

Australians at War Film Archive

William Kelly (Bill) - Transcript of interview

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<http://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/1716>

Tape 1

00:34 **So Mr Kelly if you could give me a summary of your life please?**

Basically starting, born in 1926 in Sydney. I did have some previous association I suppose you could say with World War I in relation to my grandparents

01:00 which could probably be covered later on. Going back anyway, I was born in Sydney in Campsie I believe. We moved from a number of houses. My parents migrated from England in 1924 in conjunction with his brother, my father went through and worked with Grace Brothers we then

01:30 opened a milk bar next to the Campsie theatre. She, my mother, served in the shop during the day, my uncle's wife looked after the children, he had four children and I was the only child on my family's side. They went from there into,

02:00 opened a furniture shop, 'Kelly's Furniture'. About that stage, it would be 1932-33 and from there on we enlarged the business I suppose and it was not easy being the Depression days but it was a success. I attended Bondi

02:30 school initially and then to Randwick Boys High and the last five years at Scots College and joined the navy in 1943. I saw action through the Pacific predominantly I would say in the Philippines action where the HMAS

03:00 Australia was badly hit with kamikazes and quite a number of crew killed and wounded, including myself. After the Shropshire, after the Australia I joined the, I was posted to the HMAS Shropshire and finally HMAS Hawkesbury before discharge.

03:30 It has been, well after that, I spent six months I'd say in Queensland just working as a jackaroo to just clear my head and work out what was left of the world so to speak. It was an awkward time, 21-22 in that age bracket. I came down to Sydney and did

04:00 a few odd jobs and what have you and went to the States and I did a commerce course over there and I was lucky to be attached eventually to the Litton Group of company and had a fair bit of contact with the development thermal infrared imaging for satellite purposes and other purposes which I can go into

04:30 later and I was the Australian agent for the 122 Litton companies who were very closely tied in with NASA [National Aeronautics and Space Administration] providing much of the equipment for the Apollo 11 landing. I wasn't part of that unfortunately as much as I would have liked to but we did play a major part of supplying equipment and the guidance systems. We did a lot of exploration in Australia for

05:00 Litton Oil, that's why I'm here talking to you now.

Perfect, wonderful, thank you.

I'm a little bit nervous I think.

That's okay, we get nervous too, we do. I just want to go back and ask you what your family's experience was with World War I?

World War I, my grandfathers on both sides

05:30 of my mothers and fathers, mother and father were captains of merchant navy ships. 1915 both of them unfortunately they were torpedoed and lost their life. This placed a burden on my father's mother she had four boys and three girls at that stage of her life. My father was 14

06:00 and his elder brother was George, er was Tom, who was just on 16 and there was one elder brother who was also in the Merchant Navy, George, working as a cabin boy or steward or something of that nature. How, they didn't have social services and all those sorts of things of that nature that are given away so

- 06:30 freely here now, but how could a mother of seven child support them, or support six of them with the income only being that of a 17 or 18-year-old child. So Tom and my father, the next two eldest boys they joined the Merchant Navy as
- 07:00 cabin boys and decided that they would put into house going to keep the children fed what have you. During the course of the war, Tom and, I'll refer to my father as Bill, it's the only quickest way to cover the points were approached by MI5 [British security and counterintelligence service], MI6 [British secret intelligence and espionage service], whatever the
- 07:30 devil the secret service was. They were two innocent young boys apparently carrying duffle bags from ships, not of grandeur height or anything just normal children apparently of 14, 15 years of age and they were approached to act as couriers for the various embassies throughout the war. And that was their contribution and that
- 08:00 continued for a number of years after the war because of the innocence of the act of communicating in this respect. It eliminated the use of radio which was being tapped and that sort of thing. And that's the story as I have it and they were associated, my father was associated with John Chirac who was in the French underground and they became very close friends.

Mr Kelly can I just ask you, you mention that they were

- 08:30 **couriers. What were they carrying?**

Carrying envelopes from one embassy from the to the war department to various embassies. It was a form of communication that went quite undetected I believe. There were plenty of spies around as far as I know in those days and that's the story as I have it from both my uncles and Mr Chirac, John Chirac he was very astounded when he found out who they

- 09:00 were.

Did your father or your uncle talk much about World War I or what life was like in England then?

Not to any major degree, except the problem of having such large families and trying to keep food on the table and generally in that respect but nothing of a major nature. They dealt with

- 09:30 I think it was Spain and France and America and I don't know whether during the war they came out here to Australia. They were on the Cunard [Line] and Blue Funnel Line and that's about the limit of my knowledge of their participation in the World War I series.

What are your memories of your father, what sort of a man was he?

- 10:00 Very hard, there was no love lost between us. At the age of six he destroyed any affection I had, when as I explained earlier I was the odd man out in the house, in as much as I was reared by my aunty rather than my mother who was busy making money and my

- 10:30 father, I was always the one to blame, the easy one because the others would gang up on me, the other children would gang up on me and he came home from the shop I'd say about 1933-34, had a hard day, they used to open on Friday nights until about 9.00 and the kids would sit up and wait for them and if we were lucky we got a slice of the apple so to speak

- 11:00 and my aunty complained about something that had gone wrong and before I could even defend myself he kicked me and told me to get to bed and I never forgave him from that day to this, never will. I was treated worse than the dog in my opinion and being innocent I will not tolerate being blamed for something I won't do without defending myself. Anyway apart from that I guess we were okay, we spoke

- 11:30 but there was no love lost I'm not endeared to him and likewise.

What are your earliest memories of what Campsie was like as a boy?

I can remember my mother bringing up a chocolate at night from the shop each night and sneaking it into bed for me. I suppose I would have been 3 or 4. She told me not to say anything because of all the

- 12:00 rest of the family, there were four children in Tom's family, so it was just our little secret. I can remember we had a toy car, one of those Cyclops toy cars, red cars and Reg, who I grew up with him more as a brother than a cousin, he was two months my senior in age but I was the larger of the two boys

- 12:30 we decided what we paint it black so we did that and ourselves and every other darn thing in that was in the backyard. Somebody, my parents or his father or my father left the black paint there open with paintbrush, so it must have been left there just for that purpose. I can remember that bath from that day to this it was in pure kerosene or turps [turpentine], turps I believe it would have been turps of course.

- 13:00 Father came in smoking, he was rushed out of that room faster than anything. There about the only memories I have, I have quite a few as I got older in Campsie but we can go into those if you wish at

this point or at a later date.

What did your house look like in Campsie?

We lived on top of the shop. There were premises above the shop, in fact the shop I believe the shop is still there next to the

13:30 Campsie theatre in Bingham Street from memory. It was a mass of bedrooms and that was about it. I think we had a kitchen upstairs, we quite often had breakfast down in the shop before it was opened which was about 7.30 in the morning and off to school or whatever age was depending

14:00 or what we had to do.

Had your mother emigrated from England as well?

Yes, yes, Louisa Maude Caine was her name and she came from Liverpool she lived about two blocks away from where my father was and it was the commonality of them being ships captains that I think brought their childhoods together to some degree because the

14:30 two grandparents I believe were quite close they were both Irish and come across from Dublin I think it was.

Were there many other migrants in that area while you were a boy?

Not that I know of, I can't say that I was aware of any difference between an Australian and a migrant child at that stage. I don't know whether we talked funny, well we didn't because I was born in Australia

15:00 and so my parents weren't broad in their English accents by any means.

What did they sell in the shop?

Well a common milk bar next to a cinema, they had milkshakes naturally and soft drinks, chocolate, candy. After the show was over they had the coffee, toast, crumpets,

15:30 tea and those various things. It was a very long day my father used to, well the family all used to rise at five thirty or six. They'd bring in the milk and everything that had been delivered and bread which was delivered in those days before daylight. They'd cart that in have a quick breakfast, shower and shave and off to work by 7.30 so it was fairly hectic. They poured the milk into the freezers and what have you and

16:00 my mother she tidied the shop or did anything that had to be done to it and my auntie took the children upstairs and prepared them for school and what ever the devil had to be done in that respect. And that was the life as I remember it as a child and they would arrive home at about six, seven o'clock at night, Tom and Bill

16:30 they would have a sort of rushed meal and go and prepare for pre-cinema serving and then matinee serving, get the lollies boys all lined up and that sort of thing to go into the cinema and then it was serving suppers or what have you.

17:00 It was round about 11.30 before they cleared the shop and closed it and then it was another half hour and they were into bed by twelve thirty and up again at half past five six o'clock. It was a hard life.

Did the business do well for them?

Extremely well, it virtually, they worked as I said in Grace Bros [Brothers] as packers and storeman

17:30 but they had the initiative to get on the floor as much as they could they'd get to work early, they'd do the packing they had to. They were dressed in suits, they put on they suits, they're waistcoats and that and they could get on the floor and sell and if they sold they made commission. They did the same at lunchtime so they had a fair income in that respect. The shop was virtually doubled according to my parents

18:00 in income because of the longer hours and the amount of service. I suppose it would have been 1933 to 34 they sold it. They decided they'd made all the money that was necessary to build a nice house but they still lived together and built a very nice house in Hurlstone

18:30 Park. They soon realised that they're lives had just began rather than retiring or anything, so they expanded their knowledge of furniture by going out into the retail side of the furniture trade with Tom Booth of Booths on the corner of Goulburn and Elizabeth Street. They spent about

19:00 twelve months their learning the trade more thoroughly before they sold the house and eventually opened a Kelly's Furniture at 309-311 Pitt Street. We all worked hard for a month or so cleaning the place out, it was filthy. It can still remember it and see it. It was two storeys high and it had a mezzanine floor and it just seemed to be

19:30 full of straw and paper and packing and we seemed to do nothing but pick this darned rubbish up and cart it out to trucks for days and days on end. But anyway it expanded itself, Tom's wife Nell had a

brother called Ronnie Myers in Brisbane. He was in the timber trade and

- 20:00 so they worked out a partnership, an arrangement whatever, he supplied timber, they brought a factory in Newcastle, they brought another one in Brisbane. They built, I think it was a dining room, lounge room and kitchen where they manufactured that and they formed a company to import the fabrics and
- 20:30 carpets and what have you from overseas and so they had a very good idea of progressing financially and expanding business and what have you. I went to the war 1946, came back of course, and there was Tom, Reg, Nancy's husband, Dorothy's husband and
- 21:00 myself and the young one that had come along, Laurie, so then and then there was all the Ronnie Myers family and all the rest of it. It became too much of a family affair. Everybody wanted to get in on the action. Cause all chiefs and no Indians so the elder ones, the ones that were married stayed there and I went about my way and I went to Bedford's
- 21:30 in actual fact and learnt the trade there and in 1946 they sold the business to a finance company.

How did the Depression affect the prosperity of the family business?

They seemed to relish the opportunity of making money at the expense of hard work and creating situations.

- 22:00 It didn't affect the business, the business opened actually in 1932 to 34 I'm not sure actually but it was in the Depression years. Perhaps it was in the rise out of the Depression years and there were more migrants coming out building on the harbour bridge and all that and people were beginning to set up home, renting and whatever they could and the furniture and we could do a whole home for ninety pound or some darn thing like that and they started,
- 22:30 this was the reason they left Grace Bros. They saw Mr Grace and in conjunction with what was going on in the States and back in England and people were doing time payment. They suggested that Grace Bros would double they're income if they adapted this time payment scheme. The point was here were these two lowly packers recently arriving in the country for the last
- 23:00 twelve months telling a man who'd been successful in business for the last twenty or thirty years telling him this is what he should do with his company. I'm afraid he laughed at them and so that's why they terminated and went to this Tom Booth who started this time payment in Sydney, with his brother Jack, who was in George Street, Jack of J A Booth and Company. They were very
- 23:30 lateral thinking, is the terminology these days and I've learnt a lot as far as they were concerned in that respect to things. Although the biggest start, the best father I've ever had in that respect was the headmaster at Scots College, old A K Anderson, because I had got sent to Scots because of all the troubles I was supposedly creating at home my father managed to get me in there
- 24:00 and get me out of the way. AKA sort of had an arrangement, I don't know what it was, he took me under his wing, he told me to look at various things in various ways in life and it worked very well as far as I was concerned.

How old were you when you moved to Hurlstone Park? Roughly?

- 24:30 Seven I say. I'm just thinking back to the schools I was in first class so I would have been seven, six or seven.

When did you first become aware or what can you remember about what was happening in Europe in the mid-thirties?

I don't think I ever became aware of it at that stage, not

- 25:00 until the advent of Hitler wasn't of any concern to a child of eight or nine. When the war, when they started invading Poland, Czechoslovakia and those places it became apparent that there was a possibility of war but that was way over the other side of the world so that's not going to affect us. At the time we were living
- 25:30 at Tamarama and most of our spare time was spent surfing. We were members, or I was and Reg were with the little nippers at Tamarama Surf Club and we got up to the junior surf life saving side of it but when we were old enough we went off to the war so we never got to continue with it.
- 26:00 No I don't say that we were, I think our major concern was in 1941 when Pearl Harbour was bombed on 17 December.

You mentioned that your family had the shop next to the picture theatre, did you spend time in picture theatres as a child?

On Saturday, here's your sixpence and three halfpennies to spend,

- 26:30 was off to the go to the show and that kept us out of the way in the shop and you'd even go and buy your own sweets from the lolly boy at interval who came out of your shop and you gave him a penny, halfpenny for a curl and whatever else, you would get a clinker I think they were called. But no we went

on the Saturday afternoons that was it.

And what sort of pictures would you?

Tom Mix and the cowboys and the serials,

27:00 predominantly that. That's all I think they had to show those days, were cowboys and American, they had a few odd dance ones but they didn't go down to well with the children it was all Tom Mix and Gene Autry and the those type of people.

What did the Campsie theatre look like? Was it an elaborate theatre?

It was large.

27:30 It'd I'd say it would have seated about 200 people downstairs and another 50 or so people upstairs quoting the standard stalls, lounge and all this sort of things. A couple of aisles, centre section, two aisles, one aisle either side and then another section over the wall. It had enormous red curtains and all this type of thing which were very impressive as far

28:00 as children were concerned and they started to open and the wide screen was there and the movies came on and all the cheers and so on, it was quite an exciting Saturdays as far as we were concerned.

What did the lolly boys look like?

Always very tall, they were up there, I suppose. They were in their fifteen, sixteen years and we being about eight, they were about twice the height of us and we could

28:30 just look over the edge of the lolly tray which they kept well away from all the cluttering hands trying to grab the various things and not pay any money. They were just normal boys but fairly hard working in my opinion.

Did they wear a particular uniform?

They generally had a white coat on and some used to wear a white hat and just the tray around the next, a bit like the cigarette

29:00 girls do in the different night clubs. You know, different vintage.

What contact did your father and your uncle have with the family back in England?

They went back once after they'd established themselves in the furniture trade. I presume, well my mother I know corresponded frequently

29:30 with her mother, I do believe that they were sending money back to assist for the children that remained there and hadn't done so well or that the opportunities didn't land or last to any degree or didn't exist I should say in England as they did in Australia. It was the land of milk and honey I've always said that, it

30:00 still would be if, anyway lets not get onto current politics.

Can you tell me about the first school you went to?

First one I remember would be Hurlstone Park. So that would put me round about five, I'd stay at Hurlstone Park

30:30 it was. I think I went to one before at Five Dock but I don't recall that. Yes, Hurlstone Park in actual fact and it was kindergarten. Yes I remember the first couple of days and the school, etc.

Did you enjoy school?

31:00 Yes, I, I wasn't a fool. I enjoyed maths, I enjoyed English and most subjects were of interest. I think I had a yearning for knowledge to some degree. It wasn't until we moved to Tamarama and

31:30 then I went to Bondi, Wellington Street school. I did all right in that and we went up to sixth class in the primary and I remember I was ten or eleven and I passed the primary exam for entry into high school

32:00 to go to Sydney High School. I got on very well with Mr Leeds who was the teacher and I had been, I can't think of his name now the headmaster, he lived, as I said we lived at Tamarama at that stage and we used to walk through Tamarama glen and invariably there were people that children next door, there was about eight of us

32:30 and we'd walk up with the headmaster and he was the teacher, McKenzie was his name, and he was headmaster in fifth class and he used to teach and he was very good and I think we learnt more from him going up and down the streets with him about questions we had to ask in school than anything.

What was the reason for the family moving to Tamarama?

Well they built

33:00 their, they were building their house in Dover Heights and they built in Hardy Street, there's two large red brick homes with very magnificent white limestone underneath opposite the Dover Heights school, which annoyed the hell out of them because it cut out most of their view of the harbour. They were the first people to build in the sand hills of Dover Heights, people used to laugh at them. Now you can't

33:30 buy a house for under two million over there, anyway.

Have you had much experience in the ocean swimming or anything?

Well I've swum from Tamarama to Bondi and back, not aware of the shark dangers and what have you and I used to go to the

34:00 necessary races in the life saving. I've learnt a lot about the ocean currents and what have you from observation and the wise words of many old life savers who can read the water like the back of a hand. While I was at Scots I was lucky enough to become acquainted with a family who had the yacht Klufar, which was Smiths Butcheries of Hornsby.

34:30 They purchased the yacht and held the Tasman Sea record at sixty-footer and we used to go sailing occasionally in that and in the end we were sixteen and seventeen year olds and so we used to take it out ourselves and father was quite good. We got caught out in a southerly buster one day and took six feet of water bringing it down from

35:00 Broken Bay to Sydney but we knew how to handle it and got in and pumped it all out, everything was okay. The only problem was the motor wouldn't start so we had to sail up the harbour to where his father was waiting but that was no problem. But I had a fair bit of experience I'd say in the ways of the most beautiful gift of nature in the world and that's the oceans.

35:30 **Could you swim before you moved to Tamarama?**

No. That's who we saw in the pictures in fact that you asked me earlier at Campsie, Tarzan of the Apes, he taught me to swim. Everything I've learnt I think, or most things I've learnt physically, I've learnt by observation. So when we moved to Tamarama, I used

36:00 to go Bondi baths with the school and we had our classes and all this dogpaddle and that did, I seemed to sink to the bottom and I remembered what Tarzan used to do and I started to learn, started to swim breaststroke under water and I could swim across Bondi baths in the deep baths before all the other children could swim on the top of the water and I used to go out of sheer annoyance to the teacher I think,

36:30 dive in and swim over and come up the other side. If I ran out of breath well it was only a matter of putting my feet on the bottom and coming up and punching the water and taking a breath and going down again and so that's how I learnt to swim initially and of course I corrected a lot of these faults later. Before I could swim on top of the water I could swim the length of Bondi baths under water in that method I just described to you, thanks Tarzan.

What did Bondi look like

37:00 **then?**

A massive expanse of sand, quite a number of people really. It was, surfboards were down the south Bondi section, the middle section of course and north Bondi was solely used for swimming and there were surfer planes there but surfboards were banned but there was the north Bondi Club and the big Bondi pavilion.

37:30 Things people won't remember were the two, what do you call them, losing words, they were the concrete piers that run out onto Bondi beach, there were two of them, one either side of the pavilion and they went right out to the waters edge.

38:00 You'd walk along the promenade and you could walk around theses piers and much the same as some of these setups you'd see around the world anyway but then during World War II I think they were taken down I think for safety reasons I guess to stop invasion, assisting on possible substantial invasion and all the barb wire was put up along there. No it was a very nice place.

38:30 Bondi baths was the same as it probably is now, I haven't been there for many years. The buildings have changed somewhat and but it was very popular and the water elements were a very cheap form of entertainment, there were no parking meters or anything like that and so people came out there in the busloads from the cities and everywhere it was most popular.

Can you tell me about what you

39:00 **did with the nippers?**

Well we were taught virtually the methods of lifesaving as far as, well virtually how to swim, how to interpret the water currents, not to go in there and not to do that and the sandbars and read all this.

39:30 We were taught St [Saint] Johns method of cardiovascular resuscitation which was the back of the lungs and pushing it up and later on it was, I don't remember now whether that was, no it was the breathing,

chest CPR [cardiopulmonary resuscitation], I learnt

- 40:00 later in life but it was virtually what you see in the carnivals that they have now, they have the old fashion style and how to disown, or you go to save somebody the first thing they do is grab you and try to do is pull you down with them and how to turn them around underwater and get them back up to the surface and hope you don't drown with them. It all seemed
- 40:30 very exciting, we did it with children of course we couldn't do it with adults because we were only children but we practised on each other and as we got older we became more proficient and in case of emergency we would have been called upon but the only emergency I can remember was the sandbanks at Bondi collapsing and three or four hundred people being swept out to
- 41:00 sea. By the time we got around there they seemed to have everything under control so we weren't really used. The only other emergency that I can say that I couldn't really participate on but admired someone else, was Coogee on day we used to go around there and swim occasionally, it was late afternoon and the life savers generally go out and there was good surf rolling in down the north side of Coogee but unfortunately the
- 41:30 fishermen used to come in and degut their fish and this poor cow, that's all I can call him, lost the wave and he was the only one out there and the next thing there was this ungodly scream, and I was on the promenade at Coogee and a shark took him and a couple of his mates dived into the water, there was blood from where this was to shoreline and they swam in and pulled him away from the shark and

Tape 2

- 00:34 **Mr Kelly I want to talk to you about your time at Scots College. How old were you when you went to school there?**

Ah ... 14. We lived at Dover Heights as I explained earlier. Scots College was across the other side of Rose Bay.

- 01:00 You could see it from the front of our house. So because of the associated problems with my cousins and myself - we were living adjacent to each other. As I explained earlier I was sort of sent there rather than went there. I was a boarder and so that kept me away from the problems and troubles of the home.
- 01:30 My mother and father incidentally - I don't know if I mentioned were still working together in the shop and I was still the odd boy out in the house next door. So it was about as I say 14.

What was life like as a boarder at Scots College?

Wonderful. Wonderful. The funny part of it - it was a

- 02:00 dream that I thought I'd never realise. In as much as I used to read I think it was the Bumper Triumph magazine and there was stories of these school boys and they were boarders and the fun of soccer and what have you - it was all in this type of thing. I thought, gee it'd be wonderful to be in that and the next thing I knew instead of being punished I was being rewarded I guess
- 02:30 for something well I didn't do it. But that was always my excuse. So I quite enjoyed it. First couple of nights were rather typical I guess of boys coming back from the previous years and there were dorms raids and this sort of thing so I think it was either night one or night two I received my
- 03:00 first case of six to the hands from the headmaster. Poor old guy that he was. You had to put your hand to touch the wall so he'd make sure he didn't break your wrist with the darn thing. And he'd hit you on the tip of the fingers. But nobody'd admit up to who started the dorm raid so everybody got six so that was my welcome to the
- 03:30 dorm. To do boarding. The only other time I got six was a couple of years later I guess or a year later talking to one of the housemaids while asking if - I was late back from football practise and afternoon had all gone and the bread and jam we used to get had all gone and I asked was there any chance of getting some. And the headmaster happened to be sitting on the verandah, saw me speak to the maid so
- 04:00 irrespective of what it was about here's six - you do not speak to the maids. So that was the only punishment I received at Scots. Not unfairly I suppose but it certainly indoctrinated me to the rules.
- 04:30 **You mentioned the dorm raids - what was that about?**
- Oh only you had boys running around after the lights after into different dormitories. They'd just grab the side of your bed and turn it over and tipped the -
- 05:00 whoever was in the bed on the floor and the mattress and the bed was upside down on top of you. It was extremely difficult to get out of. Unfortunately the dorm - well fortunately and unfortunately the dorm that was - I was allotted to was immediately above the headmaster's office which was downstairs. And he was downstairs studying, that night. And when I say fortunately because by looking out the window

at

05:30 night I could see my home over on the other side of the hill. I had a torch – my mother gave it to me. She said, “You can say goodnight, you can wink the torch at me.” And so that went on a bit until we sort of settled down. I was quite close to my mother.

How did the war affect boarding life?

Well during

06:00 - I think it was '42 there was the black out or brown out periods that were inflicted on – or that were necessary I should say, not inflicted on the cities on the coast. And so the ARP – Air Raid Precautions were all adopted within the schools. At this point I had

06:30 – I was house captain of Apsidal and a prefect in the college and AKA [a mate] and I were getting on quite well. And so he offered me a position or asked if I'd undertake the position of Chief Air Raid Warden or Air Raid Precautions Person and organise that side of it. So this was a matter – well the

07:00 committee or whatever it was, was building air raid shelters under the various houses that were there. There were about four houses containing I would say around about 250 boys, not in each house but over the lot of the houses. So they were having – where

07:30 the structure permitted air raid shelters built under the house or a case of putting them adjacent to the house or somewhere nearby. Or it was a case of they just had to get in the middle of the field and hope like hell that none of the buildings fell on them. So it was a matter of organising a drill in that respect to see what the boys

08:00 would do in the case of an air raid. We were trained on incendiary bombs, how to dispose of them with sand instead of water and certain amount of – there were house seniors involved and I had all the house seniors work in conjunction with these lectures so that if there wasn't a warden or a

08:30 senior around – there wasn't a prefect or somebody around who could take responsibility these boys would step in because they were also being trained. And we had to see all the windows were blacked out and this type of thing. It was pretty well routine to what was going on elsewhere throughout the world as far as these were concerned. It was down to we'd look our ourselves and the

09:00 teachers were – well there were only the house masters on board, the rest were at home at their place worrying about their problems in that respect.

Did the boys have fathers who were away at war?

Oh yes quite a few of them. Many of them of course became quite disturbed when they lost their father and it was not an experience you'd care to witness. Nobody knew what to say. They

09:30 generally left the college and went back home. And if they were 16 or 17 – comfort their mother and to do something in that respect. Some of them came back some of them didn't. But it was – it wasn't an easy time as far as they were concerned.

What understanding did you have or what were you taught at school

10:00 **about what was happening in the war?**

What was happening in the war? I don't think we discussed it per se as far as classes were concerned. Sydney hadn't been affected to any degree. We were kept abreast – we had movies on Saturday nights up in the hall.

10:30 We were kept abreast of the current situation by the newsreels. A lot of us had our own – not transistor radios but the little whisker radios I've forgotten what they call the darn things. And we'd listen into the news and that type of thing. But generally, well there were the restrictions as far as food was concerned and clothing and

11:00 everything was on coupons. But being children, and even at that age we weren't concerned with it cause it was just one of those accepted things that you were trained to accept. You were told to do something you did it. And if you couldn't have it because it wasn't there well that was all there was to it. There wasn't any of the 'me' world attitude that seems to be existing in the current day.

11:30 It was not really brought to earth until the Japanese shelling of Rose Bay Flying Base. That was their ultimate aim and I think it was the night before that there was a bit of a question as to what the plane was that was flying over Sydney and it

12:00 was a Japanese scout plane that had flown over Sydney and taken all the necessary readings that were handed back to the submarine. It didn't do a very good job with its shelling. There were – at this stage I was on the tower at Apsidal House

12:30 which stood about 90 feet above the height of the school. And I could see Bondi Bay – Bondi Beach sort of thing and out to the horizon, see all over Rose Bay. And around virtually as far as Rushcutters Bay. So

they missed the flying boat

- 13:00 place. Hit a few – oh flats I suppose you'd call them. One flat was destroyed out of about 6 or 8 shells that were fired. Where they went – into the harbour or what, I really couldn't say because it wasn't till they started firing that I got up to the
- 13:30 station. But I saw one explosion which was the one down about 200 yards, 300 yards before the flying boats come in shell firing over Bondi Beach sort of thing. You could hear them but that was – they were the safe ones. If you don't hear them that's the ones you worry about. But then you don't have to worry because you're dead.

What did you actually see from Apsidal House?

- 14:00 A lot of silly people turning lights on to find out what was going on. Hadn't blacked out their windows. I couldn't see, I didn't see any flashes or anything pertaining to the submarine firing the shells. I did hear 3 or 4 shells. I did see the one shell exploding near this flat at Rose Bay.
- 14:30 I remember telling the headmaster who had been down at the college doing some work, coming up the side of the dining room shining his torch to turn the bloody light on, that there was an air raid and swore at him. For which I did get reprimanded. But anyway
- 15:00 I can't say I really saw anything of any consequence. All I had was a darn view on a beautiful night of what's going to happen next. It was all an adventure as far as we were concerned. The children, well they were children and so was I but the school boys all got down in the shelter and it was a great, time and
- 15:30 everyone was sort of excited and all the rest of it as you can imagine it would be. Nobody knew what was going on and the fear just didn't exist because they didn't know what fear was at that stage. I think, I wrapped up the night by seeing everybody in and then going down and waiting in the kitchen and having some sausage sandwiches and milk or some darn things with some other wardens. And it was quite a hectic night all around.
- 16:00 But that's about as much as I remember of it until we had the submarines coming into the harbour. Much the same there at – I saw explosions and the naval ships running up and down Rose Bay over near – Milsons Point? Whatever the name of the point is opposite, I can't recall.
- 16:30 It was quite noisy. There seemed to be more panic over this lot. The 3 midget [midget submarines] I think they were and the fourth one didn't get in. Submarines came into the harbour and it's well documented in many of the newspapers and what have you and it was, the
- 17:00 unknowing I think was the concern that day. There was an attack going on within our country. Was just the beginning of something larger and I think that existed in many people's minds. There wasn't the mad turning on of lights or anything like that. People seemed to have learnt something from the week's previously or whatever it was.
- 17:30 But there seemed to be a change that here it was on our doorstep. We were never ever told of course that it had already arrived up at Darwin or this was propaganda to save people panicking. But there was a panic in Sydney, in my opinion after this. The Dover Heights, I can recall when my father built – they arranged immediately
- 18:00 to have an air raid shelter built of almost as big as this room. But the majority of householders up there, because the shells and everything had gone over their heads and all this sort of thing, and they were looking down on the harbour so they would have seen all this to some degree. They seemed to panic and a lot of them went to Katoomba and what have you. And there was hundreds of vacant houses up there. I begged and begged my father to buy
- 18:30 4 or 5 of them and I'd pay them off or anything. In other words I was getting there lateral thinking I think. Because what difference would it make if the Japanese did invade us – his money would've done no good and the houses wouldn't have done any good. But if they didn't those people had to come back and buy those houses and you could have bought any home you liked in Dover Heights for about 200 pounds in those day. And a thousand pounds was a drop in the bucket to him.
- 19:00 It was costing more than that to keep me at school. But he wouldn't do it, I don't know. He would've been financially profitable on the deal but anyway, that's one of the relationships we didn't have as you can see.

You mentioned earlier the night that the shelling happened at Rose Bay you were the air raid warden that got the boys down into the shelter.

- 19:30 **Could you just describe what the sound was like at that time and what the procedure was to basically evacuate a school.**

I thought it went off very well in as much as we drilled and drilled. It was a novelty. And to race in – well the first part of it was the sirens went off. So the boys knew

- 20:00 it was not a drill. Yes the – I thought they were very well disciplined. In fact there was a lot of

excitement more than anything. This is for real it's not a drill, at last. This is what we've been training for, let's see how well we can do it. And they all raced down there and,

- 20:30 I really don't know what went on in there. From what I was told they brought their comic books down or their homework. It was just like, oh here's a chance for an extra hour of fun or whatever that we wanted to do. Many of them had cakes from home and so it was a bit of a party arrangement down there. I could hear some of them signing songs and all that. Where
- 21:00 that was coming from, whether it was Apsidal or the other houses or the houses of the boys on the lawn, the college grounds. But it seemed more of a picnic event which I will say didn't exist on the second occasion even in the college. It became a serious matter then and everyone seemed to respond fairly readily to the situation, adapt to it.
- 21:30 The older boys seemed to care for the younger boys and ... poor little kids were crying for their parents I guess. I don't know. I felt sorry for them but anyway - it was -
- 22:00 I think it was the awakening that we were at war, despite the fact that we'd seen it all on the movies but it was no different than a movie picture and that hadn't sunk in. But here were the enemy so to speak, in our backyard and kids that are away from their mothers and fathers, in a strange environment to where
- 22:30 they wanted to be. It was pretty, it was a little upsetting for them and it was good to see the older boys try to comfort them and look after them. But they were pretty good to them. I wouldn't mind having any of them behind me.

For you personally at this point, how did it change your thoughts

23:00 **on the war?**

I became aware of what was going on more than anything. Particular in relation to the atrocities the Japanese were committing. These just didn't seem real prior to the fact that we'd ever be - well when I say it didn't seem real, they didn't seem to be going to affect our

- 23:30 lives. Not that I wasn't offended by the abhorrent nature of the crimes that were committed that we knew of at that time. These weren't published, they were - these were stories that we got back from soldiers that came back from the war zones and were telling the stories of what was happening to our men and to women and anybody else that they could get their hands on.
- 24:00 I was concerned then about my mother and young sister who was 5 years my junior. And that was really the greatest concern I had during the war - that they'd be subjected to some of these stories and things that had happened to other women and men in the war zone. So if I could do anything to keep these people, Japanese, things whatever
- 24:30 away from our shores I was quite prepared to go and do it. I was in the air training corps and I had virtually got my ticket to fly Tiger Moths but unfortunately by the time I was 18 I doubt if I would've gone overseas because the draught ahead of me was already been
- 25:00 called up and they'd spent the last 6 months down in Victoria picking grapes and fruit and that sort of thing. They weren't taking any more air force people over into Canada and training them up. So that was what prompted me to join the navy and the fact that I was 17 I could join. And after all my family had been in the navy, Merchant Navy admittedly. And I did have
- 25:30 an affinity with the ocean so it didn't seem to - didn't seem to worry me. I thought I'd enjoy it more, have a chance of getting there and doing something.

I just want to talk to you and just digress about how fit you were. I understand you did quite a bit of sport?

Yes I was extremely fit. That was one thing I can thank my father for

- 26:00 I guess. No matter what sport - although let's start at the beginning I guess from swimming. There was always a way I could do anything that I wanted to do as far as sport was concerned as long as I observed somebody that was doing it correctly. And emulated them in one way, shape or form. So the swimming started me in that direction. I played soccer in the junior schools and always managed to get up to
- 26:30 first grade teams. At Scots I did well in rugby and was in the first 15, first 11 and that type of thing. I took on weightlifting I guess at the age of about 12. My father - what prompted that - I had been born with a crushed chest and I was sort of at this stage of life
- 27:00 half man, half woman with an apparent breast coming on the right side and so, that was the basis of doing all the swimming I could to spread the chest out and expand the chest which was successful. Then from that it went to weightlifting which I quite enjoyed and that built me up fairly well. By the time I was 12, 14 I was virtually fully grown
- 27:30 and weighed around about 12 and a half stone. So I was a big boy. But the beauty of it was there was no

- fat, I learnt jujitsu to – in the askigagi style which is a Korean style. And went to the second dan black belt which was as far as I could go in Australia. The peculiar part of it was that the Korean Japanese that was my sensei, and the only way I could go further was to go to Japan and study. And naturally that wasn't on the cards at that stage. Athletically I was extremely good without being egotistical
- 28:30 about it. And anything I wished to play. I was very good at tennis also. During the war, after being attacked with the kamikaze and we were on survival leave in Sydney I spent some time in Muswellbrook with the Gill family, which was one of our in-law relations. And they
- 29:00 were first grade tennis players and I'd only learnt to play at Dover Heights when I was there. There was a tennis court down the road and we used to play there on Saturdays occasionally. And anyway they thought I could do all right and I spent the 4 weeks up there and it terminated with John Bromidge being up at a – one of the tournaments there. And he was
- 29:30 putting on an exhibition. Unfortunately the contestant who was to play with him was unavailable for some reason or other and they said, "You can beat this fellow if you want to." You know Davis Cup guy. I don't know whether he was in the Davis Cup or not at that stage but he came onto the court in his beautiful creams and what have you. I had a pair of khaki shorts.
- 30:00 And a pair of white sandshoes. I didn't even have a shirt or anything. Anyway at Gill's where they had their own court and it was a clay court. I didn't even wear sandshoes it was as smooth as a billiard table. Anyway it so happened that I did play him and I bet him 6-4, 6-1. Which it astounded them. Whether he was being generous to a
- 30:30 poor silly sailor who thought he could play tennis or not I don't know but they did insist that I take on tennis.

I wanted to ask you about your Japanese Korean instructor?

Yes he'd been out in Australia for quite a number of years. Unfortunately he was taken into –

- 31:00 what was it? Whatever you call it. Once again a loss of words. After Pearl Harbour he was picked up and that was the end of that. That was '41. It would've been about mid '41 – the end of '41 before they took him away. But somebody said, "What was he doing out?" But he'd been in Australia for years and years.

Was he interned?

- 31:30 Yes. Yes prison camp, interned, whatever it was. But no after – I never saw him again after that I believe he was that disgusted he went back to Japan after the war.

Did you talk to him at this stage about the war?

I wasn't really aware of him being Japanese. I thought he was more Korean than Japanese.

- 32:00 It was – oh well the instructions were all in Japanese and it was all Japanese words he used for the various blows and what have you, which are all forgotten and gone by this. No it didn't. As I said it didn't really become
- 32:30 a nationality situation as far as, well I was concerned and I suppose many other, until they attacked Sydney. Or in many cases the people that had already gone off to war were naturally thinking different to what 16, 17 year old boys were.

What did you know of Japanese culture,

- 33:00 **as you were doing this particular sport?**

Very little as far as their actual culture was concerned. It was based on their defence and fighting methods and a code of ethics between warriors and all this, historical side of things. Just from a talking point of view but it was predominantly to create mind control and body control within your

- 33:30 being so that you could turn any discipline each to your advantage in case you were attacked by a warrior we'll say for lack of a better word, with some superior skill or supposedly superior skill to yours. It was – it goes up to the kill stage in actual fact. And I suppose I still have that ability
- 34:00 because it's something you never forget and you never know when you would use it. It's one of the first things I learnt during the war was to kill or be killed. In fact the – jujitsu or judo as they keep calling it nowadays is one of the honours I feel I owe
- 34:30 my life to from hand to hand combat which I won't go into in this particular interview relevant to some of my war experiences. But I – no I found it extremely useful and – I say so hypnosis even with it to meditation and these types of things that you can control your body to that degree.
- 35:00 I wish I was able to do it now. But the body's revolting and revolting.

In 1940 how did you get interested in jujitsu? Was it a popular...

It was at my father's recommendation and once again all this is part of another story which

35:30 underlies everything that I'm talking about today going right back to the initial point of my parents - my father and uncle being couriers as to my association with the American operations. I don't want to say anything more about it at this stage I'm sorry I can't. I'm still tied to secrecy in that respect. But

36:00 it was at my father's virtual instruction and recommendation that's all. Self defence. He himself was a little skilled in some of them I think - I think predominantly as he had learnt it and found it useful, he felt that I should learn it and perhaps even expand his knowledge because he didn't go - he just learnt it from various sailors and what have you -

36:30 during his - he visited Japan a few bits during the periods he was at sea. He came out of Tokyo I think the day before they had the Tokyo earthquake otherwise he reckons he wouldn't have lived through that. But anyway.

You mentioned you were sworn to secrecy on something, was that something to do with your father?

I think we'd

37:00 better leave that one entirely alone. That's something I'm not at liberty to discuss especially on camera. I meant to mention it to you before but I beg your pardon.

That's okay we can talk about it in the break. What I wanted to ask you about was I understand you did quite well in that sport...

Well they chose and still do choose young children

37:30 that show some prospect in sport and they encourage. There certainly wasn't the financial insistence or backing that operates now so at 12 - that'd be 1938 I was approached and asked - because at this stage, I told you earlier, I was virtually fully grown and quite a large boy. And they thought I had potential for Olympic

38:00 weight lifting and jujitsu or judo or whatever the hell they referring to it in those days. So you know it was quite - needless to say the 1940, 1944 Olympics didn't eventuate. And 1938 -

38:30 '36 was the last ones that Jessie Owens was in and Hitler got a little upset about it. That's the story there, it just didn't eventuate. I didn't pursue it any further of course because the war made things quite different, my outlook on life quite different.

You mentioned that you did training in Tiger Moths. Could you tell me where you went to go and do that training?

39:00 Dubbo I would say or Wagga. I can never ever tell whether it was Dubbo or Wagga that I went to and did the training. We did the Links trainer in Sydney and then in Dubbo. And we went - well Dubbo or Wagga - I don't remember. I remember it was a Sergeant Madsen or Marsden that was

39:30 our instructor down there but I don't remember the name of the town because we never got to it. We had 6 weeks virtually a 4 to 6 weeks it was over the Christmas holidays down there and we had already qualified in Lynx training so we were taken up and we were given the stick a couple of times. And I think had I

40:00 pursued the air training corps through - instead of going into the navy I would have had the complete ticket on flying Tiger Moths. I can still fly one even if I can't say it.

What was that like to be flying?

I'd dreamt about it many a time even without the Tiger Moth. They say

40:30 when you dream of flying that you are ambitious. I guess I have been ambitious but it was like a bird. It's I think the most exciting and bird like manner that I have undertaken was free fall.

41:00 I got to stop and think what I say because I'm wavering from one line to another. One lifetime to another. Yeah I was tied in with Litton, I think I mentioned that to you earlier on. I also was tied into McDonald Douglas and with the air industry a lot

41:30 - selling F15 Eagles to the government after the war, but that's later. But asking about flying. I think we went to about 15 to 20,000 feet and that was my first experience of free fall and it was a hell of a way down. But what a trip. You've no idea the experience. I've done a couple of parachute jumps and that was great but

42:00 to get...

Tape 3

00:31 **Mr Kelly can you tell me about the day you enlisted in the navy?**

Well it was a matter of filling in the necessary documents, trying to get parents' approval. Well my mother was very reluctant of course being sweet 17. And this was

01:00 September '42. October '42, anyway around about that period. My father on her behalf sort of encouraged her not to do it but as I said he'd been – seen the war at 14 and all the rest of it so how he could argue against me wanting to go and participate, etc.,

01:30 which I felt was my duty what have you. And I wasn't going to go and pick grapes for the rest of the war down in Melbourne or Victoria or South Australia or whatever. Anyway it was a matter of physical there was no problems as you can possibly imagine. And it was a case of wait. And I think

02:00 it was just early in the new year I got my draft to go to Flinders in March – to present myself at the Sydney enlistment office and they gave me further instructions. And it was around about 1st, 2nd March from memory. '43. '44. Oh

02:30 I get those dates mixed up.

Doesn't matter. Was there an interview process or a medical initially?

Oh yes all that. Just routine. Medical. Interview was basically – a questionnaire and if they had any questions arising out of that they would sort of query you. Some boys had health problems, they queried all those and all the rest of it. And some of them couldn't

03:00 swim and so on and so on. No it was pretty routine, and just go ahead and complete everything. The medical if you passed it you passed and you'll hear from us as soon as we want you.

So how did you travel down from Sydney to...?

Train. Great adventure to many. Hell of a trip as far as I was concerned.

03:30 I couldn't sleep, some of them could. Rest of them were making a lot of noise and oh, there was cake and every darn thing around. You know mummy's boys – take this with you, you won't get fed. And all mother's cooking. It was just an experience I can remember stopping at Albury. The Salvation Army, God bless them were there.

04:00 They had hot tea and biscuits and cakes and sandwiches and we had that and we arrived down in Melbourne the next morning. Nothing too eventful.

What had you packed to take with you?

Toothbrush. Just the obvious. I didn't take any food or anything like that.

04:30 I remember mother saying, "Oh you should take this, you should take that." But no I really – had the clothes I stood in and a change of underwear, that's basically it. And the toothbrush and shaver.

What was the mood like on that train?

Oh adventure. We're off on the world cruise, something of that nature.

05:00 It was different types. There weren't many that were – seemed sad about it, everyone seemed excited. It was a chance to – well see the world I guess from many viewpoints, mine included. Apart from the underlying reason I've already stated as to why I joined.

05:30 **What happened when you got to Melbourne?**

You started to realise you were in a service. "Line up, do this do that, get in line." Really bully boy tactics. Typical. cause they had limited time – I think we had 6 weeks to do our training and another 4 weeks after that for some reason.

06:00 Yes it would've been March, April, May – it was June we got our home leave for 2 weeks and then joined ship. So we had 10 weeks of training, or probably more like 16 weeks of training to cram into 10 weeks so, it was rush rush rush. And "Here you are, here's all your gear." When you got to Cerberus

06:30 our base of operations. And it's basically where they sort of – seem to show a bit on television and that now, boot camp and what have you. Not the great degree of bullying that goes on with – they are portrayed but it was a regimentally orderly

07:00 rush, that's the only way I could put it.

Can you describe what the discipline was like?

I can only say excellent. Most of the guys that were there, in my class anyway were former cadets and some air training corps,

- 07:30 some even navy cadets. These were all operative in the schools as you possibly could appreciate and they seemed to realise that we were there to learn to save our lives if we needed to. To use what we're taught in warfare, which you didn't get in the cadets. You got the marching and the drilling and all the rest of it. We got taught
- 08:00 the gunnery side of things and some unarmed combat. And that - it was routine, nothing I don't think that was anything unusual. There was an incident. I had been elected class leader probably because I was relatively capable looking after myself and
- 08:30 seemed fairly confident, I don't know. And even though I was probably the youngest recruit in the draft I might say that I was in the top 10 physically anyway of the boys that were there. I don't recall how I got there but anyway I was classified as the class leader.
- 09:00 And possibly exams and what have you, results that had been written on my report, whether that had anything to do with it, whether I'd been a prefect and all this sort of jazz from Scots, and who appointed me I really don't know. I don't remember at least. But during the course of our instructions we had bayonet drill.
- 09:30 This was done - conducted with a scabbard over the bayonet of course. And there was this petty officer, we were warned about him by previous classes. Watch him because he was a sadist. And he delighted in instructing everybody and then getting you to play silly - good guy bad guy sort of thing. And you're the Japanese and you're this and carrying on like, what I thought was a proverbial
- 10:00 idiot. But anyway he got his jollies out of it. He used to then criticise the boys that didn't come up to scratch as far as he was concerned. And invariably he would pick the smallest weakest and slowest kid in the class to demonstrate what should be done
- 10:30 in real form, still with the scabbards on. And he ended up - a couple of kids ending up with a fractured jaw or a fractured shoulder or some damn thing like that. Or you know put out of service for 2 or 3 days down there in sick bay. So we were all looking for it and there was one young guy there.
- 11:00 Oh poor bloke. He got killed. Anyway this swine - he picked on him. And you know, we're standing around in a circle and watch. And I said, loud enough for him to hear, "You sadistic bastard, you wouldn't take anyone on your own size."
- 11:30 And they were the exact words, I remember as clear as day. And of course, "Who said that, who said that?" And, "Step up here the man that said that and I'll teach you who's a sadistic so and so." Anyway as I've said earlier I think I was pretty well versed in judo. One of the arts of judo of course is the use of the
- 12:00 stick. And to me using a bayonet or rifle was much the same. If I couldn't beat that fat fool then I shouldn't be in the navy. So he was really red livered [irate] that anyone would question him. I mean he was chief petty officer and here's a damn rookie coming into the class challenging him. But I wasn't challenging him, I was challenging
- 12:30 the fact that he had to pick on a small kid. I said, "Pick anyone you like in the class but don't pick the smallest, be a man." cause the more I said to him the more he got annoyed, which was part of my strategy. I'm going to teach this character a lesson. And even though I was 17 I feel that I'd matured a lot in association with the things I'd been through at that stage of my life. But I didn't like a bully. I won't stand
- 13:00 one. So to cut a long story short anyway I got him fairly enraged and he kept on poking his bayonet at me and asking me to stand guard. And I wouldn't. And in the end I said, "All right you want to teach me a lesson." He said, "Yes I'll teach you all right kid, you'll be in sick bay for a month." So with that I walked over to him. I
- 13:30 had my rifle in my hand, he had his. And I just went like that and took the two bayonets away and said, "Let's go." He said, "You can't do that." I said, "What, are you scared?" The colour just drained out of his face. And he came at me like a madman and it was no trouble to ward him off because as I said, I felt I was very well skilled in that field, unbeknownst to him. And then I attacked and
- 14:00 forced him back. Could have taken him any time. And I had him virtually worn out but I suppose it was only a matter of 5 minutes because the man was about 3-stone overweight. And that's when an officer came along "What's going on here?" He was that out of breath he couldn't even answer. And I just said, "We're just demonstrating - I've had previous instruction on this and we're just demonstrating what a real battle with real
- 14:30 metal to metal sounds like, steel to steel." Well he said, "Oh we can't have that. Put the scabbards and no more of that please. Take charge of your class corporal" or chief petty officer and away he went. So everyone stood there and waited for him. He didn't know what to do. He said, "You take charge of the class and
- 15:00 march them off and hand in the rifles and you're dismissed." And walked away. The boys, that was the

only time I ever got drunk. On our first leave up in Sydney they all insisted that I'd done the right thing and saved young Snowy from a hell of a belting. And I got drunk, they didn't mind. I don't drink. I never have.

- 15:30 And a couple of beers sort of thing. And everyone wanted to buy Bill a beer. And these 3 Americans 'boongs' as we used to call them, or Negroes came along and these fellows started giving cheek. "Bill will look after us." I woke up in the gutter about half an hour later being belted to hell. You can't lose control of your body. And skills or whatever the hell you want to call it. Coordination.
- 16:00 You know I didn't want to drink in relation to - I didn't smoke at that stage either because of my relation to my body and hoping for the Olympics. Anyway so that was the only time I could say during the sessions down there that stands out in my mind vividly. We had aircraft
- 16:30 recognition and all that. I got about 95% on that, I was very pleased. I can still recognise many of the aircraft. But it was an interesting - oh one of the other elements was - because of my swimming capabilities - there were 2 boys from the country, they couldn't swim a damn yard to save themselves. So the petty officer said to me, "Well you're a good swimmer, you're a member of the lifesavers and all the
- 17:00 rest of it." He said, "You get these 2 to swim or I'll have to flop them out." So it was a case of getting up at 5 o'clock in the morning, if you can imagine Melbourne in the middle of winter at 5 o'clock, down to the pool with these kids teaching them to dog swim and then teach them to over arm. It took about 3 weeks but every morning, oh God it was cold I remember it now. They eventually passed anyway
- 17:30 but they were some pretty rotten mornings because we used to get up at about 6 o'clock and it was pitch black. And going down trying to teach someone to swim at 5 o'clock in the morning in the pitch black after you'd broken the ice it was pretty damn cold. Anyway that was the only other element - we went out on the row boats and that type of thing and that's about all I can remember of the
- 18:00 darned session now.

Can you tell me about Snowy?

He was the boy that every mother would like to mother, every girl would like to mother. One of those beautiful school girl complexions, peach, peachy complexion I think. Blonde curly haired, blue eyes.

- 18:30 I'd say very Nordic. He was still in the element of growing up physically, he was not of a strong statue but he was a strong boned if that makes sense, a very thin man but a beautiful personality and even - everybody
- 19:00 in the class felt they had to protect him for some reason. He was quite a normal person, didn't need protecting or anything - you'd take a shine to him just seeing him. He'd smile and you'd have to smile back. A wonderful person. I ended up ...
- 19:30 on burial detail with - and Snowy was on the fo'c'sle. Shrapnel had taken both his arms off and the other guy that was working with me, took his legs and said, "You pick him up and we'll put him in his hammock." I
- 20:00 couldn't get a grip because of the blood and no arms. So I cupped my hands behind his head and lifted him up. As I did. His neck had been half cut across with shrapnel. His head came off in me hand.
- 20:30 I can still see his eyes swung open and he's watching me now and that was the worst experience I had during the war. Yes, I can kill but as I explained to you, what Snowy was and to see this waste of life. I swear he said to me, isn't there any more indignity that can be bestowed upon me.
- 21:00 That's what I heard anyway. That was the end of me. That's when I started to smoke, someone put a cigarette in my mouth and that was the first cigarette that I ever had but it calmed me down unfortunately. That was one of the worst things that happened to me. I'm sorry for the emotion. I still can't control it. I can
- 21:30 control I'd say 95%, 99% of my life but that incident in my life will be with me till I die. War. It's crazy. Now you've upset me, what do you want to talk about?

I'm sorry I didn't mean to upset you.

No, I know Vanessa [interviewer]. I wasn't going to mention it but it came, it came out unfortunately.

- 22:00 It has to. What can I do for you now?

Shall we go back and talk about your training?

Oh I think there's very little to talk about. I did - we played a lot of sport. I could've stayed down in Melbourne and played with the soccer team in fact. You know that was one of the elements I said. No matter what sport I partook I was good and they offered me an opportunity of -

22:30 I played a couple of games with the navy team - we played the army. So if I didn't want to go to war I could stay down there and play soccer. That wasn't my intention.

Mr Kelly, can I ask you what did they teach you about a ship?

Oh all the X and Y doors, and what the gunnery was about, where the various parts were relevant to the gunnels and captions

23:00 and pulling ships alongside. And a lot of it was done with instructional film and things of that nature. Oiling at sea, dropping anchor, the format of the ship in relation to the various - the fo'c'sle and the engine room. Officers mess. The quarterdeck.

23:30 The gunnery placements. Where the ammunition was stored. All of this - you knew it like your own household so to speak. You'd wander through the ships and ...

What sort of ships were they using in training?

These were - well no, no actual ships

24:00 down at Cerberus to any degree that I recall. It wasn't till you went to sea that you learned about the thing practically as opposed to - illustration.

So do you mean up until the time that you were posted to a ship

24:30 **there was a chance that you could never have been on a ship?**

That's right mm. Well I also succeeded - oh I could've gone to OTC [Officers' Training College] - I was offered - I thought, "Oh this'll be all right."

What was OTC?

Officers Training College. So you stayed down there. There was a boy from Grammar, he accepted it. And I accepted it and I started doing the exams and it was a 3-year course

25:00 then down there doing - oh whatever the hell. And I decided, no this is going against why I joined the navy for so I flunked out on the mathematics which was my strongest subject and so they knew it. And I'd requested on my draft that I be put on a destroyer, action ship sort of thing. So in revenge they put me on the Australia. Couldn't have asked for more action than what we got on that. That's it.

25:30 **What were the opinions of officers then? Was it glamorous to be an officer?**

No. Not to me it wasn't anyway. An officer had responsibility which didn't worry me. I think that you had to have more than a cursory knowledge of the navy

26:00 such as I had at that stage. I wasn't prepared to spend 3 years gaining it to represent the country in a war that would probably be completed or that near to conclusion that we would - so I was one of the boys and the officers

26:30 were officers and they treated me as a person and I treated them equally the same way. There was respect in both ways and I don't think there - I was not aware of any differentiation. The problems lay with the petty officers and the chief petty officers who virtually were grumpy old men in most cases. They're not all.

Was it important to have gone to grammar school to have gone to the officer's training college?

27:00 I don't think so. It was only the fact that I played football against this lad. I knew he'd gone to Grammar. There were - the captain of Kings College was in my draft also. Johnson was his name. Johnno as I called him. He ended up very badly burned in the Leyte Gulf when the first kamikaze was on the bridge

27:30 and I can see him running down the catwalk just a mass of flames and met him in the sick bay. Oh I suppose it was that afternoon or morning, I can't remember. I went down to have my wounds attended to and he called me over. He said, "Get me a mirror Bill." And I didn't know who he was, I couldn't recognise his voice. His whole face, around

28:00 here was just - there wasn't anything there but bone and burnt skin. They shipped him out that night on the American hospital ships in fact and he was a very lucky man. I've seen him a couple of times since. And there's just a faint suggestion of a scar and they completely rebuilt his face and everything. It was marvellous. He's a doctor - oh he's died now. He went through hell.

28:30 Through living hell. I don't know how we got onto that. Oh the officers...

Can I ask you what your impressions were of the Americans that were in Melbourne at that time?

They appeared to be well drilled, well mannered, well

29:00 dressed, well heeled. They didn't mix with rookies so to speak. They were servicemen that had seen action and they were servicemen that were on their way to action. But I didn't have a beef with them. I think any beefs I saw were not the Americans or the Australians it was the grog and

29:30 argument over a girl, that's the only element that appeared to upset either party.

Can you recall a particular incident where there was a stoush over a girl or beer, grog?

Well the grog one I mentioned to you earlier. That's my only - I kept well and truly away from it after that. Myers of Melbourne

30:00 very generously in my opinion, during the war donated their total basement to a canteen for servicemen where you could obtain free tickets and what have you. There were girls and you could dance and talk and things of that nature. It was a place to get to know your way around Melbourne

30:30 cause all these boys were from the States [united States] and we were from interstate and didn't know much about Melbourne. So it was a very helpful and what were they called? VADs [Volunteer Aid Detachments] I think they were called or something. Volunteer... anyway they were voluntary and they'd help out a lot. And I saw a couple of I suppose you'd say push and shoves

31:00 rather than fights between Americans and Australians. Sometimes it got a little out of hand but the military police were always outside and nobody wanted to get tied in with that lot. But no there wasn't any great animosity I don't think at all. We were allies and save it up for - that was the common thing, save it for the Japs [Japanese]. And everybody'd cool down.

Did the American servicemen seem to get more attention from the girls?

31:30 Yes the Americans were thorough gentlemen. My wife was with Farmers, working at Farmers at that time and they were also courteous whereas the Australian was not discourteous but equally not as caring and as courteous. Nor did they have as much money to throw around and take them to the nightclubs or the various places that

32:00 would give a girl a better time than going to the local football or the club or whatever the hell they used to do in those days. At this stage of my life I hadn't taken any girls out of any nature. Not that I was shy or anything, I just didn't have the money. Two shillings a week was my pocket allowance so right

32:30 up until I joined the navy. I was lucky I got 2 and 6 a week in keep.

So what would you do for R&R [rest and recreation] when you were on leave in Melbourne?

I'd generally go to the canteen. You'd probably pay a penny to threepence. Two and six'd go a long way in Melbourne. You had free tickets to any entertainment, free travel. Uniform'd open every door. So I

33:00 - there was a place called Tokades oh at one of the valley towns. Out of Melbourne, at the end of the line, Glen Waverley, I can't recall. And this Tokades was a place, I think it was a church volunteer place that allowed sailors and servicemen in general I should say, not sailors

33:30 to sleep overnight and provide you breakfast in the morning sort of thing. So you had somewhere to go to at night if you weren't going - sleeping in a hotel, motel, whatever you could afford. And I used to reside out there on a weekend, on a Saturday night. They were very pleasant. Showers provided and all the rest of it.

34:00 One Sunday morning I went out and had a shower and all the rest of it - a couple of sailors came out and they were having showers. They raced through theirs and went away. I had a shave. Anyway I got dressed and rotten cows had cleaned me money belt out which I sort of thought was safe there, it always had been. And I'd left it hanging over with my uniform and everything and they'd just taken the money and gone.

34:30 So - well free transport - I had breakfast. Free transport into the city, down to the canteen. Had lunch. Explained my situation. I was not asking for money or anything. But I couldn't buy anything so they got - one of the organisers over and they said, "Here you go onto that."

35:00 And present this ticket and you might be able to win some money or something like that. It was - what do they call it, a community singing night sort of thing. They used to try and get some idiots to come out of the audience to stand on the stage to sing or dance or something. So for this you got five shillings. And if you won it you got a pound. So I thought I could use five shillings anyway. Because it was two weeks pay as far as I was concerned.

35:30 Being an ordinary seaman, second class. So I got up there and sang 'Waltzing Matilda'. All I knew about 'Waltzing Matilda' was the verse. And oh is it the verse? You know, 'Waltzing Matilda, waltzing Matilda' and all that jazz. Of course made a complete fool of myself much to the delight of the compeer. So he got everybody singing 'Waltzing Matilda' and that's the way

36:00 I learnt to sing 'Waltzing Matilda'. And then they said at the end of it, he introduced me as the coming Frank Sinatra coming from Australia singing 'Waltzing Matilda' and of course I got high applause so I did get five shillings. So that's the way I got out of my money problems down there.

When you were in training were you being prepared for particular campaigns or conditions?

No

36:30 you didn't even know what was going on up there to any degree. You weren't given any - you were allotted to a ship and that's where you got your final training. I mean we steamed out of Sydney on August 1st and I remember that because on August 2nd it was my birthday and I was rated an AB [Able Seaman] which was another two and six a week so it was as good as singing in the damn concert thing. And

Can you tell me about

37:00 **getting posted to the Australia, how you received that news?**

Oh great delight. We were on our way. I got up there about 9 o'clock in the morning. Same damn route back through the train. And

How many boys from your training were posted...

About 8, 8 to the Australia. And

37:30 we arrived as I say about 8 or 9 o'clock. Just reported to the quarterdeck, went down and saw the quartermaster. He issues you with your hammock and what have you. Told you what watch you were in. Took the details from your dead meat ticket and - to check

38:00 it with what he had in front of him. And that surprised me more than anything. He wanted to know if I was who I said I was. I had papers but he wanted to see my dead meat ticket which you wore around your neck with your name and number and everything on it. So anyway. Blood grouping and what have you was on it. Anyway from there you went down to the mess deck and you were shown over the ship, you know a sort of a

38:30 hurry up attitude. Just shown around the ship and allocated to your various station for action stations. Given the detail of different watches, red, white and blue at sea. And - now wait a minute, red, white and blue in the harbour, port and starboard

39:00 at sea and red, white and blue at action stations. I think that was it. No, no, anyway it's somewhere in there, it's all gone thank God.

Can I just ask you Mr Kelly given the role of the Australia in the fleet, how did you feel about being posted to it?

I was unaware of the fact that it was the flagship of the Australian navy. It was a cruiser. I saw it as being a very vengeful

39:30 betrayal by the officer that was most annoyed because I wouldn't go into the officers' training college. So I didn't resent it, I was glad to be on a ship and on my way. I was allocated to cordite room under gun turret A.

40:00 No way was I going to go to sea in that position. I went and saw the gunnery officer and asked to see him. And he admitted me. And he said, "What is it you want young man?" I said, "I want off this ship or out of the cordite room." I said, "I fail to see why I spent 10 weeks learning aircraft recognition and passing with a 98% pass and I'm put down in the cordite room. I hope never to see a

40:30 enemy aircraft down there because I know it'll be the last one that I'll ever see." He was quite amused with the discussion. He said, "Let me have a look. Oh this is ridiculous. Yes you're communication officer between the starboard and Bofors 3 and 5." So it was as easy - that's how it was. Because I had, I thought, done quite well in all my training and I was

41:00 keen to be on deck. I wasn't going to be stuck behind X and Y doors. That's one of the fears I had of being locked under - below decks and not being able to get out and the damn ship sinking sort of thing cause you couldn't open the X Y doors. And I went up there I think it was about 8 o'clock at night.

41:30 Yeah I had the 8 to 12 watch I was on and they were all waiting there. And oh little Bluey - small country boy, real lark of a kid. Freckles - oh and you know real old sod - been in the navy for at least 12 months, 2 years. He said, "Oh here's my bedmate for this cruise." Of course homosexuality...

Tape 4

00:33 **Mr Kelly you were saying that you had just met Bluey.**

Yes Bluey he was the typical comic sailor. So he was making these homosexual advances sort of thing. In those days I'd been warned about this type of thing. One of the good things I guess my father did for me. Although I did have an experience when I was 8 with a damned Church of England Minister.

- 01:00 Let's not go into that. So I was well and truly aware of what Bluey was implying. Or I thought he was pulling my leg. But I didn't realise that at the time. The peculiar part of it was as I said I was quite well developed by that stage and pretty good at weight lifting. Bluey must've weighed 90 pounds, 7 stone something I know that when he was stripped because I asked him once. I was
- 01:30 capable of handling about 150 pound. When Bluey started touching me where he shouldn't and all this sort of thing, I grabbed him by the seat of the pants, lifted him up bodily and held him over the side of the ship. I said, "If you dare do that once more while I'm on board to me, you'll find yourself in the same position and I'll let you go. What's it going to be, go now or you can come back in boy."
- 02:00 He was screaming like a baby naturally. I mean here was this kid that he was playing with a minute ago, holding him out over the damn side of the ship while we were underway. He would've ended up under the screws dead. I didn't know that, not that I would've dropped him anyway. But many an accident's happened over some tom foolery [playing around]. Anyway I lifted him back on board and we were best friends after that. They were a pretty good crew. We had four on each and two
- 02:30 loaders and myself as the communication officer and director of gunfire. The gunnery officer usually called down and redirected the target options to be taken by the ship and I'd call these out. Initially that was my position. I ended up as captain of the guns on the port side of the ship after all the fun and games, we used to call it.
- 03:00 **What was the role of the communications officer?**
- You mean on the bridge? Direct fire in relation to the information received by radar and observe - crewmen observing from the wings of the bridge as to where we were being attacked or what was required in relation to - if it was - depending on whether it
- 03:30 was a bombardment, whether it was an air attack or whether it was just support fire for the troops ashore. And then to go to the various guns per earphone, telephones, things like the old pilots used to wear. Had a set of earphones and a thing around a neck and talk that way. And then scream it out loud enough for the gunnery crew to hear you so they knew where you were going or what to do, or what to shoot.
- 04:00 **What was the layout of the Australia, if you could just walk me through the ship itself.**
- Well it's from top to bottom I guess. About 90 feet off the water you had the top of the masthead, come down to all the radar and communication equipment that was existing in those days, out on the yard arms. You come down to the bridge. Bridgehouse, either side
- 04:30 was the lookout areas where you had always people on lookout for submarines at night and during the day and also aircraft. Go down either side of the bridge, port or starboard side is the stairs. We didn't call them stairs. We
- 05:00 called them something else apart from stairs, I can't remember. Now you came to the main deck having to travel further 30 feet down onto the main deck and then you're a further 30 feet over the side into the water. So from tip to toe it was 90 feet from masthead to water. You'd walk forward and you'd
- 05:30 come to the heads or the toilets as we know them. Around the outside of those and then you'd be on the fo'c'sle. You had your own B turrets, twin 8-inch guns. On B turret there was a control tower which communicated
- 06:00 or controlled A & B turrets, that's 8 guns. 8 8-inch guns so there was a fair bit of fire power. And then you'd go forward and that'd be the anchor chain and that sort of thing. You're looking at somewhere around about oh, 200 feet of deck way - about the length of this block of land, about 200 feet in depth from
- 06:30 the point of getting down the bridge. Going astern from the bridge you'd come to the galley and the mess deck. Also part of the sleeping quarters for the crewmen. And this was under the three stacks that went - as
- 07:00 you went aft. Then you came to the waste, it used to have a albatross aeroplane but that had been taken out and not utilised any more and they had - oh yeah we had twin 4-inch guns port and starboard, two sets so there was 2, 4, 8.
- 07:30 8 sets of 4-inch anti-aircraft guns. And then you had the Bofors, two Bofors which were 40 millimetre. You had - I forgot to mention 2 Bofors up forward adjacent to the A & B turrets, somewhere up there.
- 08:00 So that gave us 4 Bofors in the waste port and starboard, two on either side. Going further astern and you're going over the carpentry and part of the repairs section there and mounted on top of that on either side of the ship, port and starboard you had the 8 barrel pom-pom guns, 64 rounds per second. They were really the life saver
- 08:30 of many a crewman on board because they'd just tear a plane apart when it got close enough. Continuing aft then you came to the officer's quarters which you virtually didn't frequent. Then you had a similar structure at the stern as

- 09:00 what you had up the fo'c'sle. On the quarterdeck it was 8 8-inch guns on X and Y turrets. I think they had a control tower I don't know for sure, I've forgotten. Go below decks and we're now, forward you had more accommodation area
- 09:30 for the crew on this level. Went through then to more mess decks and aft of that it was officer's quarters and stewards and what have you. So I really couldn't answer you in detail there. And then we go down below that again into the cordite rooms and shell rooms where all the ammunition was store down below
- 10:00 these 8 inch guns. And that took up a hell of an area and it was - virtually acted a lot as ballast. You're looking at shells of 25 pounds in weight. And they were all of different usage, semi-armour piercing, armour piercing, high explosives and they were all colour coded. And there was all the ammunition, a lot of the ammunition for the anti-aircraft guns and the 4-inch guns so you know
- 10:30 you had a munitions section virtually was in this and adjacent to that of course you had the engine room. And a similar setup down at the stern. And below that you just has the bilge which was once again another 25 feet under water or something like that depending on the volume of material that was on board, or weight
- 11:00 that was onboard ship with oil and explosives and shells and what have you.

As you steamed out of Sydney and made that first journey out, what was your daily routine like?

Drill. It was a - as I said there was about 8 from my class that went to the Australia, there were

- 11:30 other new recruits, raw recruits whatever you want to call them, silly sailors who joined so it was a matter now of drilling these people, making them familiar with the duties that they'd been allotted to and constant drilling and to coordinate with the other sections. Damage control had to be coordinated in case of fire and all the rest of you had to know what you were doing, know where the fire equipment was. You were made aware of these things because who's
- 12:00 to say that the man who was going to do the damage control would be alive under any attack. So if he wasn't there and there was work to be done, you had to do it and this is what we were doing for - oh about 2 weeks along the coastline and then continued up to New Guinea. It was constant drill, firing, drones being dragged behind aircraft. Shoot at them, shoot at various
- 12:30 things in the water, so on and so on. But that's predominantly what we did for the first couple of weeks at sea.

You mentioned earlier that when you were stationed to the cordite room that you really didn't want to be below deck. Can you explain what kind of evacuation procedures there were for a ship like that?

No. If the ship had been torpedoed and it was flooding

- 13:00 you could not open an X and Y door if there a danger of flooding the next compartment. So they were about that far off the deck. If we're in compartment A we'll say, and we want to go to compartment B, compartment A has been hit and the water's coming up. So if it rises to there you can't open that door, you're not allowed to open that door. And the
- 13:30 people on compartment B are going to make sure you don't open that door because that water's going to go in there. And it'll flood and eventually the ship's going to capsize because it was broken into port and starboard sides with a centre - and this came into being, during the course of Lingayen action, we roll over at 27 and a half degrees and we were given abandon ship stations at 25 degrees lists to
- 14:00 port when - before they got control by getting the men out of those compartments. These compartments were flooded and yes there were lives lost. All these were emptied of people, they were flooded and so you've righted the ship in that manner. And it went a little further down in the water yes but the water stopped flowing and that way you wouldn't
- 14:30 tilt and consequently, then you review the situation see what you do. But no it was the strictest rule. And you see it quite often on these movies and that, it is all true in relation to submarines and what have you. The need of the many exceeds the needs of the one of the few. Which is one of the sayings adopted by Dr Spock I think it was in Star Wars, or one of those
- 15:00 things that they've got on TV [television] now. But that was quite frequently used. The needs of many exceeds the one of the few so you don't - you sacrifice the one of the few for the remainder of the ship and ship's company and the ship itself.

When you were doing these weeks of drilling as you were moving up towards New Guinea, what kinds of signs were you taught to look out for as a communications officer, what were you looking for?

- 15:30 In what respect?

Well in respect to, if you were in action what were you being taught to look out for in terms of signs of enemy?

Oh aircraft, predominantly aircraft, we were anti-aircraft and that's all we were – anything that was attacking the ship. It depended on what degree of alertness – that's where I got it mixed up earlier. Red, white and blue was the degree of alertness. So that you were on red you'd fire at will

- 16:00 so to speak. If it was threatening. If you were on – white was – oh no hang on. Red yellow and green. Got these damn navy colours all mixed up. Red, yellow and green it was. Red was fire at will. Yellow was you know, can't fire without permission and green was don't fire at all sort of thing. Just
- 16:30 stand easy so to speak. So we virtually – I mean somebody gives a command, you repeat the command to the other people. There was virtually little – and it was logical you would keep your eye on attacking aircraft. For instance if we're engaging an aircraft there and I'm looking
- 17:00 over there and I've got no instructions and there's another zero coming in over there, I'll call that to the bridge and they'll say, "Change target." Or call another gun onto that one, and it was a coordination of the whole ship, it worked well in my opinion, magnificently. It was a very well drilled and oiled ship. Particularly when Captain Armstrong took it over. But being the flag ship I think it was –
- 17:30 it had to lead by example and it did.

So to look out for enemy aircraft what instruments are you using?

Eyes. Binoculars. You don't have binoculars on the guns. You only had them up on the bridge. You do shadow recognition down in – silhouette I should say not shadow. Silhouette recognition down in

- 18:00 Cerberus when we did our training there. And it sticks and you do recognise them very readily. But you would know a Hellcat from a Zero both radial engine aircraft but you'd know by the shape of the wing. One was a square wing, one was a round one. That was a Zero, that was the Hellcat. So you don't fire on the Hellcat, you take the Zero
- 18:30 or something of that nature. Various points of recognition that just stood out and you were constantly referring to it during these drills and everything to ensure that you didn't lose touch with anything.

How close would the aircraft have to be before you could recognise them?

Well if they were bombers you could recognise it to 5, 10,000 feet. The

- 19:00 first kamikaze that came – that I saw – well it was the first as far as I know – was in the – this was the first on the Lingayen Gulf I'm sorry. There was a task force of 1,000 ships going up to Lingayen, from various parts of the Pacific. We were going through the Surigao Straits in the Philippines.
- 19:30 This Toni and I recognised it as a Toni – funny enough that was what I named my daughter but it was Antoinette and it got cut down to Toni was about 10,000, it dropped down to 5,000, it was just cruising up and down the lines of ships. cause we were in a line ahead, it was in a fairly narrow area, take so many ships. But anyway they knew what they were doing, or at least they thought.
- 20:00 And I called it, everyone was calling it, enemy aircraft. Toni. Well they'd already seen it so they'd wirelessly or somehow passed on the information that we were coming. Don't hassle it. We were the aircraft cover for the aircraft
- 20:30 – oh damn it. Aircraft carrier. They had these smaller aircraft carriers, I can't recall what they were but it was the Romney Bay, and it was at the stern of us and we were their aircraft carrier protection fire. They had their aircraft on the deck refuelling them, they'd all come from
- 21:00 dawn action stations. It was about 8 o'clock, 9 o'clock in the morning. This damned Toni flew over, request permission to fire enemy aircraft? Denied. And we just couldn't fire at it. And the darn thing went right down, right back up and then came in on a gradual slope and it flew past us at – I'd say 3, 400 yards. At about
- 21:30 500 feet crash landed, or kamikazed straight onto the Romney Bay – there were 800 men killed on it. One aircraft, one man. And some idiot, because we were on yellow alert he refused to let you shoot it down. Now there's discipline, you could see this happening, you knew you could stop it, you weren't allowed to stop it. If you did, well you were
- 22:00 stopped I suppose, I don't know, I never challenged it. But that was the way – it'd depend on who had to make a decision and there were some stupid decisions made during the war.

Who was making those decisions?

Well that was coming from – we were attached to the 7th Fleet so it was their decision to make. I believe we requested permission to fire but I don't know why, there wasn't a shot fired. And there were 800 killed on that.

- 22:30 Yeah it was – they had to – I don't know planes we lost, something like about 50 or 60 planes. An aircraft carrier, a mini aircraft carrier. And they – it started burning as I said about 9, 10 o'clock in the morning. It was still burning at 11 o'clock at night and destroyers held back and sank it by torpedo.
- 23:00 And they'd already picked up the crew that were remaining. But they lost over more than 50% of their crew because of the high explosives and the oil, and fuel and everything and a number of aircraft that were on the deck. There must've been about 10 or 12 of them fully loaded. So they all became bombs and the plane that crashed became a bomb so it was utter chaos. That disgusted me. But anyway
- 23:30 nothing I could do about it. I was just a small link in a big cog of chains.

I might take you back to the first operation that you were involved in. Could you explain where you went after you left Sydney?

Yes we went up to Manus [Manus Island] – oh beg your pardon we went up to Moresby. We didn't stop there, we were told to continue on to the western part of New Guinea.

- 24:00 And assisted in land bombardment for army that was ashore and required assistance that the Australia and Shropshire – cruisers – Devonshire class cruisers from England, were – with these 8-inch guns, they had a 60 degree elevation. So you could stand
- 24:30 10 miles off to sea or 20 miles depending on what cordite charge you put in. You put maximum in. You'd fire a shell and it'd go up about 20, 30 miles and lob over the mountain that you were – and that way with spotters and everything they'd tell you where your shells landed and what to do. And we did some of that for a couple of days along Wewak was one of the places. Hollandia or
- 25:00 somewhere like that. And then we turned to Manus. That was about – I suppose we were at sea for about a month since we left Sydney doing that.

What were your impressions of the area, the region?

Oh – thank God I joined the navy. It was almost as good as being in the air force. You got fed 3 times a day, you got 4 hours sleep every 4 hours if you were in action

- 25:30 or if you were on watch. And it was not – I wasn't – I didn't expect anything – to the degree that it was as placid as let's say what it was. And I suppose I use that word relevant to how violent and horrific it became later on. But at that stage not
- 26:00 degrading anything that the army was doing ashore but from my own point of view, being on a ship and being there, it was a very quiet placid time of a thing to call war. My mind went back to – I suppose this is how the guys that shelled Sydney from the Japanese submarine felt that all they had to do was sit down and go and get under the water again and go somewhere else and make a nuisance of
- 26:30 themselves somewhere else. And that's basically what I was doing. It's – oh well I thought it wasn't all it was cracked up to be, until later. From there, if you wish me to continue from there...

Did you go ashore at any point here?

At Manus we did get ashore – there was a lagoon. You could go ashore and go for a swim. Although initially at this stage

- 27:00 it was rare. I know we didn't – in the first visit there they ended up rigging a – some mastheads over the side and where the ship's boat used to tie on. So they rigged another lot down further to the stern and we had a water polo team. So we played water polo.
- 27:30 It was hot enough and the water was like a lukewarm bath. It was never very cooling. We used to do that and there's be guys standing up on the bows and stern with machineguns and if a shark came along they fired that. One of the tricks was of course that you never knew whether they were firing at a shark or whether the officers
- 28:00 said put a few rounds into the water and get them out of the water because it was time to do something else. So that was about the limit of the entertainment. Apart from movies, we had movies – all the virtual latest movies that were coming out of Hollywood at the time and things of that nature. I don't think we – there weren't any movies shown at that stage. The Japanese were virtually too close, their aircraft were capable of getting down
- 28:30 that far if they so desired but they didn't desire thank goodness. It was quite a – it's the biggest harbour I've seen in the world. And it's bigger than Sydney harbour, twice as big in fact. Which gives you some idea of the immensity of it. It had 6 to 800 ships in small ships and large ships. From torpedo boats up to the biggest aircraft carrier through.

- 29:00 Easily accommodated in there.

Were there many boats there when you were there?

I was surprised. Yes there was about 3-400. I wondered why aren't they out doing something, I thought

we were here to win a war. Well they were building up for this – they were building up for the next operation which was Halmaheras but I think we were in port for about a week and a half and then we

- 29:30 set off up into Halmahera's up in – Morotai it was in the Halmaheras. We were about half way to the Philippines I suppose. And did support landings there. Once again very quiet. Went in at dawn and
- 30:00 did the bombardment. As we got in there there were 3 or 4 Japanese bathing themselves out on the beach. So the Bofors crew were ordered to take them out. And two of them got in the jungle and two of them got killed. And that was the first time I'd virtually been involved with witnessing a Japanese being killed.
- 30:30 I thought, oh well that's two less of you 'b's [bastards] and so on and so on. I didn't feel sorry, I hadn't pulled the trigger but I was part and parcel of the gun crew that pulled the operation off or whatever. But it had no derogatory effect as far as my thinking was concerned. It was just one of those things, war.

What is involved in a support landing, can you just explain

- 31:00 **what actually happens?**

Usually you find – well the way it still happens I think, the navy goes in with its heavy guns. That would be the cruisers, battleships. Prior to that probably aircraft carriers go in – well they do go in and they drop fairly large bombs to get the enemy

- 31:30 away from their entrenchments or wherever the hell they are. Get them. And then that's followed by the bombardment by the navy. Firing at known targets and what have you, where the artillery had been placed, where the army had dug in and anything that would be of advantage to the enemy.
- 32:00 They shoot the – take out the roads from bombing or from bombardments. As I say over the hill job became a job of the Australian ships that could fire those over. But you had an allocated area and you'd just go in there and fire away at – until you were told to cease fire. You weren't given the details of the individual landings.

How

- 32:30 **close would the ship be to shore when this was happening?**

Oh anything from 200 to 500 yards. Very close. Depending on the terrain and what was required of it to do. It could also go out to sea and be 10 miles off and still be firing, participating in the bombardment. Invariably though you ended up in the harbour as ground support as the troops

- 33:00 went ashore. As the troops loaded from their ships. Army ships – HMAS Kanimbla, HMAS Westralia – troops ships. As they unloaded from the troop ships they would bring in the low flying aircraft and invariably do cluster bombing
- 33:30 and napalm the beaches which made a hell of a good show. And after that even they'd use the landing craft that had the rockets on it and they'd fire something like about 50 of these rockets right down the beach and they'd be on 30 or 40, it was a real firework show. All this happening say between 4 o'clock and 9 o'clock in the morning, 4 or 5 hours of it. And
- 34:00 then the troops'd go ashore. In Morotai the water was that clear that we were standing in – oh they said it was 10 fathoms which would be about 60 feet, that you could more or less say, "Oh look at that grain of sand there." It was so clear and beautiful. Crystal clear. So much so that from here to the – oh 100 yards off you had the Kanimbla. And the guys'd come down the scrambling nets
- 34:30 into the barges and go ashore in that manner. And somehow or rather this chap lost his balance or something, and anyway he missed the barge. Of course he had a fully loaded kit which – some weighed about 120 pound. He just went straight to the bottom. You could see him down there trying to struggle and get all this off. And I wanted to go over the side because I could go down that deep, I'd done it before.
- 35:00 And help him cut the damn straps and that but he couldn't get it off and in the end he just died and they said there's nothing you could do about it. I reckon by the time I got down there he would've lost – he would've taken in that much water you couldn't have saved him anyway. So that was the only mishap that I witnessed and regretted that I couldn't do anything about. But we were at Morotai – oh one of – no it came later.
- 35:30 I think it was Morotai or Leyte but it's worth a mention. Our aircraft recognition was that good that we saw this Japanese floatplane taking off down the end of the harbour. We reported it as such, confirmed by the Americans. Told us to take it out. Opened fire on it. Just as it got off the water – hit the rudder. And the damn thing got up on the air all right.
- 36:00 And it came at us and – oh it was really ropeable – not a shot being fired. Just flying straight at us, we didn't know what was going on. Anyway we were told to cease firing. It was an American plane that had gone into to do some surveillance and it is an identical one that they captured in Singapore and all that

- sort of thing. And the Japanese were using them to confuse us I suppose. So that was the first
- 36:30 plane our gun was actually credited to shooting down. Anyway.
- What happened with that plane?**
- Oh it had to crash-land by its ship and the pilot – there were two men in it. One jumped out with a parachute and the pilot just crash-landed the thing and it sunk and they got out. Nobody got killed in it thank God. But it was very embarrassing and amusing as you can imagine.
- 37:00 But we made up for it later on.
- What was the communication like between the US [United States] and the Australians?**
- Extremely good. As far as camaraderie was concerned there was no problem. They signalled by flag and they did a certain amount by radio. As far as I could make out it was – well when we went ashore there was no animosity
- 37:30 or nothing. We were there to do a job and we were doing it together. And we were virtually kissing cousins, I suppose you could use that terminology. I can't say that – military police were I suppose strict because they had to be otherwise things could've got out of hand, whether it be American or Australian. And that was the only time
- 38:00 you saw any hostility between the Americans and the Australians. If there was going to be trouble they expected the Australian military to be there, not the American military police or whatever. And vice versa. Incidentally there were English and Dutch up there and the Van Tromp [Tromp class frigate] was up there and a few other – I think there was some English ships, I can't recall any of the names off hand. But I'm sure
- 38:30 there were a few there. I remember them up there but I don't remember the particular names. But the Van Tromp I do remember because it was the filthiest ship in the fleet but I shouldn't offend the Dutch. It did its job. Beautiful designed destroyer.
- So when you're doing a support landing at Morotai what's the kind of – the volume of sound and action. I mean if you could just describe it.**
- Deafening, continuous.
- 39:00 Always something happening. 5 hours. If it had been at night I suppose it would've looked a bit like Sydney fireworks without all the glamour and prettiness about it. But it was very loud, very noisy and very destructive. You'd go into this beautiful green surrounding bay.
- 39:30 Clear water as I explained. It just looked like a typical tropical island and within 5 hours there was hardly a tree standing or anywhere for anyone to hide or what the hell. You'd wonder what the fight was all about. What use could a piece of land like that be in its current condition. But they've all grown back.
- How long would you stay in a place like Morotai**
- 40:00 **for if you...**
- One was required if their shore batteries couldn't – had a problem sort of thing. We were there for about a week – usually about a week or a little longer. Week to 10 days is the general rule. Depending on the size of the operation, and number of ships involved. But as the flag ship I guess the Australia was required to stay there longer than some of the smaller ships. I don't know.
- 40:30 **Did you go ashore at Morotai?**
- No, no, we were not permitted. We were at action stations at all the time. Never went ashore till we got to Japan after the surrender.
- What was the evidence of the enemy at Morotai?**
- We got progression reports. Not
- 41:00 – more scuttlebutt [rumour] than anything when it came down the line, that the guys were doing good. That we were receiving casualties or we weren't. What we'd been firing on and for what reason. Because all this had come from the bridge where you had the lookouts and what have you and they'd just pass it down and the telecommunications officer'd hear something and he'd just pass it down to let you known what was going on.
- 41:30 As you know there's nothing worse than sitting there being observer and not knowing what the hell it was about. It's like looking at a TV and not having any sound or whatever. So they did good at that landing, they did very good. And we were on the move forward and not back peddling any more so it was quite good. And we were very proud of it and I thought, "Well this
- 42:00 is a piece of cake and at least we're getting rid of these Jap..."

Tape 5

00:32 **Mr Kelly, before we go on and talk about Leyte and the Lingayen Gulf you mentioned earlier that your crew mate Bluey was playing a joke on you. Can you tell me what you had been told about homosexuality and what experiences you had?**

Oh I don't see the relevance but I don't mind talking on the subject.

01:00 My era and your era are vastly different and what is accepted now was never accepted or spoken of in those days. However my father having been to sea and it was a renowned place as far as homosexuality was concerned. But one of the elements in - I think there was Tom, Reg and myself, as children. To get out of Nell's hair more than anything we were sent on a trip to Tasmania with the

01:30 Young Australian League. I won't mention the name of the minister that took it. He was in the army and did receive medals, etc., and he was a prisoner of war so I'll not denigrate his name relevant to the era. We went down to Tasmania and we'd sleep on straw mattresses and that sort of thing, while we were looking around at Devpnport and various -

02:00 Hobart and different places. But at night he'd come around and want to kiss all the boys goodnight sort of thing and he would - French kiss so to speak anyway. Which sort of revolted most of the boys and he would fondle or attempt to fondle their testicles and what have you. So you know I sort

02:30 of walked out of the whole damn camp and when I got home my father wanted to know what was wrong and I explained it to him, but once again nothing was done. And Reg and Tom were both there - it always raised my doubts whether Tom was that way orientated because he wouldn't speak about the damn thing. But that's neither here nor there.

03:00 Post-war '46, '47 about '47 I'd say, Tom invited this army reverend to his home up at Wahroonga and Reg and I were there. It was Christmas in fact and along he arrives with his little

03:30 boyfriend in tow. An air force kid, couldn't have been more than about 16, 17 - oh more than about 18 or 19 I'd say. He arrived and all the rest of it and okay, I was a guest in the house so I sort of said hello and that was about the limit of my conversation with him. But he couldn't have been there for more than an hour.

04:00 Reg came and said, "Do you know what that dirty old so and so - he put the hard word on me. He really wanted to know whether I'd be interested" and all this sort of jazz. Well that was it. So I walked out and Reg said, "Will you like to tell Bill what you told me?" "Oh I didn't tell you anything." I said, "Well I haven't forgotten what you told me when I was 8." And I looked at him and I was going to take him apart.

04:30 He knew that. He called out to his little boyfriend and ran down the street and that was the last I saw of him, the last I ever wanted to see of him. But it was only the fact that my father explained to me after he'd been through the incidence in my younger day that I was aware of that type of person ever being in existence. So that's as far as it goes.

How common was seasickness?

05:00 I was seasick once. It wasn't really. If you were on the upper deck you rarely got seasick you just didn't look over the side of the ship. There were various - you didn't get any of the smell of the engine room or anything like that or the galley. It was relatively smooth or it was very rough. The ship was - around about 10,000 tonnes from memory so we cut through the water and we

05:30 were generally doing anything up to 20 knots on cruise speed and she was capable of doing 33 knots and in fact on one instance there, outran the destroyers which could only do 32 knots. It was a beautifully manufactured ship so - and it hardly ever rolled. If you got across the swell then you could get some roll. But I do not honestly recall anyone being violently

06:00 sick or being sick on board the ship while we were at sea or for that matter when we were ashore or in the harbour there was nothing to worry about except if they'd been drinking too much. That there was plenty of sickness about and I loathed cleaning up afterwards the rotten cows throwing up all over the deck. But I was - after the war on the HMAS Hawkesbury coming up from Adelaide. We'd been around

06:30 to pick up an LST. Landing Ship Tank and tow it back to Sydney. The southerly was blowing so we had astern sea following us which meant that as the wave came up behind you it'd lift the stern of the ship and it'd start to slide down so you'd go off course. And

07:00 the coxswain was sick so I was called on duty to take over the helm. And the young snotty - what are they called - midshipman who was in charge of the deck screaming these damn orders down the communication pipe - I can't think of the name. "Get back on course red two zero," whatever the hell we were doing.

07:30 It was purely and simply that you'd get off and you'd naturally straighten up and all you were doing was concentrating on the - oh God - anyway the compass. So you concentrate on that and unfortunately the

wheelhouse was immediately above the cookhouse or the galley and the fumes came up from that because they were preparing breakfast.

- 08:00 It was about 3, 4 must've been close to 5 o'clock in the morning and this didn't - concentration and breathing in these fumes didn't go so well so what I had had to eat went into the bucket beside the binidar, banicar - I don't know. Beside the helm anyway. Must to the delight
- 08:30 of all the young sailors that had come on deck and could see me. I'd open the side of the helm, the two doors, sliding doors and so it was fairly obvious I had been sick and they thought this was most hilarious because they'd all been sick and they wanted to know how - and I told them "Watch the horizon you don't look at the sea, keep away." As I told
- 09:00 you earlier. Anyway it was a great joke. So when I came off watch at 6 o'clock I went into the - oh it was 8 o'clock I'm sorry - I went into the galley and got the greasiest piece of bacon and pork and everything. And went out on deck and put it in between a couple of pieces of toast and ate it in front of them and said, "Oh this is beautiful." And opened it up and all the rest of it, so they all lost
- 09:30 their breakfast and that was my only experience with any sort of seasickness at all on the ship. cause I was the old sod having been to sea, they'd never been to sea before.

While you were based at Manus did you have any opportunity to go on land?

Oh yes yes frequently. We - after we got established and everything there and it become, all on the Australia I think it was and on the Shropshire, we had a LCVP - Landing Craft

- 10:00 Vehicle Personnel take about 60 men at a time ashore and - because of my - oh I suppose experiences as far as yachting and all that was concerned I was fortunate enough to be - I applied for it and got the job of the coxswain of the landing barge. So I went ashore nearly every day. When I wasn't on duty taking others ashore I was running around and getting various things for the
- 10:30 ship's captain or officers and what have you. Or running Liberty men ashore into the lagoon where they'd spend the afternoon playing.

What was the base like on land?

Virtually no base. Oh well the base as far as the Americans were concerned, it was not near the lagoon, it was a lot of the army tin sheds and jeeps

- 11:00 and soldiers, everybody sort of - fairly busy and obviously war time equipment that you see on those type of films or illustrated on most of the films these days. But it was nothing that - unexpected.

Were there locals?

Yes but they were over on another island. We never

- 11:30 - no I don't remember the name of the particular island. There were a few working there yes. A few of the males doing some of the carrying and that type of thing but there weren't any women around. Except there was a - where we went ashore in the lagoon there was - oh it was a very
- 12:00 big place and about 300 yards up there used to be some women come down from one of the villages or something and go swimming there. And like all the silly sailors they'd go swimming naked. Some of them had costumes but you didn't carry anything more than you had to in those days. So it was generally - if you were modest you'd wear underwear, if you weren't worried about it you'd go for a dip. There was an instance where a couple of stokers thought they were onto a good thing so
- 12:30 they swam out and came in and chased these girls trying to catch them for obvious reason. cause by this time we'd been about, oh six months away from women folk let's say. And evidently they'd been caught before. So when they did fall in the sand they took a handful of sand and put it in the most appropriate place to cause the sailors to have no pleasure whatsoever, which I thought
- 13:00 was very smart. But that's the only incidence of any women that were in that area. Nobody else anyway bothered them after that. So they just swam around and you could cross the island go to the surf but it was very dangerous in as much the waves would come in and you'd only have about 2 to 3 feet maximum of water before you hit the coral. And if you didn't get off
- 13:30 the wave before then you'd end up with a coral stripped chest. So I went over there, there were beautiful waves and if you knew how to surf you could get out of it quite easily. But it was pretty hard on the feet, you had to wear shoes and - or sandals anyway or something. But it wasn't - it was quite enjoyable and we played - they had the water polo there and we played water polo. We used to play grid iron sometimes on the -
- 14:00 when we were ashore with the Americans. We even got to that stage of friendliness more so in the later part than the early part of it.

What knowledge at that particular time did you have about the progress of the war in the Pacific and how the Japanese were going?

We were told we were suffering heavy losses in some areas, particularly the nearer you came to Japan the heavier it became. We'd just

14:30 been to Morotai and our next engagement was Leyte so we were well drilled on what to expect from there except there'd been no mention of course, as it hadn't virtually occurred, of the kamikaze pilots. So we were, I think fairly well informed in relation to each landing, that we were going to go to and what we could possibly expect, whether this was going to be a

15:00 walk in the park such as most of them had been - well as they all had been to that date. I knew the war was on once we got to Leyte of course.

So what did they tell you specifically about Leyte?

They briefly outlined that the landing would proceed in the manner that I'd previously run over. That it was expected

15:30 that there'd be a heavy concentration of troops in the area. That we would be doing such and such an area. And we could expect resistance from aircraft in this particular operation. They couldn't understand why we hadn't come across any to any major degree at this point in time. Well they didn't

16:00 make mention of it, they just explained that there were aircraft in the area and quite a number in fact. They had been used probably for bombing or for advances of their own troops. But the idea was that this was the push back. We'd started back with Morotai and the Solomon's and all these sort of things and the Japanese were being pushed back and it was just another step further ahead. And like the Japanese were leapfrogging then we in turn were

16:30 leapfrogging - some of the - and cutting off their forces and going back and doing mop up operations after.

What did you know of the concept of the kamikaze at that time?

Nothing. Nothing whatsoever. It wasn't until the actual landing at Leyte where it came into being, that I know of anyway. And I think it's well documented anyway that

17:00 it did start in the Philippines. They had quite a few aircraft. It was on - at the end of the bombardment about, ooh I'd say 11 o'clock in the morning, second day. Because we'd - all ships had dropped anchor and we were sort of sitting there

17:30 lending support to the ground crew - ground forces. And these Japanese aircraft started to appear and so it was action stations. Up anchor and away and become a moving target sort of thing, standing procedure. Unfortunately some idiot officer if I can use that term with all due respect, most appropriate though, hadn't put a marker buoy on our anchor which

18:00 meant that when you slipped anchor you just broke the chain and down the anchor went down to the bottom but you had a marker buoy indicating where your anchor would be and you could pick it up later. Well rather than just lose the chain which was worth about a thousand pounds I believe, the anchor at the time, the anchor crew was ordered to hoist anchor. So you had to put it around the capstone and pull the damn thing in and they were silly enough to even hose it.

18:30 And of course there we were. If you travelled with the Australia, it was painted battleship grey, all the other ships in the fleet were camouflaged. So it stood out like a proverbial out house in a country hill. And I think that was one of the reasons Australia got hit so much. They wouldn't let us paint it, or change it so for some reason we left it because perhaps - I don't know, they thought it was smart to have the flag

19:00 ship a different colour than all the other ships but it just didn't seem logical to me. The plane came in and just started strafing the gun crew - the anchor crew, killed all of those. The guns had guards on them that prevented you swinging your gun around and shooting your own ship sort of thing, so as it was coming in dead on the bows

19:30 there was no guns except these two Bofors who could only get a shot at them. Whether they hit it or not I don't know whether it was intentional, once again I don't know. I presume it was intentional. It dived on the control tower anyway, on top of B turret and smashed into a ball of flame and bomb exploded, whatever it was carrying, torpedo we don't know.

20:00 Which destroyed the control tower and all those that were in it and the plane ricocheted and ended up hitting the bridge and killed the captain and quite a number of people. All told I think there was 60 odd wounded and about 30 killed from that one plane. As I mentioned earlier Johnno was one of the unfortunate ones but the Americans did wonders with his face and it was a bit

20:30 horrifying to see and hear the screams and shouts and what have you. And we were virtually useless. It destroyed the steering element of the ship and cut out the firing of the 8-inch guns. We could still utilise the 4-inch guns and anti-aircraft guns but they were all independent, there was no control whatsoever. So it was a case of when you've completed your

- 21:00 job get the hell out of it and that's what we were ordered to do and so we left there. Gave the proper funeral rights to those sailors that were killed, officers and crew - that was an experience to see 3 or 4 at a time go over the side and the 21 gun salute and so on.
- 21:30 We got back to Manus and they said - well this was in October '44. Well you know what are we going to do, how are we going to repair this. They got these people up from Garden Island in Sydney and the Americans came over and a couple of days they were looking at it and all the rest of it. To get a new control tower from England and fit it and what have you it'd take 9 months. The Americans said, "No that's not good enough, we want it done
- 22:00 in three months, it's on the next operation, due to this gun elevation factor I referred to, told you about earlier on. We and the Shropshire were most welcome on all of these American landings. So the Americans said, "Well we can do it in 6 weeks." Of course the Australian, Garden Island thought that was a great joke. And anyway eventually
- 22:30 they convinced whoever it was that they had to convince that they could do the job and they'd have it ready for the January operation at the latest. We hit Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides and before we even landed there were cranes swinging over the side of the ship as we came alongside the wharf and the Americans were coming down like a lot of monkeys out of the trees.
- 23:00 And they all had blow torches and what have you. They went around that control tower. And I don't think we'd even secured before they were lifting the damn thing off. They stripped all the wiring out, put one of our own control towers on, rewired the whole ship, changed the radar. They did everything and during this
- 23:30 time we were sort of painting the ship and doing menial tasks and what have you, filling in time, going ashore. Much the same there ashore as it was at Manus. It was over on another island where all the township was and this was a large island equipped for ship repair, it had a floating dock and everything like that.

Can I just take you back

- 24:00 **to Leyte. When you first saw the Japanese aircraft how many were there and what sort of aircraft were they?**

This was a torpedo bomber that hit us so that's why we think it was - I don't remember the name of it. They were fighters and light bombers. I think in that attack there must've been about 40, 50 of them. They came

- 24:30 a swarm from northwest towards us and they just split apart when they got to the fleet. And took on individual ships. Yes it was - the HMAS Arunta, there was one that they'd shot and it landed about 6 feet, it was the first one ever to be hit they say by - or it was the first casualty of a
- 25:00 kamikaze. It crashed about 10 feet from the side of the destroyer and wounded one sailor and killed another. And then I suppose it was within 5 or 10 minutes of that we got ours. So I think that was what started the kamikaze side of it. The Arunta was the first to go and then we and
- 25:30 I think there were 2 or 3 other ships that got hit of course but I don't recall the actual ones because we were under pretty hectic damage control at that stage. And everyone, even the cooks were out with hoses and doing what we could to prevent the spread of fire and destruction of the ship.

Can you describe to me, that damage control - exactly what everyone did on the ship once the planes are hit?

Well you had hoses, you had fire extinguishers, whatever the hell was necessary to extinguish

- 26:00 fires is the primary thing. It'd go to examination of damage, repair of that damage to get the ships in a workable state if it needed to be repaired and as quickly as possible. If we'd been holed or anything like that to ensure the ship was stabilised so she wouldn't roll. And various things of that nature. It operated as a well oiled machine and as I said
- 26:30 you always had secondary and third backups because - well let's go ahead to Lingayen, we had cooks and stokers and everybody at the guns firing when we were under attack and we lost so many of the anti-aircraft personnel that these guys are drilled enough to know a procedure. What to do, how to load a gun, how to, where you pressed, what you aimed at, how to use the loading and training of the gun.
- 27:00 This worked the same in the cordite rooms and shell rooms and possibly not in the turrets, there was no need to replace them because it was 4-inch thick steel. But it was about the way it operated. Your primary function was to say in my case, was to do the anti-aircraft gun. The stoker would be a primary function to
- 27:30 come up and lend a hand, even if it was only passing ammunition or whatever was required to fill the vacancy that had occurred. Sounds like a job application doesn't it. But it was all done automatically. A stoker and I keep aiming at stokers because they're the deepest, virtually in the ship in the engine room. Cooks and stewards were first, they

28:00 weren't allocated to any particular gun, they were just directed to go to Bofors 3 and 4 or, beg your pardon 4 and 6 or 3 and 5 and take orders from the captain of the gun there as to what their function would be. Because they in turn could've been hurt and so you'd still be without a crew so if one fell somebody stepped into take their place. And if they fell then somebody stepped in to take

28:30 their place. Based on the whole element I think of the old British soldier where they had the rows and rows of soldiers and as the frontline fell the second line stood in their place and so on. But it was all coordinated and I think it's an excellent exercise in absolute control of men.

How did that work in terms

29:00 **of when the captain was lost?**

Once again the first mate stepped into the position and it - Deshona that was - I can't remember the name of the first mate. But it was taken over automatically - I don't even know whether it was the first mate because I don't know who the officers were that were killed on deck. But there was somewhere that the highest ranking officer would take over

29:30 the ship as the responsible party. As it was dead in the ocean then someone had to do something about it and they rigged the rear steering compartment for steering the ship as all the bridge controls had gone and so there wasn't even a telephone system, it was

30:00 right throughout the ship a number of sailors and the call and order from the forward part of the ship as to whether we wanted to go to starboard and what course to take etc. And this'd be called down through the ship until eventually they did get a phone line down there and they could give the orders over the phone and that's the way we went down to Manus which was fairly remarkable in a matter of 2 or 3 days. And if you didn't have a well drilled and skilled crew that could

30:30 do this thing. I don't think of any organisation that's not military that's capable of doing this. Let's look at Foxtel for instance, what a mess they're in. At this point in time they're telling you it's 3 or 4 months before they can even do a repair on your darned installation. Little bearing on the war but a similarity of quantity of people. There were a 1,000 men on the ship and to coordinate

31:00 them into that direction I think was marvellous.

What sort of medical teams were on the ship?

Excellent. There were 2 doctors from memory, a lot of medics. What did they call them, they didn't call them medics. Sick bay attendants. And I'd say there was a staff of probably - or crew I'd say of 20 with

31:30 a couple of doctors on top. They were fairly skilled and they could do minor surgery, appendix, I suppose tonsillectomies, those sort of things. During the war - during battle they would do whatever was needed to be done. They wouldn't do surgery just if someone had broken a leg and it had to be - anything than a normal reset they wouldn't try and

32:00 shorten or screw the damn bones together cause you'd do it through a orthopaedic now. But they were very efficient. They knew what they were doing and I don't know whether there was a separate anaesthetist or not or whether they did that themselves if it was necessary to do it, in operations. So I presume that there'd have to be 2 doctors anyway or some of the

32:30 sick bay attendants were highly skilled in that field.

Were there padres or religious people?

There was a padre on board yes. He conducted services as was required and I think he did more than one. He did a Christian service. I don't think he brought in Catholic, Church of England, Presbyterian

33:00 or whatever the hell it was. Purely and simply prayers it was referred to, not to anything in that respect.

Can you tell me what happens during a burial at sea?

Well the bodies are wrapped in - usually a men's hammock or whatever's available depending on the number involved but in this particular incidence

33:30 when we had about, as I said somewhere in the near 30s - I don't remember actually - I've got it recorded elsewhere. They were done three at a time and they were laid on a slab of wood down on the quarterdeck. Prayers were said, their names were read out. They were honoured

34:00 for their participation in defending their country etc. Bugle, The Last Post was sounded and 21 gun salute. 21 gun salute, Last Post was sounded and the boards tilted and they were committed to the deep, I think were the last wordings of the service. And we repeated that about, oh 10 times or 6 to 8 times as we were

34:30 returning to Manus with the damaged ship. But there was a ship that was open to an easy mark for submarines. Here we are, we're still thinking of giving them full burial rites, every bit of it deserved. But it just shows how the

- 35:00 organisation that was on that ship was – to me excellent. I couldn't – oh you know you can pick fault with food but who can't. Even these days with all the varieties you may have but it got a bit monotonous at sea and all that type of thing. But you know the best food we ever had was while we were getting repaired in actual fact.
- 35:30 In Santos they went ahead with their work, we were loading ship and all the rest of it. And I think it was there, it might have been at Manus, I don't remember. But talking food anyway, we'd been – yes it was this operation because we were loading up ammunition. It was very big amount of ammunition and this
- 36:00 ship pulled alongside and we started loading up the shells and what have you. And of course when it came to food we were accustomed to getting fresh fruit and things like that. Of course when it came to that they didn't bring any food. Why? The shore men were on strike for ten shillings extra. They wouldn't load it and they wouldn't allow the army to load. And that's not long shore men actually that was the damned
- 36:30 - whatever they call them down here. Wharf labourers. They wouldn't load the troops ships with food and they would not allow the troops to load the merchant navy ships with food. I thought that was disgusting. Swore then I'd never join a union in my life. That was my opinion of unions.
- 37:00 I'm sorry if I offend anybody but I'll never forgive them for that.

What was the overall opinion about the wharfies?

Not very good. The Americans came to our aid and we lived high off the hog with turkey. I mean bearing in mind this was Christmas. Around about Christmas and the Americans had been well and truly loaded with turkey and ham and cranberry sauce and all the new tastes under the sun that we hadn't experienced but oh boy,

- 37:30 it made our food very drab and tasteless after we ran out of it. Even the ice-cream they had, we made sure we got plenty of that in the future. But you couldn't get the turkey and the ham and the fresh fruits, and the chestnuts. It was real American Christmas. Turkey – I'll never forget it. So they did us a favour to some degree but I thought it was a pretty low down type of way to be going where kids were up there being killed.
- 38:00 **What knowledge did you have that [General Douglas] MacArthur was in the region at the time?**
- Let me think now. Lingayen, we were aware that he was in Lingayen because he passed down the side of the ship about 50 to 100 yards. He had a chair very similar to what I'm sitting on mounted on the
- 38:30 stern of the LSVP and the coxswain in fact had to – you could lift the wheel up and stand on the stern of the ship and steer by observation in that respect. There was nobody in the LSVP, only him and a few of – he was as I said sitting on the back, on the stern and the few of his officers were in the well of the
- 39:00 barge. And he was sitting there and he had – as though he had just walked out of TV studios or out of an interview in Sydney. He had his dress khakis on and sunglasses and his cob pipe and you know, having a day at the office sort of thing. And the boys someone said, "Hey that's MacArthur." "Oh yes, hello boys," and all this sort of thing and they cheered him along and this was
- 39:30 the – well the landing took place at about 9 o'clock – it must've been about 11 to 12 o'clock in the morning at Lingayen Gulf where we were really getting, copping it. Now whether he went ashore to boost the troops or not I don't know but he was there, well and truly.

What was the opinion among the men about him?

- 40:00 They admired the fact that he was moving into the battle at this early stage. It was thought that many of these people would you know fighting from the offices down in Sydney or somewhere like that, but there was no mistaking who it was and we were told that it was him after he'd gone by. The captain or someone said on the loud hailer, "You're aware that that was General MacArthur, he leads by example." And this was a good illustration of it. It was all part of the –
- 40:30 I won't say propaganda – but all part of things to keep you morally – morals on the boil shall we say and fight a war as if – whether you wanted to or not – you took the orders from the top and acted accordingly.

Tape 6

- 00:34 **I wanted to ask you about the repairs that the Americans did to the ship. Can you remember that time and what they were doing.**

Basically replacing the British components of a control tower and all the ancillary linkages to data acquisition, radar etc,

- 01:00 and electrical elements to Americanise it so that we could function within the period of 6 weeks. That amounted as I said earlier, just take the control tower off, put on an American tower. They welded that on, all that happened within 3 days. The majority of the work was the rewiring of the ship to ensure that everything was functioning. Replacement of
- 01:30 other equipment that was not conciliatory to the American system and so - I think we were both on imperial I'm not sure, I think so. But it was a case of the wiring or something of that nature. So they virtually rebuilt all the linkages associated
- 02:00 with the firing of the major guns of the ship and the connections that were necessary to have it operational as far as communications and everything else was concerned. And it improved it immensely as far as accuracy was concerned from the radar side of it. It was far advanced to English radar and well we were more than
- 02:30 surprised at how quickly it was done because the ship did look one hell of a mess when it came in, there was a lot of it burnt.

What was the activity around the ship as it limped into harbour? Well in terms of how quickly...

When it went to Manus or when it went to...

When it went to be fixed to Santo?

All ready for us. As I said within 3 hours they'd

- 03:00 taken the burnt out conning tower off. There must've been about 20, no they wouldn't be welders, cutting flames anyway and they all had their allotted area and they just seemed to work side by side and within - it was amazing just to see this spark and all the rest of it. We couldn't believe that within 3 hours there the whole thing was up in the air and we hadn't even really
- 03:30 secured the ship to any great degree of security. It was fabulous.

Once you returned to Manus what happened next?

Well when we got out of Santos we had to do a 2 week shakedown cruise which involved testing all this equipment and all the rest of it which utilised

- 04:00 firing of guns at various objects. Even having drones fly over and see what that was. Take some points of firing the 8 inch guns at nothing but having people observe where the shot dropped and what distance had transpired and all this was recorded on radar. Fantastic. We came through that with flying colours. And
- 04:30 by this time it's around about just into the new year I believe, somewhere around about there. And we're getting told that we're off to Philippines again to do this Lingayen Gulf action.

What were you told about the action before you went?

That if we thought the last one was a piece of cake don't think this one is. It's going to be rough.

- 05:00 So what you didn't experience there you'll probably experience here. And they had a fair number of planes in the area. It was the northern island as opposed to one of the smaller southern islands Leyte. And Leyte was a very mountainous country and that was the reason we were required, to try and prevent reinforcements
- 05:30 being brought up to the front by the Japanese through the various jungle roads and that. The Americans used Piper Cubs to spot the areas. And that was the whole idea of - as I say, the Shropshire and Australia being in each and every landing of these mountainous islands. Because the American guns wouldn't go above 35 to 40 degrees. It gave the
- 06:00 fire power a hell of a command in as much as you could fire 25 miles inland virtually if you wanted to.

So what was the scene that greeted you as you came into the gulf?

As I mentioned earlier there was the initiation to fire and that action was the Romsey Bay or Ramu Bay or whatever - it's a name very much of that nature.

- 06:30 We arrived from memory about - I don't know whether it was January 13th or January 4th and 5th. It was a week apart from those dates. It was in that time slot. It would've been the 13th I'd say. It was much the same as any other landing initially. They obviously knew we were coming because of the -
- 07:00 well we presumed this because of the matter of the aircraft, the bomber that had spotted the taskforce coming through Surigao Straits. There was a hell of a lot of ships. The bombardment and landing had all progressed before - I'd say 5.30, must have started firing at about 3.30 at night and
- 07:30 you didn't see anything until dawn and we were in another harbour, like much the same as any other harbour. There weren't towns or anything around, it was purely and simply jungle and what have you. It

was to establish a foothold on – I think we were about 50 miles north of Manila at this point, if not further. The idea was to go down to Manila and attack from the front and the back. There were other landings in Manila but not at that time.

- 08:00 The troops were landing and the Japanese aircraft came over from, flying very low. They just scattered when they got to about 4 or 500 yards from the ship. There must've been 100, 150 of them.
- 08:30 And when they got – well it seemed relatively close, they sort of came up off the deck, off the low level flying to about 5, 600 feet and came in shooting and trying to drop bombs and there was another group up top, I suppose about 3,000, 5,000 feet. Which really we weren't
- 09:00 observing to any major degree because the American air force were up there dealing with them so they were looking after that. Whether this was a sneak, that's a distraction, watch that and we'll come in and get you from underneath. But couldn't get through our radar, not ours anyway not the American radar. So they just came in and started attacking all the ships and shooting.
- 09:30 Machinegun fire and dropping mini – well they were airborne torpedoes. They weren't very accurate. I'm not sure whether it was that day, it was the second day in fact that – well when they came in they were like damn flies you couldn't see half of them because the sky was basically black with smoke. There was something
- 10:00 like about 6, 700 ships firing anti-aircraft guns into the air and God knows what. These pom-poms for instance as I said would fire 64 rounds a second. There'd all be high explosives. They had a black puff of 64 in a minute at least. And somehow anyway one got
- 10:30 through and I think it attempted to do what the previous one had done and hit the bridge. It missed the bridge, they were firing on it and driving it off course to some degree. So it just missed the bridge and tried to dodge the fire, I don't know. He banked to his right and his wing caught the tip of the funnel or the first stack.
- 11:00 Which sent the plane straight down into the starboard – I think it was the starboard one, I'm mixed up. 4-inch guns. And killed all the crew there and burst into flames and damage control came and
- 11:30 cleaned it out, put it out. We were back in action within 10 minutes.

Where were you at this stage?

Next to it, about 50 feet aft of it. That's when I got a bit of shrapnel in the shoulder. I got a bit of shrapnel in the hip. I was on the starboard and I'm practically sure it was the starboard one that was hit first.

- 12:00 I have got a report and it is in the archives in written format as to what the sequence of events were. But it was firstly, I'd say anyway the starboard one and I do remember being hit first in the shoulder. Because I was standing behind the guns and the shrapnel from the explosion etc sort of cut a few of our guys around. I was lucky I got a small piece.
- 12:30 And the second one was – some of our guys were off the guns. More guys were killed on the corresponding Bofors, 4 and 6 Bofors in the port waste. So we had to go, make a decision who was the experienced gun crew to go over there. So I had the option I could go over there or stay where I was. So Bobby said, "Well you come with me and
- 13:00 we'll keep this side going." And we got a couple of cooks. And you know I wanted to get onto the guns and do the firing and what have you. And so I ended over that side. And that's when the next one came down and it came down and it was the action I explained trying to go for the bridge and hit the other, you know the one that just come around the bow and swung into the ship and hit the starboard guns, the second one came down on the port guns, 4-inch guns and
- 13:30 wiped them out and killed a lot of those crew. And fortunately I was on 6 Bofors which was protected by the poor cows on 4 Bofors so 2 or 3 of those were killed from the shrapnel and what have you. And damn me if we didn't do a whole switch around again and I was back to my old 3 and 5 and by this time I'm elevated to being a layer on the gun. But all the drilling and exercise and what have you
- 14:00 that I've mentioned earlier it came to boot and it was second nature to be firing at – or laying out as directed. It was must like being back at the school but it was real life rather than just drill. Trying to recall the third one now that came in.

What is the scene on, what can you actually see before you at this point on the ship?

Oh

- 14:30 do you mean now or then?

Well then?

Oh it's like you and I sitting here as clear as that. It's something you've not experienced. You can say it's like watching a major earthquake occur or it could be like watching a major building, not that I could possibly compare the

- 15:00 tragedy of it, but the twin towers how that sticks in your mind, how you see that. You saw it acting probably on TV, if you haven't then you saw it – and things like that they're just there and that's when you turn and close that chapter on that book in your life and refer back to it only if it is necessary to glean some advantage or to assist somebody in relation to their problems associated with something of a similar nature. That's
- 15:30 the way I see it and I can see it as clear as I can see you if I wish to. There's body parts, blood – without going into the gory details of it, it's all there. I think the most unfortunate thing was our wonderful cook. Like when I say wonderful, wonderful in his personality and always making people laugh.
- 16:00 One of the bright boys on the ship sort of thing. Always had a joke and what have you. And he was up on one of the guns, I don't know which one, I don't recall. But he ran in fright, and behind the aft stack they used to have these repairs sheets of metal, they were about 12 feet by 8 feet and they were coned like that. He thought that was a good place to hide and the bullets couldn't get him.
- 16:30 Unfortunately when the plane landed the explosion just clapped the two things like that and we hosed him out. Couldn't find anything of him but just mincemeat. And they're the things you see if you want to but if you don't want to you turn it off and shut the book and go onto the next chapter of your life, whatever it might be. And I found that philosophy is about the only way I could go through life and I put that down as I said earlier to the headmaster of Scots College.
- 17:00 Old AK Anderson he told me that life was a book. Forrest Gump [movie character] expressed it a little more poetically when he said it was 'a box of chocolates', and it is much the same. Except you read that part of the book you wish to and write it in your own mind or Omar Khayyam, having writ passed on. Having writ on the walls of time past on I think it was, I've forgotten the actual quote
- 17:30 now. But you take these experiences. If you learn from them, if you're lucky enough to survive them I think they make a better person of you. If you can give a command, if you can obey a command you're a stronger and better person for whatever it might be, with all due respect to the circumstances and situations that might occur at the element of time that is
- 18:00 pursuant to what your problem might be. We're getting it all around again anyway as you can see, around the world, it's never ending. It's undisciplined warfare, they call it terrorism. Anyway let's not get onto politics today.

You were talking about the 3rd plane that came in?

Yes that's funny I'm getting a mental blank, I must've stuck a couple of pages together.

- 18:30 Oh gee. I think it was on the bow of the ship somewhere up – I know I didn't see it that's why I can't pull it to mind. And without reading the text of the operation I couldn't actually remember. It's – there was
- 19:00 very little loss of life at that point relevant to that particular landing, crashing, kamikaze. I'm sure it was the one that landed up on the front part of the ship, forward part of the ship. Because nothing happened of any repute, oh there's another one. Incidentally these didn't occur one after the other or 5 minutes or anything
- 19:30 like that. The first one came on the first day, the second one on the second day. The third one on the third day. The fourth one on the fifth day and I think the next day was Sunday. And we were very thankful that the Japanese had very kindly given us a day of worship in peace.
- 20:00 In as much as we hadn't been hit but we got two the next day to make up for it.

So seeing as they were each day, how were you preparing for the next day, having already been hit?

The – it just happened that way, I don't think it was planned that way. They had their dawn and night attacks sort of thing. At dawn

- 20:30 and at dusk. On the second day after seeing so many planes come across, the gunnery officer of the Australia thought, well it's a hell of a lot of planes to fly in in such close formation. And we didn't know whether it was going to be done that way. But he devised a plan that I thought was utterly brilliant. So he took the 8-inch guns,
- 21:00 all of them, staggered the fire so that he had 250 gram, 250 pound HE [high explosive] explosive shells mounted in each one and planned that they would go off in – broadside scattering, putting a scatter pattern which would
- 21:30 as each of the shells would go off, it would cover an area of about 300 feet in diameter. And the next one'd go off 100 feet or 150 feet further on. So it created a chain if you can imagine of shrapnel. And when these planes came in the next morning they came in in the same formation. The Australia fired
- 22:00 these broadside and a ship of that size that fires that quantity you shift back about 25 feet into – going backwards sort of thing. It was the first time I'd ever experienced broadside, it was quite an experience. But it worked as he said and we took virtually 50 planes out. We were credited with taking out 30 but it

took the whole centre of this thing. The interesting part was that morning,

- 22:30 it was during the night in actual fact, the American forces used to tape the Tokyo Rose. Anyway it came across over Tokyo Rose's session that American armed forces radio - we were tuned into it that the very brave of the Australia, we are aware of your secret weapon.
- 23:00 Which was only our standard armoury, with a long firing flame gun - went into intricate detail but they named the captain of the ship and I think - yeah it was Captain Armstrong, I don't know whether Collins was on board, I think he was taken off at - on the
- 23:30 occasion but we were still the flag ship, I can't remember. Immaterial. Anyway she named the gunnery officer and the officers and they knew everything about the damned ship. I was waiting to hear my name called out. But it was amazing. They would now take a special effort to take the Australia out and make sure that the troops
- 24:00 of the gallant Japanese army and all this sort of jazz would live up to the reputation and all the Australians on the ship would go down to join David Jones locker and all this. It went on for about a quarter of an hour. But it really surprised us.

What kind of impact did that have on morale hearing this?

Oh great comedy. It was the best morale boost that we had. I mean for them to think that we

- 24:30 were virtually - one arm of the American naval force there. Perhaps two arms. Could have a secret weapon that the Americans didn't have. I mean that was sheer idiocy. And it was - the propaganda, I think -
- 25:00 they'd come on and play all these American tunes and what have you. And how you're thinking of your mothers back home and all the rest of it. This was to try and get under your skin but if didn't. If you knew somebody was doing that you'd deliberately avoid taking offence or getting riled up about it. If anything it did more for our morale than if she hadn't have said it.
- 25:30 It was just an odd instance.

You mentioned that the attacks came on different days. After the first attack what kind of discussion was there on board the ship about how to deal with subsequent attacks?

Only along the lines that, I hope it's not me, and I hope it's not you. And, we'll just have to keep going at it. I mean I think we were doing very well.

- 26:00 It was a case of counting the number of planes you could shoot. That became a competition. We were getting - oh what the hell did they call it? Messages anyway from the admiral of the fleet, I think it was - no I can't remember his name either. The Admiral of the American fleet and many of the battlers and cruisers and aircraft carriers that were around -
- 26:30 they could see the pasting we were taking and as I said it was because, in my opinion, we were battleship grey and we'd already set a precedent for them to attack us anyway. Not that we were the only one that was being attacked. The USS Chicago got hit and many other American aircraft carriers and destroyers were going down right, left and centre. It was a very concentrated battle but from our point of view, it was my battle, my ship. And
- 27:00 that's what we were concerned about, keeping her afloat and fighting. It really was a case of - well see if we can beat such and such's score and see how many we can take out next time we come in and all this sort of - I think it was something to keep your mind off what was actually going on around you without making it too damned obvious that what we were doing was something to talk about rather than talk about losing so and so
- 27:30 or such and such or whatever the hell happened to. And then of course we had our dead to bury. A few of them were buried with honours but the rest of them were just thrown over the side. It was disgusting but as I told you earlier on, it sort of turned me. We finally - the final one that took us was
- 28:00 - I don't remember, I can't remember. It was a torpedo bomber anyway that came in. You could - at this stage I was on the port, back on the port Bofors. And it was obviously coming for us. They said it was a torpedo bomber but we think it was a bomb underneath it not a torpedo
- 28:30 because otherwise he should have let it go and fly over us and take the next ship out with his aircraft. That was their procedure when they had torpedoes going. So it was assumed that it was a bomb but I suppose about 200 yards it'd be and you could see the pilot in the plane done up with a traditional Japanese
- 29:00 helmet and the wide silk scarf and all that sort of jazz. And you could see the gun fire coming from the mounted - wing tips of the plane. You could hear them going around you. We had a panel of metal in front. If one went that much higher above it it'd probably take your head off. Or knock you out with
- 29:30 your helmet you had one. But there were only the eye slits that you could see out, between the helmet

and the top of thing and to get a view of the guy. And right – well I thought we were going to cop it dead on track and he was about 70 yards ahead of us coming at us. We're firing and hitting the plane but it's not doing – and then

- 30:00 at about 100 yards the pom-poms had clicked onto this one and you could see, as the shells, they were 20 millimetre shells, so big. As they exploded they'd just tear away a piece of the plane and it was just chewing it up like you were tearing a piece of paper up. Which fortunately drove it off course to the degree that as we're sitting in parallel here, instead of landing underneath us there
- 30:30 it landed. And it flopped into the water as opposed to hitting the upper deck which would've taken us out and the other side and probably the pom-poms. So it was a brilliant effort on behalf of the pom-poms. And the gunnery crews that were training on it. And off went the explosion and we're sort of sitting there in a bit of semi shock, are we dead or what? And all this water spraying
- 31:00 on me. Oh and it kept dribbling on me and dribbling on me and I looked up thinking what? And it's all blood. And the poor cow that was loading the gun he just had no head or anything. Top half of his body had been shot away to hell and he was just dribbling blood all over the damn gun. Those sort of things were the things that you turned off very quickly. So the ship started to tilt and we started
- 31:30 taking on water and the bomb had gone off and made a hole right on the water line about 20 by 15 feet I'd say and we were taking water fairly fast. But once again the X Y door factor that we mentioned earlier, come into play and it was holding it but one of them gave way under the volume of water that was coming in. So we went over a little further and it looked as
- 32:00 though the whole ship was going to go down that side. But the damage control came along and flooded the other side and righted the ship. The funny part, if you can call it a funny part, at 27 degrees, or 27 and a half degrees it was abandon ship's station. Or it was abandon ship. And I had to run aft over the quarterdeck and dive off the back of the ship so you didn't
- 32:30 end up getting sucked down with it as she went down. But at breakfast that morning we were sitting there after – oh I think we had – that's a funny one too. We had pasties that day, damn me they were so good we couldn't figure it out. You know just the turned over meat pie sort of idea. Went into the galley, you wouldn't believe it, 1917 army
- 33:00 rations from World War 1 and that's what made our breakfast that day. And we're looking over the side and honest as I said we were up 30 feet from the deck earlier on and you'd look to the right and there was the head and you'd look there to the left, there was the tail. It was practically an isosceles triangle. Would have been a 30 foot shark. It's the biggest shark I've ever seen. And I thought, oh God I wouldn't like him to have me for breakfast, he'd have it in one mouthful.
- 33:30 Of course not more than an hour later or so this damned abandon ship warning comes over. No way I'm going down with the ship, I wasn't going down for breakfast there. I was very relieved when they did get the ship righted and I didn't have to abandon ship. I wouldn't have known which way to go. It was the most – well it must have been a whale shark or something, the guys said it was one of the giant whites that were supposedly up there. There
- 34:00 were some very big sharks. And I still hadn't got over that Coogee affair that I mentioned earlier on. But anyway that was one of the lighter sides I suppose and not very light when you really rationalise it. So we were virtually dead in the water once again. We could move, we lost part of the engine. I think we could go about half speed or some damn thing.
- 34:30 That was repaired, whatever they could do there. The question was, if we moved the pressure in the water and the hull could possibly break down an extra row of X Y doors. And so the Americans can again and, "Oh yeah that's no problem." I'd not seen it before
- 35:00 but they just put a big canvas over the side of the ship and straight into the water, underwater welding. Put a patch on the side of the ship and I think they started that at – mm must've been about 4 or 5 o'clock in the afternoon and by 11 o'clock they'd covered the whole God damned thing up. It was a patchwork quilt sort of thing, it was only 1-inch
- 35:30 steel as opposed to the 4-inch of steel that the – but it stopped the water coming in so we could manage – pump out what we could out of the other and with the Chicago we headed off about midnight or 2 o'clock, 3 o'clock over to Pelaya and I think it was either HMAS Warramunga or HMAS Arunta, we had them in escort.
- 36:00 And we dropped the – left the Chicago at Pelaya and they were picked up there by some other American ships and they were back off to – further east in the Pacific towards the states to some repair place. We were told we were going back to Sydney.

I might just ask you about the moment you see planes coming in that kind of formation.

- 36:30 **And how you're aware of which one is going to be a kamikaze plane.**

No they all were. No there wasn't one kamikaze, these were 150 kamikaze coming in at once. They weren't there – the bombers that were up there in the first instance I think were a distraction to allow this to come on. They'd already seen the effect of – well I don't know why but the

- 37:00 Toni aircraft that did the Romsey Bay and the aircraft that did the Australia at Leyte to me were, we've got quite a weapon here for the loss of one man, one aircraft, look at the results we can get. We took out a battleship, we took out a heavy cruiser last time, this time we took out an aircraft carrier and it cost us one man. So it was a - it's what I suppose you'd call a terrorist sort of thing operating these days. They look to take out
- 37:30 as many as they can for one or two people. And they were just drunk with saki and what have you. They believed they were going to heaven, I've heard this story before only recently again. So you know they'd get these relatively young pilots. You didn't get any of the ace pilots they used to have. You'd still hear about them after the war but these were guys that were saving their country
- 38:00 the same as I wanted to save mine. And giving their life willingly, having been doped up on opium and saki and all the lovely young ladies they wanted. And some of them, you could see they weren't prepared to go into the ships. I don't know whether the sight of it sobered them up they'd go into the - deliberately appear to go into the water and sort of get out of the plane and wait
- 38:30 there to be picked up or rescued or some damn thing. Which well it wasn't - I don't think that was what the intent started off with. But as far as they were concerned they were going to become kamikaze and heroes at home. But then again when they realised what was involved they chickened out but there was a hell of a lot of them didn't. Out of 150 I'd say you might get 10 that chickened out.
- What kind of psychological impact was that like**
- 39:00 **for the men onboard the ship knowing that these pilots were willing to sacrifice their lives?**
- Very hard. We couldn't rationalise with it. Why would I deliberately go and do this? And the answer was logically no. I was doing this for my people at home. We weren't under threat then, Japan was under threat and so whether - I don't think at any
- 39:30 stage, well if Australia was under threat it'd probably be a different set of circumstances. You'd stop at any cost. It's not - you wouldn't talk about it that much because you couldn't comprehend it or rationalise it in relation to your own feelings and the situations were not such that you wanted to get involved and start thinking like that or thinking, I think you were
- 40:00 still immature mentally to some degree. You comprehended what was going on but you didn't want to rationalise and explain it to a logical reason so that it got to you where you would perhaps not react as you should be reacting. I couldn't honestly say what the reaction to each individual was. From my own point of view I really wasn't interested. As far as I was concerned if I could shoot or kill as many
- 40:30 as I could, I was doing what I was going up there to do, so that we could not be faced with this problem in Australia.
- Was it more frightening to be faced with kamikaze pilots than the ordinary bombers?**
- Time didn't exist to be. We really were never bombed, the Australia was bombed in the Coral Sea battle but I wasn't on her at that stage. So the only time I
- 41:00 can honestly say I feared for my life because once you were in action you had no time. The adrenaline was rushing to stay alive. You weren't worried about dying, you were worried about staying alive and the two are diversely opposite. So you did the best you could in relation to what you were required to do. I was going to say something, I've lost it.
- 41:30 Oh yes the only time I experienced fear was later on in the Borneo. I'd been through all this hectic HMAS Australia action and whatever, survived and managed to live and get back some sort of rationale type of life as far as my family and home was concerned on the survival leave.
- 42:00 And...

Tape 7

- 00:31 ... as we said was fairly, well it was just - useless hunt or so to speak. Lost so much fire power and what have you and so many people killed and wounded. We came down to Sydney and did 4 weeks survival leave. The crew were all discharged, the Australia was put over opposite Garden Island and left there I think till
- 01:00 after the war. And probably stripped of any of the equipment that could be utilised on other ships. But it was left there till after the war and the Japanese eventually bought it and used it for scrap which was a bit of a woeful thing as far as I was concerned. I went down and did an AA3 gunnery course down in Cerberus when we came back off the Australia.
- 01:30 And a shortened version of the - about 2 weeks I think from memory, of the naval commando course. But I still couldn't get over those sharks so I didn't go into the underwater side of it for clearing mines.

But anyway, I did most of the course before I had to face up to this and I said,

02:00 no I couldn't do it. So I think – prior to that we had our survival leave and I spent most of it up at Muswellbrook playing tennis, I think I mentioned that earlier on. And that was about the size of it.

Mr Kelly can I just ask you given what you'd just experienced what thoughts were you having during those 4 weeks?

Primary to –

02:30 well during the 4 weeks to be thankful I was alive. To enjoy the beautiful country I was living in and sport and tennis was really the in thing in those days. And being able to get back into the surf and see some of the friends from the lifesaving organisation. And

03:00 it was just a good holiday that's all. Freedom from worry and I don't think you belaboured your thoughts on any of those, you were so pleased to get away from it all. So there were moments that you probably had or that I had I know. Occasional ones where you'd get a flash of something and it was a little disturbing and you'd remember what was going on but all told it was

03:30 a relief. I mean we'd been up there close on 2 years I think it would've been or 18 months at least. And hadn't been back to Australia in over 18 months so it was a fair drag away from home and it was good to be home and you appreciated it. So that's about all I can say in that respect.

So then you were posted to the Shropshire?

Yes that's right. We did landings there in Balikpapan.

04:00 And in – no the landing was Brunei Bay I'm sorry and the second one Balikpapan. These were getting much back to the Morotai type of landings. They were as I said earlier, the islands had been leapfrogged and we were going back and doing the mop up operations. There were quite a number of Japanese troops there. 200,000

04:30 I think in Brunei Bay we were told. Figures of that proportion anyway. It wasn't a turkey shoot or anything of that nature. They had no aircraft down that far though and that was our advantage. As I said earlier, I think the only time I experienced fear was at that point in Brunei Bay in as much as were – completed our bombardment and the shipping and everything around about – it always seemed to be around

05:00 about 10 or 11 o'clock in the morning. Anyway it was just after bombardments and the next darn thing we're sitting at our gun stations still in action stations. And there's this hell of a big whistling sound and then four 30 or 40 metre high spurts of water come up alongside the ship. We'd been shelled by shell battery. And not to be able

05:30 to return fire, not to know where the hell it was coming from, as in the other things you didn't stop and think. You were automatically drilled as to shoot that plane, that's what's attacking you or return fire to that or whatever the hell you were directed to this. But in this case, where the devil did it come from? And of course nobody'd seen it, all you hear was the roar of the shells. And so this perturbed me somewhat. I thought, well after being through all that, to get

06:00 taken out with this, that didn't – I think – I will say I was scared, I didn't know what was happening or how to react to it. As did a few of the others.

Can I just ask you Mr Kelly what made that more terrifying that being attacked by kamikazes?

The unknown. You could see what was going to happen or you could take moves, you could do something to avoid what was happening as far as kamikaze, even if it was only pulling a trigger and returning fire.

06:30 You could see the plane being stripped apart by other guns firing on it, hoping like hell that you'd win this little battle. You'd get shot down before you hit me. I suppose it's a bit like these damn silly computer games that kids seem to play these days. But it was – you could do something in return, you could defend yourself to the best of your ability. In this where did it come from? What do we do? How can we

07:00 stop it? They took evasive action with the movement of the steerage of the ship. And I'd say that was primarily because they were pretty close first shot. And that's primarily what prevented them from doing it. They estimated they were a couple of hundred pound shells anyway and I don't know what damage they would've done. But the point was, and I learnt a lesson again from this. There was one

07:30 of the old sods who had been in the Atlantic and they'd been shelled a lot. And he said, "You've got nothing to worry about Bill. Don't let it upset you." He said, "You're worried that you can't fire back at them." I said, "That's right." He said, "Well can you hear it?" And I said, "Yes." And I said, "That's it you know it's coming." And he said, "Well that's no problem. If you can hear it you've got no worries because it's already gone over your head. Because the shells were travelling faster than sound. So you're

08:00 hearing that after they've gone by. It's the one you don't hear that you don't have to worry about

because you won't be here to worry about it if it does hit." And that made a lot of sense. Immediately it became a joke and that was passed around a lot of the young lads that were on board. And the trouble with fear, the only thing to fear with fear is fear itself and that was the quote he gave me and I've never forgotten it, it was quite true. You analyse that and you'll agree with me

08:30 probably.

So how long did that shelling go on for?

Oh I think about another 5 minutes before they spotted it and there was the Shropshire and the Chicago. I think everything that was there just opened fire on the darn thing and blew it to hell in a matter of 3 or 4 minutes after they spotted. We didn't get hit or anywhere near a hit after that. But they were aiming at us.

09:00 Once again I don't know why. But possibly as we had the admiral - I think the Shropshire had the admiral on board. He seemed to come and go like Christmas or some darn thing. Whether he was on board or whether he wasn't. And any particular battle I really couldn't say apart from Collins who was at the Leyte battle. Anyway

09:30 we seemed to be first cab off the rank. Australian ships were always first into the harbour for some reason or other. Destroyers used to precede the cruisers. But the mine clearing ships and barges that went in were always the Australians that cleared those out for the landings. And they'd go in 2 or 3 days before the landing took place, under cover of night.

10:00 Take away as much as they could of the mining and make sure that the beachheads were clear. Well they didn't expect us in either of the two places. Not to the degree that the troops went in.

When you were involved in the landing at Brunei Bay, how were you aware of the enemy? What enemy presence was there?

There was no enemy really showing. It was a standard as I said

10:30 routine type of bombing or bombardment and air raid bombing. Rockets. So it looked as though there was very little to expect. However at Brunei Bay the Japanese had been preparing, I should imagine, because they knew which way the war was going to some degree. They'd dug themselves down about 20

11:00 feet into the sand hills and had tunnels and everything like that in there. So when the shelling started it was just surface shelling and they went down in there and as soon as everything stopped, nice and quiet. And our troops started to come ashore they came up and blew hell of them and we lost a lot of men that way. Consequently when it came to Balikpapan we had the answer for that too and knew how to get over it. The bombardment

11:30 went on I'd say for usual standard procedure, then nothing happened. The Shropshire and I think there was an American battler that also went out and for a whole night and day, 24 hours one 8-inch gun fired one round of shells

12:00 - one shell until the 8 guns had fired and then it started all over again. That went on for a full 24 hours. And all they were doing was lobbing these high explosives semi-armoured piercing shells up in the air, or semi-armoured piercing shells at least, up in the air and they were landing on the beach-heads in various patterns that the Americans wanted laid and the cruiser - we could hear

12:30 some shells going over the top of us so we assumed that they were doing the same thing. So they really laced the thing and I doubt if the Americans lost more than 2,000 men in that landing. Most of them when they went ashore, the Japanese that hadn't buried alive came out and they were that shell-shocked because the shell'd go down about 20, 30 feet in the ground and then explode and all the tunnels'd collapse on top of each other. And the amount of shock was there that they must've experienced shock waves.

13:00 So there was a hell of a lot of shell-shocked prisoners that they took, they just didn't know which day it was and it was quite a strategic answer I thought to the happenings in Brunei Bay. But one landing you learnt from and the next landing you gained from it. I was quite

13:30 enraptured with the idea that they came up with to counter act that.

When and how did you become aware of the atrocities committed by the Japanese in the Pacific?

Well as I told you, I had witnessed some of them in Brunei personally which we won't bother going into at this stage. I think we were told about it more than anything. Whether you put it down to propaganda or

14:00 anything in relation to the landings that we were heading into to perhaps be morale boosters that you didn't want this happening to your folk at home or anything of that nature so we would be generally told of some atrocities. The prisoners of war was a big thing of course and how many prisoners had been taken and how they were being utilised and demonised what have you and the women being abused and

14:30 raped and children killed. And all this – it was just sort of tacked on at the end of each briefing to remind you that this was one of the elements that you were fighting for to report and to get away of the savagery of the Japanese as opposed to the so called educated or more advanced American and Australian

15:00 type of culture. But it was a matter of opinion.

What was your opinion about how resilient the Japanese forces were like that were left on Borneo and Balikpapan?

Some of them were extremely resilient. I'd say that they – not that I had contact, it's purely and simply word of mouth but

15:30 some of the Americans I was talking to later on were saying how they wouldn't accept the fact that they were being beaten and this was purely and simply a back fighting action as far as the – our aims were concerned and they were still advancing and they knew of the Coral Sea battle and all the rest of it even though they lost it, they claimed to have won it. And they'd been invading Australia

16:00 soon and all this sort of thing went on. But they believed that they lived under an Emperor who really was a god and all this. Now whether that had any bearing on it or not, it was their culture rather than their resilience of what. If they were as...and the Japanese marines were a very good fighting force. They were 6 foot, nothing like the normal little 5 foot 3

16:30 Japanese – these fellows were 6 to 6 foot 6 and you knew you were tied up with them if you were unlucky enough to come across them. And they were well drilled. So that type of – they were full time sort of army or military personnel and I think they were as resilient as what our boys were even though they weren't full time. Or most of our boys anyway.

17:00 I don't know about the treatment of the prisoners of war. All I know is there was nearly a Third World War started there and then at the signing of the Yokohama about an hour before Yokomoto or whatever his God damned name was, came on

17:30 board to the USS Missouri. Because there were 3 American hospital ships pulling out of the harbour loaded with Japanese prisoners of war – our boys that had been prisoners of war. And they were just walking skeletons, many of them couldn't stand up but they were out to see their freedom coming to them on these ships.

18:00 There was just bone hanging there and a bit of skin over it, which was supposedly an arm. And there were nurses holding onto them to keep them – but they wanted to be at the side of their ship, hospital ship and see these American ships there and they knew that the surrender was on that day. When the men saw them it was a pitiful

18:30 sight. All the gunners were trained fore and aft on Shropshire but I don't know how it started but the guns seemed to sort of move on their own volition, one or two at a time and then the whole damn lot seemed to. And they swung around to a training to port aiming at the Yokohama city. If one idiot had pressed a trigger at that stage I think the whole damn thing would've been on again. It was

19:00 so close in my opinion. I don't know, I don't think it would've eventuated into anything but that's how it affected the men. The order came through to train guns fore and aft and all that sort of thing which was immediately obeyed but you only had to have one trigger happy idiot. A couple of the American ships followed suit too so it could've quite a

19:30 nasty finish for what was supposed to be civilised people attending to these uncivilised creeps. But that's about it I guess. Now what?

Did you go on shore at Borneo?

Yes but we left that out for the reason I explained earlier.

20:00 Next time I was ashore anywhere was back at Manus I guess and then we came up to Manila. Manila had been captured and Corregidor had been taken out and all of that. It was interesting to see. We spent about 3 or 4 days there and we had been briefed on the invasion of Japan.

Can I ask you what your impressions of Manila were given that

20:30 **it had been occupied by the Japanese for so long?**

Yes. What amazed me more than anything I think was the volume of black market and sex trade that was going on there. You had hundreds of thousands, that's all I can say, of servicemen who had been away for so long and I think the sex trade was an attraction for more reasons than one

21:00 in as much it was a discharge for many people who seemed to think it was a great thing to get VD [venereal disease] and be discharged and get out of the action and what have you. The mere fact that we were going to Japan which wasn't going to be a picnic, everyone knew that. The brothel that was in Manila itself was as big as David Jones and they were in 6 foot by 6 foot cubicles.

21:30 The ground floor was made up of a large lounge area and the clients shall we say, would go and choose

the lass they wanted to be with and disappear upstairs. The queue went from - if you can imagine Sydney it went from Grace Bros - I beg your pardon, David Jones down to Mark Foy's of servicemen waiting

22:00 to go into this particular area. What the hell happened I don't know. I do know that the - one of the silly sailors I was with was hoping he could go there but he didn't have the money. I don't know what the cost was, five dollars or something like that, American dollars they were dealing in. But we were walking back to the ship

22:30 and I happened to kick a rock on the ground and underneath there was a two dollar greenback. And I said, "There you are you can go and have half a one" or some damn thing in joking form. With that - there was a kid about 6. "Pom-pom sailor? Pom-pom sailor?" Which was sex I suppose I don't know. So this kid, 6 was hawking around looking for

23:00 customers for his sisters who were around about 12 to 14 years of age to make money and ends meet financially in this respect. And it was - I'd seen all the American VD films - they made sure you saw these any time you went anywhere near an island port. And ...

Can you tell me what was in these films?

You name it.

23:30 Technicolour pictures of the results of VD, what it does to a woman's vagina, a man's penis. And various parts of the body, their face half eaten away. Breasts all gone but just blood and gore. It was enough to turn you off women for the rest of your life which of course it doesn't, but it certainly kept you away from women who you suspected might even have had anything like that running around in their bodies. So from my point of view no thank

24:00 you. This idiot's point of view he went and laid with that - oh she was about a 14 year old girl. Nothing pretty about her at all but anyway it served his purpose and of course yes he did get his discharge with VD. So if that made him happy well that was his misfortune in my opinion. He got out of it, he wasn't going to Japan but anyway, that was the

24:30 basic of it. I couldn't get over the number of buildings that were in Manila that were quite modern, of course Americans had been in Manila or the Philippines for many years and it was much the same as an American city when it was all boiled down.

What evidence was there of a Japanese occupation?

I'd say very little. Only that it was run down and it had obviously been looted and

25:00 the people were very joyful to see the American troops in there and all that. I'd say it was probably 3 weeks - after we went through Lingayen Gulf that the battle of Surigao Straits was on and then after that the Americans

25:30 attacked Manila and took it over so it would have only been 3 to 5 weeks and it would have been then another 3 months after that that we were back up there to do the - it wouldn't have even been 3 months, 2 months to do the landing so that any evidence that was existing per se after the landing, I think would've disappeared by the time we got up there and went ashore there.

And what about the harbour, what did that look like?

26:00 A number of - well most of the harbours you went into were wrecks and where bombings of old ships were - well they weren't old ships, they were war ships and merchant ships and what have you. A number of the airfields - there were always derelict planes and this type of thing that were around. And it was just - any broken down war machinery.

26:30 You'd see some of the natives stripping them to get the aluminium and copper and these things out of them where they could to sell them off as metal or some damn thing. But there was no evidence of - you couldn't speak the language of most of these places so you didn't get to speak to many of the people.

Where were you when you heard the news of the atomic bomb being dropped?

We'd already been

27:00 advised that we'd be going along to do the Chinese coast between the sea of Japan and China. Japan having invaded China in 1937 and they'd you know pulled a lot of dirty tricks over there too and they weren't loved. We were told there were 10,000 Japanese kamikaze planes lined up on the Chinese coast and the

27:30 west coast of Japan to jointly attack anything that came on that side. And commonly there was another 10, 20,000 lined up on the other side so they weren't really looking forward to going what we'd been through, we were talking - oh I'd say the biggest radar I suppose we would've seen in the Philippines was 5 or 600. Here you could see 1,000, 2,000 aircraft in the air coming to - so you

- 28:00 know everyone sat down. I know I did and wrote my mother and father a letter and sort of said goodbye and thank you and I didn't expect to see them again. And this was left with the naval office in Manila. So that well if we didn't come back the letter'd go through. Fortunately
- 28:30 when we were due to sail, the day before we were due to sail out into this the order came through to hold operations which made us all start to wonder what the hell was going on. Was it a counter attack being planned by the Japanese or what? So we didn't go out to sea, we just remained in the harbour. We assumed without being told that it wasn't a counter attack.

Why did you assume that it wasn't a counter attack?

Well

- 29:00 the obvious thing to do was to get out of the harbour and you wouldn't be bombed or anything. If they had all this aircraft power which they're going to use for protecting their home land, they might be going to use it and try to take the ships out before they got to their homeland. So the obvious thing was to get out and give them the open sea and give them a run for their money rather than be stuck in one spot and they could pick you off like turkey shoots.
- 29:30 I think it was the 8th August. Anyway the first thing we heard was that Nagasaki had been - I beg your pardon - that Hiroshima had been bombed with the atomic bomb. And there was talk of the Japanese surrender and there'd been hundreds of thousands killed. We'd already been briefed on the fact that
- 30:00 the anticipated loss to the allied forces was somewhere in excess of 5 to 600,000 killed and God knows how many anticipated wounded. So to hear that 200,000 Japanese were killed was just cream on the cake as far as we were concerned. Here we were - we'd stopped going there and they'd just bombed
- 30:30 Nagasaki - I beg your pardon - Hiroshima and we were waiting for a surrender. And I believe Russia came in acting on behalf of the allies to try and find out if - no no that wasn't - Russia came in after Germany - couldn't have been them. Doesn't matter anyway who it was - probably Swiss I don't know.

Can I ask how you actually heard the news?

Over

- 31:00 the loud speakers they kept advising us on the loud speakers. There was no radio or anything of that nature reporting on that basis, it was announcements from the ship's captain or one of the officers saying, that we've been advised that so and so and so and so happened. And that's the story.

Can you recall what you were told about the amount of the civilian casualties?

Only a statement of fact that estimated that

- 31:30 there would have been in excess of 200,000 killed. Nothing more than that. You weren't given all the details just the facts to appraise you of the situation rather than getting details as you would reading a newspaper or something of that nature. It was an announcement that wouldn't have lasted more than 2 or 3 minutes. But anyway it was a very pleasing announcement from our point of view. We'd all sort of said, "Well
- 32:00 this is it." And here's a second chance, maybe it isn't. Nothing happened for 2 or 3 days. They said they didn't know what was going on so they didn't appear to be wanting to surrender. The Emperor wouldn't be in it or some damn thing. So even though the navy - not the navy, the military of Japan
- 32:30 they believe wanted to surrender at that point. But the Emperor said no so they couldn't do nothing but obey him. So then they went and dropped the second one on Nagasaki and within 24 hours that was it, the Japanese have surrendered. So we were lined up then to go to Japan to Yokohama Bay
- 33:00 - the 7th Fleet and the Australian fleet which was an arm of the 7th Fleet. I think it was set for the 29th August, the surrender was to be signed. I can't be sure of that but I know it was very late August. We'd started off on the trip
- 33:30 and were just about there when we were hit with a tornado. The wave was 60 to 70 feet tall, I've never seen anything so large. The fury of the sea is most fascinating as the sea is in every part of its beauty and cruelty. So we had to stay out to
- 34:00 sea for - oh 2 or 3 days till it calmed down. And I was a bit disappointed that the surrender was going to be signed in August because in one of the school documentaries, I suppose you'd call them, that we used to see in the pictures there, they had these prophecies of Nostradamus. And it was shown quite a few times
- 34:30 at school - he prophesied the war would begin in September 1939. I think he named the date I don't remember. But it would go for almost exactly 6 years. And it was - I think it started on probably the 3rd or the 4th of September so this I believe could possibly come true the way events were falling out. When they said the 29th of August
- 35:00 - oh what a shame, he missed out by 2 or 3 days or whatever the hell it was. Damn me if the cyclone didn't come along and make his prediction true to the word. It was quite an unusual thing. It's just one

of those things that sticks in your head. Not that I've read any of his - well I've read a number of them but I can't make head or tail of them. I think they're very easily worked out after the event rather than before the event.

- 35:30 This was before the event. He'd named Hitler by name or similar to name. And so that's what caught my attention and 6 years the war hadn't transpired that long and hadn't - so it was just one of those things of interest to me.

What happened once the tornado died down?

We went in - we anchored about 250

- 36:00 yards astern of Missouri so we had a wonderful view of the surrender. It was very stayed and very cold and no courtesies offered as gentlemen at war as appeared in the English and German relationships
- 36:30 relevant to a number of the forces who were there and during the surrender, in Britain - not in Britain - but in Europe. But this it was - there was a great deal of animosity there and on the photographs in the paper and that sort of thing, you can really see this in the expressions on the faces. It was
- 37:00 - there was no cheering or anything like that, or exchanging pens or anything of that nature. It was well worth witnessing - well you're getting all you deserve sort of thing. Really don't want to know you. But we'll take over from here and that was it.

What was the atmosphere like on your ship?

An historic event occurring, it was great

- 37:30 to see. Thank God this ends it, God bless - oh fancy forgetting his name. The President. Harry Truman. As far as I'm concerned he saved my life. And I'm sure most of the crew that were on the Australia. There is a lot of animosity towards the dropping of the bomb I realise that but all told there wouldn't have been more than about 350,000
- 38:00 killed in the 2 bombs that were dropped and a couple of hundred thousand affected by radiation etc. And these figures just roll off the tip of your tongue, and say, "Oh so what?" People are horrified. But had we gone in it would've been more than double that amount, treble perhaps. Both civilians, military personnel and everything. It was be all to end all and it was better that one side took it than both sides share. There would have been
- 38:30 an equal amount of deaths in Japan as what were there and a greater amount of deaths by the allied forces than what the Japanese would've experienced. And then God knows what would've happened in China if it had gone one. Whether it had boiled over, we just didn't know. Russia was coming in on the darn thing then after that had been so
- 39:00 it could've gone on and on for another two years and ended up just as one continual blood bath for the next 2 or 3 years, losing billions of men, billions of people. 200 million would be a walk in the park sort of battle. So there was that attitude. I think most of these sorts come later when you analyse things and try to rationalise whether it was worth it but there was a pleasure as far as the ship's company was concerned.
- 39:30 That'd we finished the damn thing. And here we were in Japan.

There has been some controversy surrounding how the war was finished in the Pacific. What is your opinion about the necessity of those mopping up operations?

After the surrender?

No before the surrender, to clear out those Japanese forces in the islands.

- 40:00 Bearing in mind that the allies were aware of the prisoners and the conditions that the prisoners were being treated with - it's like if you - in my opinion - if you knew the lady down the road or the man down the road was keeping dogs and he used to whip them every night cause they wouldn't do this or wouldn't do that, and you were capable of taking that whip away from him would you do it? And I think it was something - a
- 40:30 very poor analogy I know but I think the sooner they got in and mopped up the Japanese, because the Japanese weren't prepared to surrender. They had the opportunity to surrender. If they didn't wish to surrender then the only way was to take them out and kill them. That way you were saving, or hoped to save as many of our troops which were prisoners of war. That's my
- 41:00 opinion anyway. I believe it to be right whether I am or not well, that's what we fought for, so we'd have freedom of speech and express our own opinions.

That's a good place to change tapes.

Tape 8

- 00:34 **Once the surrender had been signed what were you told about what your role would now be?**
- Well we'd be the occupied forces in Japan. MacArthur was made - oh I suppose you can say acting Emperor, I forget his military title but he was given full title to Japan. My own particular
- 01:00 position was once again back onto the coxswain of the landing barge. This enabled me to go ashore every day virtually. Sometimes on leave, sometimes taking liberty men ashore much the same as I'd done in Manus. Pardon me. I remember the first
- 01:30 week I suppose it would be, within the first week. My bowman and I were ashore one morning waiting for some supplies to be moved around to take back to the ship. And about half - oh about 50 yards away I guess we could hear this child crying and there was nobody around. The area had been pretty well bombed and a couple of
- 02:00 lean-to's. Anyway in the end we wandered around trying to find out where this child was crying and we came across this lean-to and there was a baby, wouldn't have been more than about 4, 5 months old. It was on its own and you know what the hell would you do with this? So I had had - I'd had a younger sister so I picked the baby up and said, "Well I don't know what we'll do with it, we'll take it outside and ask one of
- 02:30 the officers could we bring it on board." Anyway we walked about 10 yards back to the ship and this woman came screaming down, "Wait for me wait for me!" Speaking perfect English. She turned out to be a geisha girl and our thoughts of geisha girls in those days were that were virtually high paid prostitutes or call girls. But she explained to us what the duties of the geisha girls were
- 03:00 and they were very highly educated and business orientated women who were used by the hierarchy, executive committees in companies to act as their personal assistant, to attend to any whims and details that they wanted done. To entertain
- 03:30 any of their visitors and what have you in that respect. So body and soul went into their work truly in every sense of the word. And the children that might arise from this boss of theirs were brought up by his wife and treated as a member of the family and it was quite an education as far as we were concerned knowing -
- 04:00 and this girl she'd been to England to learn English and all this. Remarkable how well she could speak. Well she spoke better than I did I guess. And she explained that she'd been out trying to get something to feed the baby that she was not lactating and had to get milk or some fluids into the baby.
- 04:30 And everybody needed money and all this sort of thing. So well we adopted the two of them and having sort of - well to me women and children had nothing to do with the war, it shouldn't have anything to do with the war. So the hatred that existed between the men the compassion let's say for the children and the
- 05:00 women associated with was equally as strong in this particular case with both John and myself who were coxswain and landing barge forehand. So we brought them back - we brought her back the next day, or that afternoon in fact. I had another run. I said if she was there - we brought her back some condensed milk
- 05:30 and some tinned milk. Soap a couple of candy bars and cigarettes. Something else. Oh yes a couple of towels so she could have some diapers for the kid. Of course boy didn't it stink. So we brought some scissors ashore and we cut those up for her and from there on
- 06:00 she'd sort of wait for us on the dock each day and I suppose we built up a bit of a black market trade for her. In reciprocation she took us down to a warehouse I'd say, it'd be about 4 miles, 3 miles just outside of Yokohama Bay and it was as big
- 06:30 as - oh I'd say the showground pavilion that was out at the Royal Easter Show, one of those Anthony Hordern ones. Enormous thing. And it hadn't been hit or anything. But it was only made of tin. Well that's as big as it appeared - perhaps it wasn't but that's as big as it appeared. It was at least 200 yards in length and 100 yards width, it was bigger than a couple of football fields. Anyway she said, "You come inside." And we
- 07:00 were wondering what the hell to expect. Surely to hell she wouldn't be taking us down there to take advantage of any situation or kill us or what. cause we'd been...what we thought was reasonable. But no this was a payback, thank you. And when we walked in there you wouldn't have believed all the silk and fabric that was there from - it must've been making it all during the war. It
- 07:30 was from floor to ceiling. There were kid toys, pyjamas, silk kimonos and all this sort of thing in existence there. And we were sort of pretty well aghast with it. So that doubled the black market side of it and we traded a hell of a lot of soap because that's all - we were going to the canteen and buying it. And they couldn't make out why there was so much

- 08:00 soap and cigarettes coming out of the canteen. I don't think we were the only ones who were getting on to a few of these things. So both John and I bought a hell of a lot from them and we'd bring it down to Sydney for the family and I remember a beautiful kimono that my mother would've loved. The toys were all right, we took those with us and we got a few of the silks. Anyway we were due to go and pick it up
- 08:30 - well tomorrow's Wednesday we'll say and it wasn't Tuesday morning, get back to the ship at 12 o'clock. Up anchor we're going back to Sydney, no greater warning than that. So here we paid at least 50 US dollars anyway which was probably equivalent of about 5 or 600 dollars down in today's market and it was a lot of money to accumulate.
- 09:00 Like even 5 shillings a week would buy tobacco and do the trade but we'd done well enough and that was each. So they got all this money from us and here we were shipping out and there was no way we could get ashore to get these damn goods because we'd be out of the harbour and be gone by the next morning when these were all to be ready for us to get back on board. We'd made the arrangement.
- 09:30 But it was compensated by the fact that we landed back on Sydney on Christmas Day, well Christmas Eve more than Christmas Day. Many a tear, there was that day. It was just like today has been. A beautiful day. And we arrived back in Sydney so we really weren't too concerned. My mother in the interim had had her second daughter. She was very embarrassed trying to explain to me that a
- 10:00 change of life baby had come along and she kept telling me about little feet'd be running around. I didn't know whether they'd adopted a war kiddie, lost his parents or we'd got a new dog or some darn thing. She was so embarrassed, I don't see why but anyway. Because it was an unspoken thing in this days as far as children were concerned.
- 10:30 I guess the only other thing I can relate to as far as Yokohama Bay was - I went off and saw the Nagasaki bomb - you weren't allowed within a mile of it but it was just like looking at a flattened city with a few walls standing up. And it was
- 11:00 - well all I can say it was a dead city, it was dead. Nothing else came across. But the land was dead, there was nothing there moving, not a bird or a dog which you see in other war ravaged villages or places or towns. There was nothing there, it was just dead, still, quiet. And it had a pretty strong impact I'd say
- 11:30 mentally on people to - more so later than at that particular time. But you see this and you start to wonder why weren't the dogs there, why wasn't this - and the radioactivity and that side of it starts to creep in and you realise what a devastating weapon it really was and still is of course.

Were you told about radiation at that time?

Somehow

- 12:00 yes we were aware of it. We were told we weren't allowed to go there because of radiation. We knew what it was, didn't know how deadly it was. It was anticipated to take 2 or 3 months to clear away and all this sort of thing. But they'd done all this over in the deserts of the States and I don't know whether, I don't think they did any experiments in Australia till after the war.
- 12:30 But they let off a couple of test bombs in Arizona I think it was. But they were well and truly aware - well the scientists knew that atomic radiation existed before they burst the atom so it had to, to keep the darn thing together. Once you broke it it had to go somewhere, through you and me and you wouldn't even know it.
- 13:00 The other instance there was another typhoon came along, one day there, virtually without warning. And we had liberty men ashore and there was a siren that was sounded on the ship for 'return to ship, post haste' for some reason or other. So this was sounding and all the sailors were attending and the wind was getting
- 13:30 stronger and stronger. And boats getting fuller and fuller. Anyway the barge was supposed to take around about 70 or 80, or 60 personnel and jeep was I think the limit load or about 70, 75 men. And here I am with I think it was 102 in the end count standing on shore. And by this time the winds were up around 70 or 80 miles an hour and you really knew you're
- 14:00 in for it. So no way they were going to stay ashore and live with all this flying tin and God knows what - they all wanted to get back to the safety of the ship. So despite all my pleadings and everything they jumped in the ship and we had about an inch of freeboard before the water would've poured over the side of the ship, filled the barge and sunk it. Even though it had floatable sides on it but it would've drowned the engine out.
- 14:30 So off we started towards the ship with over 100 men on it when you're only supposed to have 60. The water's beginning to come in, the pumps couldn't take the water out of the ship. The boat was barely getting through the water. The wind was blowing it across, it was hard as hell to steer. And on these barges they have a cruise speed which was about 15 miles an hour or 15 knots I should say then they have an action speed which is double that which is about
- 15:00 30 knots. I thought, well we're never going to make it on this. So I went down and turned it onto action

speed and the men were all sort of in this barge area in a nice flat level lot and so the boat was sitting like that. And I hit the accelerator on the steering column and – oh the gear column at least. It was a twist top for forward, reverse

- 15:30 etc. You put a little stick back and turn the accelerator. But it was like that and she just went like that. And all these silly sailors fell from the front of the barge right to the back. The propellers virtually – I thought we were going to just flop over backwards but they took to the water and it cleared the back of the barge – the stern so that
- 16:00 the – where the pump outlets were the water got out of there. We made it very quickly over to the ship. Of course when I turned it off everything flopped down again there were men everywhere. But by this time it was sort of panic stations to get the ship out of the harbour, 100, 110 miles an hour by then. We went to sea and if I'd ever- never see it again it'd please me. We thought the other
- 16:30 hurricane I was telling you about was – or typhoon was a major one. This thing dwarfed it. The waves were 90 – we'd go down into a trough and you'd be looking up at about 120 foot of water in front of you and you'd steam up this darn trough of water on the Australia which was almost – I think it was about 800 to 1,000 feet long I've forgotten.
- 17:00 And you'd end up going through the middle of it and all the water'd wash down over the top of it. I've never seen anything so big and if you went sideways then that was it, you'd be rolling from here to Christmas. So we went through that for about 2 days I think. Got well out to sea where the troughs were larger as they condensed and got back into shore they were more frequent and shorter in between each wave
- 17:30 whereas at sea they were sort of spread out so you weren't going under so often. And we spent a day and a half, two days there before we returned to Japan. It was quite an experience. I can remember I was on lookout duty which was ridiculous because nobody'd be able to fly a plane or do anything there but I think you had to keep an eye out for where any of the other ships were. Thank God we had lights on then
- 18:00 because you could see that there was something close to you or some damned thing. Although the radar should have kept them in touch. Anyway going up the bridge, I explained the layout of the ship roughly to you and there was a safety rail and hooked onto this darn thing. But you'd go through this wave and this water'd come down the ship. You couldn't see a darn thing, you were in about 20 feet deep of water
- 18:30 and hanging like hell to the rail and hoping your line wouldn't break. And it took about 3 of these to get from A to B to get up the ladder and then you'd run like hell to get up on the bridge. And you didn't even want to get off the bridge to go back down below because you didn't think you'd possibly make it. It was unbelievable. You couldn't imagine without going through it the volume of water that is in the waves and that. As I
- 19:00 said earlier the seas are beautiful being in its compassionate stages or younger stages, I don't know how you'd term it, as a child growing up, but by God when it gets to being the cranky old man or the cruel sea type, it really scares the hell out of you. I have a great respect for it. As I think most sailors do who have been to sea and experienced any of these things. Yeah Sydney to
- 19:30 Hobart race with the catastrophes down there, you learn to respect very quickly the power of the sea.

When you were doing the work in Japan what kind of evidence was there on land of how the war had impacted on the civilians?

A lot of bombings. The train was still operating between Yokohama and Tokyo. Tokyo hadn't been bombed, especially the Emperor's palace. It was very much if you know Sydney

- 20:00 like Hyde Park on which the Emperor's Palace was built with this great moat around it. And then you had Elizabeth Street so to speak all the way around this moat. Beyond that
- 20:30 were the shops. Buildings as big as David Jones and Mark Foy's and quite a number of cars. The outer areas and factory areas and all that were bombed but the major city was – an occasional bomb had gone off course or something like that. Nothing had ever hit that palace, they made sure they never hit that, for what reason I don't know.
- 21:00 But they first tried strongly to bomb the Japanese into submission with the American B42 fortresses and day after day but it was to very little success to get them to surrender. Much the factories were knocked out, a lot of the – well Yokohama itself, there was a number of battleships
- 21:30 that were in the harbour and they'd been successfully bombed and they were still there, even when we came back to Sydney there'd been nothing done about it. There as no effort being made to clear it up. The major element around Yokohama was that the fishermen were to go out each day and try and get enough fish to feed those that were in the area. And all the village areas were off limits to service personnel
- 22:00 and in fear of something happening, but nothing ever happened. There were no killings or anything like

you're getting now in the Iraq situation.

Were you living on the ship all this time?

Yes oh yes. You know it wasn't really a holiday, it might have been treated as such

- 22:30 and you - well the navy had very little to do really. Army as usual were ashore and the Americans were virtually taking over all the tasks. We were just there in case or for whatever purposes - there were a few odd jobs that had to be done. We sent electricians ashore or men that were capable of assisting in rebuilding something or other.
- 23:00 Telecommunications. These men seemed to go up to Tokyo or down to Yokohama - I think they were trying to establish the civilian use of electricity and whatever was necessary. But it was a fairly leisurely start and a very cold finish. Snow on Yokohamas looks
- 23:30 very nice but when you go to wash down decks it's not much fun because the salt water turns to ice - stalactites and stalagmites and this silly old - Royal Navy petty officer insisted you take your shoes and socks off and scrub the decks down. They hadn't been scrubbed for 5 years. "We'll have this ship looking brand new. His British
- 24:00 ship. Of course the Australians hated this guy. And he hadn't been there, he'd just joined the ship after it was all over and here he was telling us what to do and God there was a lot of resentment there. He used to get up there and stand behind the guy with the hose and scream these orders at these guys to "Brush the deck, put more elbow into it" while this fellow - so
- 24:30 it was devised to get him to continue on in his usual manner but one of the guys was to get behind him and grease the deck. So he was about a yard behind this fellow screaming all these things and sort of to his left or right depending on how he felt.
- 25:00 So one of the chaps ducked out of one of the forward hatches and just threw this oil and grease across the deck. Of course as he stepped in it over he went. The fellows just kept walking and hosed him and hosed him right to the side of the ship. Because it was a very strong pressure hose. Poor cow ended up with a broken shoulder and a busted
- 25:30 leg anyway because the pressure of the hose - he hit the hatches as he was going across. We didn't do any more decks after that and he went off ashore somewhere. We never saw him again. I don't know what happened poor old cow. But we did enjoy what little time we had left with the ice I suppose you could say on board. Anyway that was one of the more humorous moments as far as we were concerned at the time.
- 26:00 I suppose if he'd been American he would've got a purple heart anyway.

You said that you arrived home on Christmas Day.

Yeah wonderful.

Who was there to meet you?

Nobody. There was no announcement we were coming home. All the guys - well once we left Japan the letters wouldn't beat us now, we didn't stop anywhere, we just came down. Nobody virtually

- 26:30 was there to meet us at all bar customs, they seemed to know about it. And evidentially a number of ships coming in before had been guilty of bringing in contraband and what have you. So they had about 50 of those guys waiting at Circular Quay for us to get ashore.

What kind of contraband was it?

Oh these silks and black market goods and that type of thing. Which you know went against the clothing coupon system that was operating

- 27:00 in that respect. I suppose there was rice which was rationed too and a lot of things like that. But they didn't stand a chance with 200 silly sailors that had been at sea and away from home for 15 to 20 months. We just walked through like they didn't exist. But as I said it was a brilliant day and it was dress ship.
- 27:30 I think a lot of people when it came in knew what it was by the time we did enter the harbour and we had to go ashore in liberty boats. We didn't go to Garden Island we went straight to the Man of War Steps and that's where they were waiting for us. But there was a lot of people outside and I presume the grapevine or
- 28:00 some of the navy had told various people and they'd told other people. But from my own point of view my parents didn't know and there was a lot of other guys that didn't know. All Sydneysiders anyway that were on board or New South Welshmen anyway living in close proximity of Sydney, were given leave and a few Victorians and Queenslanders and other states were requested to stay
- 28:30 on board and let the families go home. Just saw my mother's face when I knocked on her front door. She

thought it was a ghost, couldn't believe it. Because we didn't know when we were going back to Sydney and I used

29:00 to communicate with them by letter and I'd given them no indication we were coming back. Anyway ... I said, "Well it's all over Mum." She was so pleased. Sister came out and my father came out and "What the hell are you doing here?" "What trouble you got yourself in for?"

29:30 Oh he was a funny man, silly old man. So that was it. From my point of view anyway. We had the opportunity then of going on a victory cruise on the Shropshire to England. And no I'd had enough of navy and done what I felt was my duty - there was a young chap who'd love to go to England. He said his parents came from England. I said so did mine but I said,

30:00 "I've had enough of this." And having the experiences I've already mentioned with the Royal Navy - they were taking the ship back over. I didn't want anything to do with that. It was finished. So he had a draft to the Hawkesbury. I went and saw the officer of the day, whoever the hell it was you saw. Oh the officer of your watch.

30:30 And said, "Could this be arranged that I take over his draft and he can have my draft." And he couldn't understand why I didn't want to go to England. I'd already been to England once before during the war. And it was nothing but pea soup over there as far as I was concerned, I didn't want to go back and go through that again. Anyway we swapped drafts. I joined the

31:00 Hawkesbury and the captain was - Lieutenant Sprigs or some such name, can't remember his name. He was in charge - he was acting captain. Lieutenant commander joined it later on but he was 22, 23, only a young fellow. Small man.

31:30 Could've been about 3 years my junior in comparative size and what have you. Nice young fellow. And most of the crew were straight out of service. 2 or 3, the stokers and engine crew were old hands at being at sea and what have you. But on the upper deck and I think the

32:00 communications officer was - he'd seen service during the war. But there were very few that had war service. It was sort of the end of the draft and to keep it going - they were going up for occupation forces eventually and doing whatever had to be done. So they referred to me as the 'old salt' and even the captain, much to my embarrassment used

32:30 to ask "What do you think I should do?" We were bringing this LST back as I told you from Adelaide. And the towrope broke. He had no idea how to get alongside or manoeuvre the ship to pick up the - LST had had a couple of guys on it and you couldn't just leave it there in the Bass Strait. Anyway we worked it all out.

33:00 We went within - oh I'd say, it was a fairly windy day sort of thing so I suppose we were within 50 yards of it and it was just a matter of firing a rifle with a line on it and pull over line, reset the line and what have you. The only point was the midshipman that was working with us reckoned we should have reversed back onto it

33:30 and just tied the two damn pieces of rope together. Little did he realise that when you reverse the ship the rope that you have hanging over the back of your ship will go in your propellers. I got caught up in that one because of the stupid officer in Tokyo Bay. He wouldn't listen and I got abused by the captain because I was captain of my own barge and I shouldn't have been listening to an officer who knew nothing about running a damned landing barge. So these were all the things and they amused me I suppose

34:00 being such a young man but on the same token being treated as being so mature at that time.

How long did you stay in the navy for after the war?

It was July '46 I got out I think. Yeah July '46.

How did your wartime experience affect you?

A lot to sort out mentally.

34:30 I spent 3 months up in the Darling Downs doing jackarooing and tank sinking. I'd had a little experience in the school holidays in country work and it seemed very refreshing. It was away from the sea and it was a different outlook. You didn't really have to worry about this or that, a snake maybe. But

35:00 they didn't worry me. I wasn't - sharks were the only things I was scared of. It started off with snakes, sharks and spiders but I managed to overcome the snakes and spiders but the sharks, no way, still can't. Anyway I think there was a lot of time for meditating and cattle work is sitting on the back of a horse and perhaps taking them from A to B or

35:30 looking after some sheep or things of this nature. Doing the milking and all the odd jobs the new boy'd have to do whether he went into the factory or whether he went up there and was a jackaroo. A Jackaroo was a rouseabout that learnt something about the farming trade that a boy growing up in the industry wouldn't have had to learn. So you were

- 36:00 a city slicker and you'd go up there and become a jackaroo and became a farm boy. How to saddle up and what have you, which I knew anyway. But that I think stabilised me and I came back to Sydney and because – at this time anyway the shop I was telling you about, my father had set up had been sold and
- 36:30 I guess I started off at Bebarfalls because I didn't know the furniture trade. Because also in some of the school holidays I spent time in the shop cleaning it up and doing the work and never getting paid for it. And selling, you know I was lucky enough to be allowed to sell on Friday night. So
- 37:00 **Does the memories of the war, does that still affect you now?**
- Well if I let it. As you see I've opened the book or gone back to the chapter and it's hit me a couple of times during the course of this. Normally I won't talk about it but I feel that what my experiences have been have been to try and make this country
- 37:30 a better place. I feel to some degree we've succeeded but also failed in many avenues. It's hard to – I'm not into politics, I'm not into politics to any degree and I don't wish to shape the country as perhaps the various Prime Ministers do. And I know all about the
- 38:00 financial skullduggery [wrong doing] that goes on throughout the world and the corruption and everything of that nature. And until you get well down the track in life, unless you become aware of it in your younger part of your livelihood as I may have if the war hadn't been on. There's very little by the time I realised how we had succeeded
- 38:30 and how we had failed at the same time, that I could do about. And apart from that I had other duties that I had to perform in my life. And went about trying to execute these. And I was lucky enough to get the opportunity to go to the States, let's say on a scholarship I suppose you'd call it, by Westinghouse. And I did a Bachelor of Commerce course over there in the
- 39:00 American Naval Academy, in Apilos. At the end of this, because I was an Australian and had a fair idea of what the Australian nature – people were, I was seconded by the US Justice Department to do a bit of work for them over here.
- 39:30 Westinghouse engaged me and they bought into the email group and I became quite interested in electrical manufacturing and that sort of thing and it was a learning kerb I suppose you could say. I omitted to mention before, I went to the states I did
- 40:00 12 month, 18 months course at Woolworth's training managership. It was a wonderful course for giving you knowledge in that respect.
- Because we don't have much time left on the tape, I just wanted to ask you one final question. What your thoughts are on the war and the futility of war?**
- On the war
- 40:30 as it was fought in World War 1 and World War 11 it was to achieve the end of all wars and we firmly believed this, especially when the atomic bomb came on, that this was the weapon that would cease everyone being so goddamned mad and going onto to killing each other to make a point or take something that you had that I wanted and I'd rather die than not have it. It is absolutely
- 41:00 stupid what's going on today and always will. You've got those that have and those that haven't, and those that haven't want those that have it, and those that've got it ain't going to give it. It is definitely a futile thing and they say the pen is mightier than the sword but I think it depends on how sharp the pen is or something. Use it as a bayonet. It's very difficult to summarise it.
- 41:30 If the world could live in peace where we cared, and I'm not looking at the communists or Fabian beliefs of those who have it should give it to those that haven't, but everyone should work. If you take the common insect, garden bee, there's what the world should be.