to

05:00 load that poison gas. Where would they have been.

What exactly was BIPOD?

BIPOD. That is the when the oil companies took over the fuel 4 gallon drums they put it in. I know with the 4 gallon drums I held, I went to throw it up and the top and it wasn't tight and the fuel come into my eyes and burned my eyes

05:30 that is what you had to put up with. The bloke out there that was a corporal he used to be in the oil company so they had their own there you see and of course the oil company wasn't paying them the army paid them and they got all that money extra. It is just like the tobacco you would get those cigarettes off the Yanks maybe you would sell them for 2/-d. a pack I forget what you would sell them for

06:00 but then you weren't allowed to take them off the wharf because the big men weren't making any money out of them. You weren't allowed to take them off the boat. You have got to put yourself in those position of those Lieutenants and that they knew nothing about anything they were just walking around with canes under their arm pits, good job doing a bit of rifle

06:30 inspection in the morning. Then you would get the sergeants.

You were telling me this morning off camera about the American ack-ack?

Down on the wharf yes that battery was there all the time. Say that was the front coming into the wharf

07:00 to the vacuum from the street coming into the vacuum there was a big hill up to the left, with black tanks on they were water tanks, and then sloping down and then coming in on the level that had been built up from the sea that was the tanks full of fuel, plane fuel, truck fuel, distillate, full of fuel. The idea was when the fuel came into those tanks was to get

07:30 out to Deeragun and those places in case it got blown up and they put in the papers that the tanks were empty and they were full. If there had been no shadow with the moon that way, no shadow on the wharf there is no way that bomb aimer wouldn't have got the wharf he got the shadow he would have got the wharf. You could well understand him making an error because

08:00 all the shades on the lights and everything and with the moon over that way you see the moonlight and that shadow would throw on the water and that is where he got it.

Did the American ack-ack open up that night?

No way, that would only make the one run that boat because it dropped all its bombs I think it might have had 6 bombs dropped them all only made the one run. You couldn't blame the Yanks for not opening up because if there had been any strafing there

08:30 the damn place would have blown up you couldn't have strafing in there with 1 million gallons of fuel.

Did it make sense to even have an ack-ack gun there?

It could have in a way because if the tanks were empty, they were a use but I don't blame the Yanks they told me what was on and everything happened that fast

09:00 they told what was on, and unless the tanks were empty that is what he said if we get strafed we are dead.

Did you get any warning that the air raids were on?

I don't think so, I don't know. There were warnings because I will tell you a story in Charters Towers I told you about my wife having the miscarriage down there, because you have got to understand this is a war area and any

09:30 thing like that you were disturbed straight away. I think this story could be true in there Charters Towers and the fellow who was supposed to sound the alarm, he never sounded the alarm until the all clear went and the bloke shot into the trenches and the bloke fell into his rifle and bayonet and landed on his bayonet and bayoneted himself.

10:00 But they tell me that was done in the all clear so that was in Charters Towers. They had women search light units and that up here I know what Bartley told me about the hill. He was a Brisbane fellow Lionel Bartley friends of ours.

I was going to ask you what other defences were there in Townsville during

10:30 **the war?**

They had gun emplacements I don't know if they had the guns up there, I was never up there to see them but I think they might have had, and they had all these emplacements with the barbed wire. Damn mile of barbed wire you have never seen so much in all your life right up along the beach right up over the Mount Stewart that way and out that way Shelley Beach. We had the job when things had quietened down on the wharves

11:00 having the job of dismantling the lot of it we just rolled it up and threw it down the gullies. A fellow said that they didn't prepare for this war they must have been mad in the mind.

What about slit trenches and bomb shelters?

You had to, they had bomb shelters they had them in Flinders Street, they had them along the road cement ones.

11:30 All people had slit trenches they had plenty of bomb shelters. In the areas you went to work you couldn't record everything. I can tell you about the malaria unit. There was a malaria unit here and at 6 o'clock you had long sleeved shirts they had to be rolled down, after sunset they had to be rolled down

12:00 and we used to go and do work for the malaria control. I would say to myself you had better be careful of this stuff. You had rubber boots and a soft drink bottle of DDT [dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane - insecticide]. you know what it did? An acre of water, a soft drink bottle of DDT to an acre of water powerful stuff it was.

12:30 I was careful not to get any of that damn stuff on me. The lieutenant of the American patrol he got it on, he got scratching himself, he died septicaemia it killed him. See that is a powerful thing that DDT they don't use it any more do they for the malaria patrol.

Was malaria a problem in Townsville before the war?

No I think it might have been but there wasn't the population really here to be worried about 30,000 or so.

13:00 You had all these troops and that here and the American Patrol was here I wouldn't have been working for them would I had jobs with them but I got them. You had to go out the town common and any cattle pads with water on them they had to have DDT on them.

Where did you meet your wife?

13:30 Down here when we used to be swimming, this was before the war. I drew my eye to her, she used to get out in the water and get up to her chin, and I thought to myself I have got to get a wife with courage. I have got to get a woman, I wasn't thinking about getting married then that is how I come to meet her. Unlike now I don't know if you have read the same thing

14:00 like me what is happening to marriages, etc. The [contraceptive] pill, the woman on the pill cannot detect the secretions under a man's armpit. Before there was the pill, in nature really the woman selected the partner or selected the husband and both of them could

14:30 detect the smells under the armpits. The male to the female and the female to the male and they bonded or not, you didn't know the way things were going but you married a woman for sex or you married because you loved her. Of course if you married her because you loved her you were all right and vice a versa, but that is what they tell me is wrong but I don't know.

When did you get engaged?

15:00 I forget the exact date.

Was it during the war?

Yes. I got married I was getting married when I got called up.

I know when you got married but I just wondered how long a wait was there between you?

I don't know. I forget.

How did you propose?

Just ordinary. If you knew as much about sex as me you would get frightened I suppose.

15:30 You live a restricted life and that.

Do you think what was going on at the time with the war influenced your decision to get married?

No. Because I did say to myself I had given the word to get married and if I go into the air force well everything is set up to get married so I had better stick to my word, so I stuck to my word.

16:00 We have had our battles up and down but everything has turned out all right we are still going strong. That is the way it is so she must have selected the right person.

Did you have to ask Joyce's dad for her hand?

Oh yes and he wouldn't tell me anything about Gallipoli or anything about

16:30 Europe he wouldn't tell me.

What was the wedding like?

A very poor wedding we had glassware and that and my brother he was going to come down to be best man, so they wouldn't give him leave from Cairns so he shot off and got caught, and they put him under restraint and they put him in the damn prison and they had him doing what no doing there

17:00 part of the punishment they would have to dig a hole and put it in the bag and carry it so far and then carry it back and put it in the hole again. They punished them all they could. He couldn't get down to the wedding so we had to get another fellow a best man my wife knew a fellow and the pastor who married us was Pastor Lock he was a Missionary in New Guinea and he married us we had to borrow the Baptist Church to get married in

17:30 so there is was.

Did you wear your uniform?

No I never had a uniform then because I had got the leave form the army to get married, after travelling 1664 miles. You wouldn't think they would be so damn silly would you.

What about a honeymoon, did you have a honeymoon?

I hooked about 7 days with a crook back they were going to arrest me they said but I

18:00 reckon that was rubbish they contacted some fellow and I got him to tell them I was too crook. And anyhow I got away with it I think we went to Mount Morgan and that because we had limited time.

And then your first born was a war baby?

Yes that was Carol who came here.

Was that planned?

We didn't know nothing about planning, knew nothing about planning.

Did that concern you bringing a baby into a world at war?

18:30 You have got to think you don't know what you have got to think of if you can leave someone behind that doesn't enter your mind when you are in love or that.

19:00 That is the way it went.

Was there any other time once you were in the army proper, and you were married and everything, did you ever get any more leave?

Only annual leave, I got 3 months rehabilitation leave after the war which I spent in the Towers. My father in law had a grape farm, and I got two allotments up there and we were going to go into that but we had a bit of a yike and that

19:30 and it all fell through we were going to go out and get alluvial gold too that fell through he was a good gold man.

Did you see your mum and dad a fair bit?

Not too much the Mum and Dad lived next door. The bloke by the name of Timms, a Naval bloke he used to live there. Only when we come up did we see them there.

20:00 **How did they fare during the whole event?**

I reckon my father had plumbism. I think the war helped to kill him because he was born in London and he was a great patriot and when those ships got wrecked off Singapore that knocked the socks under him when they got sunk there.

20:30 **Was having you and your other two brothers working in the Works Company was that a rare thing for the town?**

I don't think so. I had another brother and the army ruined him too, and he was with the Coastal Artillery and they discharged him and sent him to Redbank and the fellow said, "No

21:00 we are not discharging you and you have to go into the army again," had to go back in the army and he shot through. "Take the damn lot," he said, "I am going through," and he got lymphoma and cancer down here and he was having trouble with his stomach in the army, all those years and they should have got on to him and they should have put him out but that is what happened to him.

21:30 The other brother the sergeant bloke who is dead he's buried over a Bolger's Bay, he was a TPI.

When they said you guys were going to go to Bougainville originally were you keen to go?

We weren't worried we were going to set up as camp bookmakers we weren't worried.

Were you disappointed when the other guys got to go instead?

No we didn't know anything about it until later on. If I knew what I knew about

22:00 Bougainville now, what I knew I wouldn't have wanted to go. I struck a fellow there he was 40 odd he said I don't know he said I am walking around he said I am a mad man he said I had contact with one woman and I loved her and he said I am too stupid in the head to get married and if I go to Bougainville I can get killed. That was worrying him. He couldn't sleep of a night.

22:30 **Before the news was raised that you might be going to Bougainville were you keen to get overseas were you sick of Townsville?**

No that finished me, I had finished with volunteering. When I couldn't get into the air force that is why I didn't want any medals or anything when I couldn't get into the air force that finished me

Where did you end up being demobbed?

Here, the Works Company we had huts at that time.

23:00 We had huts with tin roofs with Masonite walls and shutters but you had to make your own bed, but you worked in a bit more comfort.

And they passed you medically A1?

They said I was, I don't know. They said I had rheumatism, I might have had rheumatism too but I certainly had a disc lesion because they know dam well the trouble I was getting down below.

23:30 **What sort of medical did they put you through when you got discharged?**

None. Just discharged you.

You had to sign a piece of paper agreeing to that?

I don't know I can't remember that I don't know. Everything is gauged on sick reports because a fellow told me in Greenslopes he said this fellow died and they wanted to get his wife a pension but he never had

24:00 a sick report all the time he was in so he said the army couldn't have done it so they wouldn't give her a pension. The difference with me the army wanted to move me to Brisbane so they could look after me better the Repat [Repatriation] Department. I said how the hell am I going to go down there that is up hill that Brisbane up and down I am flat out walking along a level ground so I didn't go down.

24:30 **Once you got out of the army what did they give you to prepare you for your life after the war?**

They give you three months leave, that is all but if I wanted to, a lot of soldiers they wouldn't sign anything to get trained and I wanted to get into the Stock Exchange but you couldn't get in the Stock Exchange so the only thing I could do was get in as a carpenter. I went training as a carpenter

25:00 I helped the uncle to build a house at Mount Spec before I come into the army the second time. So I knew a bit about it. I have still got the papers in there.

How did being a carpenter, how did that go on your back?

When you have a disc lesion you can still do a lot of work and you get a lot of pain. I used to get a muscle spasm, I would be on the roof I'd jerk, and go

25:30 to fall off get a muscle spasm and if you work down low you get trouble down there you would swear you had haemorrhoids but you have never had haemorrhoids at all and that comes from the spotting

down low and I have two down there these lesions I have got from to work down low and that was the way it was you had to take what you could get. Then

- 26:00 I couldn't continue with the job. I done training there to get higher up in the game and builder's certificate and that but the doctor said you have got to get out of it, none of it is good to you.

Besides your sore back what other problems did you have at the end of the war?

Virtually

- 26:30 none really only the spine. I had been stood on my head and I had been x-rayed and everything they said incurable and inoperable. Before I saw those doctors I went to one doctor and he said I could be telling him lies and I went to Katie Hopkins, she was the physio and you know what she said to me without any x-rays or anything she said to me your chassis is buggered.
- 27:00 She said your chassis is buggered that is without all these fellows doing all these things and giving me all those x-rays she knew straight away she said your chassis is buggered.

What could you do could you do anything to help?

No because well I have been doing special relaxation sitting here and even dinner time and then last night but you have got to really live a life of compromise. As the doctor

- 27:30 said when you leave here you lift no more than a hat and you have got to live a life of compromise. But as I say your income goes that low that you turn around and don't get adequately compensated, I don't think you do anyway. I think I had one advocate with me all the time but I went down myself and the fellow said you haven't got too much to go on but
- 28:00 he said I will tell you something if you don't get an increase in pension you have won your case because they accepted into your evidence what you have said. They said you have no advocate no I said I am here to tell the truth and the truth requires no advocate. I will tell the truth and I said when I go out to the trots or the dogs and I am sitting on
- 28:30 the curly belts and people get walking up and down the seat it hurts my back. One of the curly belts they are seats that you sit on to have a look at things. I got that in and in the end I really had no trouble in really getting a pension but I was the only one without an advocate you see.
- 29:00 The specialist would my reflex action, he would test that he would get his hammer right up there and bring it down and my leg would just go like that, never said anything. I got with Dawny and he told me he used to test the strength in my arms and he said you have got to get into the water.
- 29:30 I said how am I going to get into the water I got TPI you know and he said get into the water and I said how am I going to do that and I fished around and the only place I could get into the water was out at the Rehabilitation Centre. Anyhow they said right oh we will take you on but if we get you right you will have to go back to work. I said if you get me right that will suit me down to the ground, but they couldn't get me right.
- 30:00 Firstly the physio who tested me she said we are not going to get you right. Fellows were going there it was a big place and you could go there and get assessed and if you got a pension they couldn't take it off you, they couldn't fix me TPI. They told me not to drive a motor vehicle, I would kill myself.

By the time you got out of the army how did you feel towards the army?

- 30:30 I had a gut full of it. I wasn't like Bob Exelby he told me the right thing. I had been down to Warrengowen the fellows were still in the army you see, but he said you don't want to get out you want to stay in you have done your back in here. I said, "I have had a gut full!"

Where what was your opinion of the Repat help that you had when you got out?

Repat help is a funny thing unless you know the

- 31:00 Repat Act you can't get much at all. You know who's got the Repat Act, the Vietnam Veterans they have the Repat Act. A fellow came out to me and he said, "You've got to have the maximum case." I put into Centrelink and your wife should be a carer she takes you to the pool if your wife is a carer she gets \$42 a week, and she doesn't get anything more than that but because she didn't say she was
- 31:30 cleaning my teeth and combing my hair, she can't get \$42 a week she got nothing, and yet those Vietnam Veterans their wives are going to work and that, they always say. I am not going crook on them I'm just telling you what's happened their wives are cleaning their teeth and that and they are getting the \$42. What the old TPI and the old
- 32:00 soldiers and the soldiers that never got sent overseas, they split them and they haven't been doing the job and these Vietnam fellows they do the job and I am in their lot now. If I wanted my wife and my son that died I wanted her to go out there and get counselling, and I wanted to daughter to go out there but they haven't been out.
- 32:30 but you can get counseling. How I got onto you fellows the Honorary Secretary here they wanted some

fellow to tell them about the Townsville war and I told him a few things before and he said to see you fellows and tell them.

Do you think you have had a harder time with Repat and everything because you served solely within Australia?

Well I

33:00 would think so because what I mean to say, you can go well the brother has got a TPI but straight away he is a lot smaller bloke and he is a smaller fellow and the doctors were right behind him and he had been in the army hospital with bronchitis and that and I had been in the army hospital with that other thing. When I went down to Greenslopes I got fitted with a brace a different one to there they had tubes on there and this doctor there

33:30 he was disabled too because he had a limpy leg with that fitted me that brace, and I had that brace. Unless you know the Repat Act or someone in the Repat you go better.

What were your thoughts on Anzac Day after the war?

I don't worry about Anzac Day. I seen the soldiers getting belted on the head and everything. I am not saying those fellows who

34:00 did that like those things that is OK. I used to get upset every Anzac Day so it paid me to stay away from the place but I'd get upset. My father in law he always went in Anzac Day. He told me it used to be the Australian Privates League of Australia until the officers took it over.

You have never marched?

I haven't been able to march for years.

34:30 **Have you joined the RSL?**

No I don't know whether to join or not, I could join it. The way I was treated they gave me a service pension the government. They couldn't gauge that anyone would be treated so wilfully as the way I was treated they couldn't get over it and I could join the RSL but they wouldn't let the brother in and the only reason he never had gone to New Guinea

35:00 he was the Pay Sergeant and he had only ever done the one job and he wanted to go there and they wouldn't let him go. The RSL wouldn't have him and that is where the RSL stinks. You could go in the RSL and you could get overseas and you could be a Pioneer, pick up the dung and everything and you are still a hero and that is the difference. They split the Army Corps to cut down the money.

35:30 **What are your thoughts on Anzac Day if you don't participate?**

I have got no thoughts because I know what happened at Gallipoli, I know the scam going over with Jap ships and I know that I have met soldiers in the 6th Div that got mauled in Europe and that the 9th Division got all the credit.

36:00 The 6th Division got no credit at all because I know blokes in it and they told me. They publicise what they want to publicise and you have got to accept that and it is no good to me, I can't march and the it is only since I got these chairs I can sit down a bit what is the good of me going. I can't drink.

36:30 **What is something you might like to say to kids that are going to see this in 5 or 10 years' time?**

I don't think they are going to see it, I don't think I'd like to say anything to them, because you have got to go into history you see you don't get the truth, as the 6th Div said the 9th Div got all the credit and they got none all depends on who they want to promote. They talk about terrorism here now

37:00 and against the body bomber there is no defence and they are talking about all this money, 600 million it is all the taxpayers money. They can't tell me that they didn't know that our people could get blown up in Bali I won't have it. You have got to sit down and think ahead and think of things you can overcome a lot of troubles.

37:30 You will know if they want to bomb you that is the place to go.

You have got the chance now to say anything you like to anybody?

I don't like to say anything really. I don't know, but you might know what I should say but I don't know, you've heard it all what should I say? My son he was a sergeant in the cadets

38:00 the fella had a stroke he got a disc lesion and he was a sergeant in the School Cadets and I said to him they wanted to go on manoeuvres, and I paid for him to go down by aeroplane I wanted him to show him what the army was like on manoeuvres and it was a damn sight tougher than he ever thought it would be so that killed his ardour down for going in the

38:30 army but he has disk lesion he couldn't get in. That boy of mine wanted to go to Vietnam I never told

him anything about it, and I said to him you had better tell them that you have only got one eye you've only got 5% in the other eye and they wouldn't have him. That is what you have got to do.

Have you talked of your experiences to your wife and kids before?

39:00 No my wife has never known that I'd been down doing bombs and that like on that ship, no one has ever known. I have never told them until the Secrecy Act was lifted, because the Yanks wanted it and that was it.

Have you kept in contact with other blokes from the Works Company?

No they are all down south. There is a bloke up here but I can't get to see him, he's crippled but he is walking around.

39:30 When you are out working and that and you get with different fellows and do different jobs, you can't build up much because the bloke Barry he was a good bloke Barry Malone, but he's died, and then the brother he's crook, but I haven't seen him but there is some dispute about a house and that. The wife goes over and sees him

40:00 but no you don't see many to get on because you are out working all the time, you have got something to do and when you are out working all the time and how do you get friendly with them. Oh you know, like Lottie Yeo and Billy Alden, he was quite a decent bloke up the top here, they were decent blokes

40:30 you couldn't get a better bloke than him and they are gone you see, you never see them any more. If you went to the RSL and had a few beers and told a few lies... Like I'd been in Greenslopes and the fellow said, "I thought I know this fellow, I thought, I think I know him," but the way he was talking...

41:00 So I thought, "I will sprag him," and I said, "What are you doing?" And he shot around and he said, "I had a very hard time after I left you fellas, he said." I didn't remember him leaving us fellows. You can tell all the lies in the world when you go down to those hospitals that is what a lot of them do.

Righto.

INTERVIEW ENDS