Australians at War Film Archive

Roy Freeman (Skipper) - Transcript of interview

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Tape 1

00:36 **Thanks for participating in the archive project, Roy. If I can ask you to start by giving us a brief summary of your life and your service record please?**

I was born in Sydney in July 1928. My mother and father were English, and I was born in Marrickville.

01:00 I'm the eldest son of two, my brother Keith and I. We shifted shortly after I was born to Bexley, where my brother was born two years later, then we came and lived most of our childhood at Bronte, on the eastern suburbs, right near the beach.

01:30 We had marvellous times at the beach; we spent the summers in swimming costumes. We were always togged up as little British kids, because we had sou'westers on and we always wore sandshoes too, even swimming we had them. But, we had a very nice childhood, I went to Clovelly Public School and from there to high school, and I got my leaving certificate from

02:00 Sydney Technical High School, which at that time was right near Victoria Barracks in Albion Street, at Darlinghurst. When I left school, I went to the Technical College, and did a couple of years of Architecture, then I decided that I'd apply for Duntroon, I was about nineteen when I applied.

02:30 Consequently, I was a couple of years older than my classmates at Duntroon. Prior to going away, I'd been in the Scouts movement for a long, long time. Ultimately, the Rover Crew was the seedy end of the Scouts, and I didn't enjoy that a great deal. I went to Duntroon, and got there in 1948,

03:00 that was my junior class, which was known as fourth class, and I spent four years, graduating in 1951. We had a fairly large class, the army was starting to increase in size, and our class was a fairly big one when we went in. We went in with about sixty six people, and we graduated with fifty three, so we had a twenty per cent

03:30 drop out rate for academic reasons or attitude or something like that. Of the fifty three that graduated, there were sixteen who graduated into infantry, but because the Korean War had just started in 1950, and the casualties amongst junior officers were pretty high, they decided to upgrade the number graduating,

04:00 so they brought it out to thirty two, they doubled us by bringing in graduates from the other service, artillery graduates and armour graduates and sea graduates. They all became temporary infantry officers for two years, which allowed us all to go to Korea for a year as infantry officers. Substantially, we were all trained as infantry officers at Duntroon, as well as doing a civil program,

04:30 we had to do a program which complied with about two years of normal degree course in science or engineering, or arts, whatever you wanted to do. I graduated in 1951, and at the end of 1952 I sailed, or I got an aircraft to Tokyo,

05:00 and then ended up in Korea, in the middle of winter in Korea, just before Christmas '52. That's when my active service started in Korea. I joined the Third Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment, it was know as "Old Faithful," it had been there since 1950, but it was reinforced from time to time,

05:30 during that period by new officers and new men, and I took hold of 7 Platoon in C Company 3RAR [Royal Australian Regiment] at that time. When I joined them they were out of the line, they'd come out of the line about three weeks previously, and they were ready to go again after New Years Eve, we went in.

06:00 Back to an area called 355, 355 denotes the meterage of the mountain we were on, it was 355 metres high, which was a large feature in that area, but Korea was a very mountainous area where we were. It's made up of large valleys,

06:30 and large rivers, especially in summer time when the snow melts. Large rivers could be a thousand

metres wide. We were just over one large river called the Imjin River, which was just north of Seoul, the capital of South Korea, and we were holding that line just above the 38th parallel.

07:00 So we were experiencing severe winter conditions, we were not used to this. We had very good clothing, though, that was one of the main things in Korea, we had good clothing.

If I could just interrupt you, because we will talk about Korea in detail for the rest of in the day. Could you tell me briefly when you left Korea and what happened after you came home?

07:30 The Korean War finished on the 27th of July, 1953, and they had been piling new duty officers into that to get some experience of warfare. The class that graduated behind us in 1952 had come up to take our places, I was supernumerary in my company, and

08:00 I was drafted out of Korea in August ’53, and went to Kure for holding, then I came back to in the middle of September ’53, and I brought a plane load of troops back with me, a sky marshal load of troops. We came back through Guam, Port Moresby, and then

08:30 Sydney.

I have some questions about your childhood. Was the family living in Bronte during World War 11?

Yes, we were living in Bronte, and my brother and I had been in the Scouts. I was about eleven when the war

09:00 started, I’d just gone to high school, and in the Scouts as such we joined the National Service component of the Scouts, where we ran round and acted as air-raid wardens. We had black outs in Sydney at that stage, and we had air-raid warnings. Our job was to go around with the adult air-raid warden,

09:30 and run his messages for him, or knock on doors and tell people to put their lights out or cover up their windows with blankets, because we had complete blackouts in those days. All the cars had special headlights on them for when they’d travel at night. We were living in Bronte when the Japanese shelled Sydney

10:00 from Maroubra, they were off Maroubra in a submarine. They’d had some light aircraft that had gone over Sydney, and the shells had come virtually right across our house where we were living and gone as far as Bondi, right over Bronte, Tamarama, and they

10:30 shelled part of Bondi in that way. My brother and I, being good Scouts, said, “We’ve got to go to the air-raid wardens and go and help them.” My mother and my grandmother, who was living with us at the time had been through the First World War in London, said, “You’re not going anywhere near it at all, you’re not getting out of this place.” They upended the table in the hallway,

11:00 and put a mattress in there, and my brother and I had to climb underneath that. My grandmother was quite a good old Scout, she had a half bottle of brandy in the glass cabinet, labelled ‘Air-raid brandy’, and the two of them demolished this half bottle of brandy between them before the air-raid warning.

11:30 So we didn’t get out to help the air-raid wardens, and my brother and I cowered underneath a mattress in the hallway waiting for the thing to stop.

Do you remember what time of day it was?

It was in the evening, round about six or seven o’clock, it was quite dark, in May or June, I forget now. It was ’42 or ’43.

12:00 It was quite a to-do because it was the first time anything had happened really, as far south as Sydney, and by that time the beach at Bronte had three lines of barbed wire across it, and we had a search light battalion up on the northern part of Bronte beach,

12:30 and we had machine gun nests in the park, where the tram came down the hill, and they’d dug in machine gun placements there, so we were expecting the Japanese to come in on any of those beaches, Bronte or Bondi. They’d even blown the piers down, Bondi at that stage had had two piers of concrete jutting out from the main promenade out to the surf,

13:00 and they’d blown those down because they didn’t want the Japanese to get in on those. It too had three lines of barbed wire right across it. So if you went for a swim, you had to go through the zigzag area to go and have a swim.

What do you remember was the turning point for people taking the Japanese threat more seriously in Sydney? What do you think it was?

I think it was that, plus soon after that the

13:30 three submarines got into the harbour, and they torpedoed, they tried to get at some of the American fleet who were anchored in the harbour. These were two men submarines, and they came in underneath another ship that was coming in through the boom gates. They got through into the inner harbour,

14:00 and they let go their torpedoes and it went underneath the United States cruiser that they were trying to blow up, and it hit Kuttabul, which is an Australian naval ship, or a ferry which is being used as a staging area for naval personnel, and it killed about nineteen navy

14:30 personnel. That was the fact that they could get into the harbour and cause so much damage. Two of the submarines were found and depth charged, and the fellows in them were killed. Soon after that, the submarines were hoisted out of the harbour and put on display at Bennelong Point, where the Opera House is now.

15:00 At that time, it was a big tram depot, and they had this large ground on the western side of Bennelong Point, and they put the damaged submarines there with all their bits and pieces. That was on display.

Did you go down and have a look?

Oh, yes. My mother took my brother and I down, and we had a look at it. People were very worried about it.

15:30 A lot of people in Manly and Bondi, where there was large residential areas, they got out of the place completely, they sold up, usually at a loss, and they went bush. A lot of people did that, especially through Manly and Bondi, they were the areas which were mainly threatened.

16:00 **What about in your neighbourhood in Bronte, were there families that moved out?**

There were some, but not a lot. Bondi was a much larger beach, we were a smaller beach, it could be a rather treacherous beach. We weren't really worried about that, most of the homes were not easily accessible from the beach,

16:30 because we were living behind the main shopping area. I can't remember too many people going, but there was a great exodus from Manly and Bondi.

While you say parents and people were genuinely frightened, I am interested in what your general impressions were as a child growing up?

We were excited by the whole thing.

17:00 We were involved in the war effort in Scouts, we had this National Service thing, or emergency service as they called it. On the Saturday morning, we'd go up to an area in Clovelly, this large house, and we'd make camouflage nets, and everybody was involved in all those sorts of things.

17:30 My mother was doing a lot for the Australian Comforts Fund, and everybody seemed to be prepared to have a go. At that stage we had food rationing and petrol rationing, and whilst we weren't incommoded by that at all, we just couldn't get all the things we wanted to get.

18:00 Clothing, you had to make do with what clothing you had, or cut down your father's suit to have a pair of trousers, because you just couldn't get new clothing. That was one of the things that we remember, but not badly, it was just uncomfortable or not quite as it was before the war.

What were your perceptions as a child of the Japanese?

18:30 We didn't like the Japanese at all. There was an anti-Japanese feeling before the war, because the place was flooded with cheap Japanese toys which fell apart.

19:00 I grew up during the Depression, which didn't really worry my family, although my father did have problems with the Depression, but we never went hungry or without shoes, but there were kids at school that very rarely had lunch, you'd share your lunch with them, or some of them didn't have shoes.

19:30 Public school in Clovelly, there were kids there that their father or mother hadn't been working for years. I went to school in 1933, when I was five. We used to walk to school and walk home. It was a pretty simple sort of thing, but we were well looked after at school.

20:00 We had a good school, good teachers, and even during the war when I was in high school, we had air-raid drills and air-raid places we could go, they were dug in the schools and sheathed over with earth and corrugated iron, and we

20:30 had special drills about going into those air-raid buildings. Even in the schools themselves, in case of air raid with incendiaries, we had buckets of sand, water and all that sort of thing. The whole thing was upgraded to virtually a war footing, so we were quite conscious of the fact that there was a war, but it really

21:00 wasn't worrying us except when we got to high school, particularly Sydney Technical High School where we had old boys coming back in uniform, and some didn't come back, so in the school magazine you'd see so-and-so was killed in Britain or somewhere else. Casualties were in the papers,

21:30 and you knew that there were casualties in various areas. We knew as a family we had relatives in England, who we used to send bundles, parcels of food to Britain. They were having a much harder time

than we were, in fact they were having a terrible time in some cases in Britain.

22:00 We were advised fairly well of what was going on, and we were doing the best we can, I thought. Every boy was saying, “When I’m eighteen I’m going into the army or the navy, or the air force.” We thought that was on,

22:30 but the war finished in 1945, and that was my last year of school, I was seventeen, so I didn’t get to go to war during that period. I did ask my father and mother if I could join the navy as a cadet midshipman, but my father said, “No, you’re not going to go to the navy.” He was in the merchant navy,

23:00 and he was away a lot of this time. My mother was virtually a sole parent, he would come home probably once in six weeks when the ship was in Sydney, or when the ship was not coming to Sydney he would let her

23:30 know and she would have to get a special permit to go to Melbourne to see him. We had our grandmother looking after us and a couple of aunts, they weren’t really aunts, but they were friends of my mother and father’s which we called aunts. So we were very well looked after from a family point of view.

24:00 My mother and my grandmother had a great deal to do with our bringing up, my brothers and I, and both of them were fantastic women. They did a heck of a lot for us.

What had been their background in England?

My parents wasn’t actually very good.

24:30 My father had gone to sea when he was about thirteen, and I didn’t know till when he was quite old. As a boy of fourteen he’d been on a hospital ship off the coast of Gallipoli, when they were bringing in all the

25:00 thousands of people that were getting clobbered at Gallipoli. So he had a fairly savage sort of a start to his life at sea. He’d actually had two other friends that joined the navy together,

25:30 or they knew each other as young boys on the ships. Eventually they came out and settled in New Zealand for a little while, the three of them. They thought they’d have New Zealand as their head quarters. Then they thought that was no good, and they’d come across to Australia, so dad came across to Australia in about 1926. My mother and he had been married in about 1922,

26:00 after the war, then he brought my mother out in 1927, and I was born in December 1928. My mother came out with her mother. My mother had been born in 1901, they were both the same age virtually, and

26:30 they married in 1922. My mother had been a fairly bright girl, she ended up at the War Office during the war, she was about sixteen when she started there, and by the time she left there she was a supervisor in the War Office.

27:00 I wouldn’t say she was very well educated, but at that stage they didn’t educate girls much past second year or third year high school, but she was very, very bright. She had an idea that one had to better one self, one had to do the hard yards, and

27:30 she was always a very good role model in that. I think she was a bit of a snob, but that was all to the good, she wasn’t that bad.

What makes you say that you think she was a bit of a snob?

I think the way she looked after us and wanted us to be the best we could. She always did things well, and she would

28:00 go without herself, but she made sure everything looked good and was good. She instilled certain things into us which are probably with us now seventy five years after. We still remember what she expected of us, but she was always a very forthright person, we were always encouraged to bring

28:30 our friend’s home, on a weekend we’d always have, especially living at the beach, people would come in and have lunch and go and have a swim. The house was always open, we had marvellous sing songs around the piano, which she played. She was self taught, she played by ear, but she played quite well.

29:00 There’s always a fight between Uncle Warry and Uncle Eddie, they’re friends of my father, Eddie played very well, self taught, an excellent piano player, and Uncle Warry, I think he was a bit of a cockney, actually, and he

29:30 played well on the black notes only, he didn’t play on the white notes at all. So there’s always a fight as to who’s going to play the piano at family gatherings, but Mum played quite well with the boys, and any of the girls who came up for our weekend dos. We had a very good childhood, very well protected and

30:00 it was excellent, really, looking back on it.

What were their friends like? What sort of people were they?

Just ordinary people. Mainly the friends round the area, people in the same street, aunts and uncles. My mother was a

30:30 gregarious person, we were in Scouts, she was on the Scout committee, when we were at school, she was always in the Parents and Friends, or Parents and Citizens. She took an interest in what we were doing, she was on the church committee, and she'd deliver church newsletters to people in the parish at Bronte.

31:00 She did all those things, but she wasn't overly religious. My father wasn't overly religious and neither was I, but that was one thing. We were Anglicans, but I eventually became a Catholic, which caused a bit of a raucous

31:30 when I met this Catholic girl when I was in Wagga Wagga, who I'm still married to, and I decided to become a Catholic. The family were not very happy about it, they loved Paula, but they didn't like the religion, and because my grandmother, she didn't meet Paula, but she was a very bigoted Wesley, and

32:00 I don't know whether you want to hear those sort of things?

I do actually Roy, because it's hard for people of my age to grasp this concept of the division between Catholic and Protestants.

At that stage, there were severe problems with Catholics and Anglicans, or Protestants,

32:30 Masonry, if you were an Anglican you were expected to, Masons were very strong in the fabric of Australian life at that stage. Even in the police force and the railways, you had different sorts of people, so they said, you could get ahead by being a Catholic, but there were Masons in there too, and the same thing with the railways.

33:00 The railways, you'd get ahead if you were a Mason. These things were ridiculous, really, and they've gone now, I should think, but they were very strong in those days.

Did people have any concept of what the Masons did, or what it meant?

No, it was a secret society, nobody really knew. They'd always worry about people going off to their Lodge meeting with their little black bags, and they didn't know what they had in them.

33:30 That was the Anglican side, but the Catholics in 1919 had virtually formed their own type of lodge with a thing called the Knights of the Southern Cross, which was also a secret thing, but the Catholics at that stage

34:00 said they had formed that so they could combat the unions at the time in 1919, which were largely Protestant, and they were not letting Catholic workers get into them, so the Knights of the Southern Cross were formed for the Catholic Church. There was a little bit of antagonism. If you are going to a public school as an Anglican,

34:30 you'd see the Catholics going to their school and sing nasty songs at them.

Can you remember any of those songs?

I can't, but my godmother was very bigoted, and she was always concerned about two nuns going around together and being on the same side of the street as nuns, it was just ridiculous nonsense. When I started to become a Catholic, it was

35:00 quite a cross to bear for my mother and my father, although they were not religious people, they just couldn't see why I was doing it.

So as a child did you go to church on the weekend?

As a Scout, we'd have a church pray every month, we'd go to that, and sit in the pews.

35:30 As the plate came around, we'd put in a penny, and take out a halfpenny or something. We used to have a great march in the Scouts, we'd march down from Arden Street, near Clovelly Road. We had a bugle band and a drum band, and we'd march down

36:00 Arden Street with the troop behind marching. There'd be about forty odd of us, then we'd go to church to pray, so that was when we were in St Luke's Scout Troop.

Did you have a Scout hall?

Yes, we did have a Scout hall, in Varna Street in Clovelly, just off Arden Street.

36:30 Right next to the church, it was part of the church, really, but we used it as the Scout hall.

What were your scoutmasters like?

Well, he was an excellent fellow, his name was Ashton, we called him Middy Ashton. By trade he had an

electrical company, and he did employ a couple of the Senior Scouts, as apprentices.

37:00 An excellent fellow. In lots of ways, he was like a surrogate father, because we'd go on camping trips for four days, we'd camp at old Menangle. He looked after us very, very well, a very nice fellow.

Were there boys that you were aware of who had fathers away fighting the war?

37:30 Yes, well my own father was away, and there were lots of others. We had a lot of friends who had fathers and brothers. A lot of the senior Scouts that we knew had gone away and joined the navy or the army or the air force.

38:00 We were friendly with two families, my father on one of his ships had made friends with one of the fellows there. He was a widower, and he had two sons, a lot older than my brother and I.

38:30 They were being looked after by his sister, who had three sons, and their name was Ollis, and the other fellow's name was Schave. There was Bernard Schave and Alan Schave, and Alan Schave, during the war, joined the air force, and he came and lived with

39:00 my family for about six months before he went over to Canada for the Empire training. Bernard, his brother, had been killed in Timor, and the other family, the Ollises, John Ollis was at Moore College, theological student, and joined up as a sergeant early in the war.

39:30 Ray Ollis had been at the Cathedral school at St Andrew's, he did some journalism, and when he was eighteen he joined up in the air force. Ron, his older brother, he too went to Timor.

40:00 Of those families, John and Ron were killed in Timor, and Bernard their cousin was killed in Timor, and Ray came back as a bomber pilot, and he was not good at all. He went to Kenya after the war.

40:30 He wasn't rational, he killed himself when he was about forty in South Australia. Alan came back, he also was a bomber pilot, he's living over at Killarney Heights now, he's the only one that's alive of those five boys, three of them were killed in the war.

41:00 My brother and I, when we were quite young, fourteen, thirteen, we'd go to their house in Gladesville on the water. They were right next to Scots College boatshed, we'd get a boat out from there and ride out on the Parramatta River. We had some lovely Sunday afternoons with that family. It's so sad, we were quite aware of what was happening.

41:30 These three boys, John was twenty four, Bernard was about twenty eight, and Ron was about twenty seven, they were killed at Timor in that area. The other one was okay, but Ray.

Tape 2

00:31 **Roy, what are your memories of your school days?**

Mainly of headmasters and teachers, and boys and friends. We had great teachers, at that stage during the war, a lot of the male teachers had gone to join up, or been called up,

01:00 so there was an influx of female teachers during the war. Prior to the war, going through primary school and infants school, they were mainly female teachers, and they were terrific. We used to have these fantastic fellows that come, and for threepence they'd put on a show.

01:30 One fellow used to play the piano with his nose, and do all sorts of juggling tricks. There was another fellow who used to come, and he used to talk to us about whaling, he'd been an old salt from somewhere, and he'd spin these terrific tales about catching whales off Albany, and it wasn't a bad thing in those days to be a whaler.

02:00 He'd had these wonderful stories to tell us about whaling. I can remember those two particularly, the school would go to the auditorium that we had, we'd all pay our threepence and hear this fellow carry on about whaling or the other fellow play his piano with his nose, which was quite a show.

02:30 The other thing I can remember was when I was in third grade, I'd gone up to the primary school at Clovelly Primary School, in Arden Street. We had a diphtheria outbreak in Sydney, and we all had to be immunised, and go through a series of three inoculations.

03:00 That was horrendous, I didn't like needles at that stage, and I don't think I like them very much these days either. I can remember that, there was a great deal of trauma. We had lovely Miss Benham, she was my third grade teacher, and then

03:30 we had Mr Hogg for fourth grade. He reputedly had a steel plate in his head, because he'd been in the First World War. He was inclined to get angry very easily, and we all put that down to the steel plate in his head. I think it was probably us that made him angry. Playing marbles and

04:00 generally having a reasonably good education for a primary school. Most of the male teachers at that stage had gone through the First World War, they were all ex-servicemen, you could tell from the little badge that they wore as an ex-serviceman. We had one mad fellow who used to teach us woodworking,

04:30 and drawing. He used to get quite stroppy and throw things at us. Great big lumps of wood, which would never be accepted in these days for a teacher to do that to anybody. They could give you the cane too, we used to get the cane if we stepped out of line. We'd walk to school, walk back home.

05:00 At that stage, in 1939, we had some Jewish boys come to the school, they were German Jews, quite a number of them came from the eastern suburbs.

05:30 A lot of them settled in Bondi, we had a couple in Bronte, and they were always looked upon with a great deal of doubt about them. We always called them 'reffos' [refugees] for one thing or another. They slotted in after a while, and through high school, we had a number of

06:00 people come in. A lot of boys came into my school from Hong Kong, their parents had been living in Hong Kong. I had some special friends that went back to Scotland after the war. He and his brother joined the Scouts as well. We had special friends with them.

06:30 A lot of the Jewish boys that came to school at that time did very well too. Eugene Kamenka was one, he became a professor at the university in mathematics. Another one, called Basser,

07:00 I think his father was Adolph Basser, whose father was a very well known educationist. Another one started off the nut shops in the Strand Arcade, they made these beautiful nuts with the inner almonds and chocolates and things like that. So they were quite clever people, and did rather well. There were a couple who were engineers, who didn't really

07:30 sit well with the population at that stage. They were always rather lonely, we didn't really concern ourselves with them too much, except that we were suspicious of them.

As a kid, did you know much about why they'd come, why they were refugees?

No, we didn't know anything at all. We knew they were refugees, and we knew that

08:00 Germany had virtually forced them out. A lot of these ones that we were getting started to come from about '37 or so, they had been able to get out themselves, so they were pretty well educated, professionally educated very likely. They were able to have enough money to get to England or to Australia.

08:30 They were the lucky ones, but they didn't talk much about it at all. They didn't talk at all about the treatment that the Jews were getting, we didn't know that. We'd heard that things like Kristallnacht when they burnt the books and broke in all the windows and did that. That was well reported, but we couldn't understand that. We didn't know that

09:00 people could be so set upon by other people, particularly by Christian people, you wouldn't expect it. The Christian churches were quite well looked after in Germany and Austria, and we didn't know what was happening at all.

09:30 **What do you remember of the war ending?**

Well, I was going to school, and what happened at Sydney Technical High school was that I was in a part of the school which was an annexe over in the East Sydney Technical College where we rubbed shoulders with a whole lot of bohemian

10:00 art people over there, the old Darlinghurst jail. We had some classrooms there. It was just said, "the war's going to finish," and it finished at about ten o'clock that day, we knew it was going to happen, and we were all sent home. Holidays, sent home for the day.

10:30 The people flocked to town, we didn't go to town, I was only seventeen. I went home, probably on the tram. I used to get a tram from Bronte to Darlinghurst, and get out near Victoria Barracks and walk up to the school.

11:00 It was one of those things that we were very pleased about, but we knew it was coming. I mean, we'd been warned. After they dropped the first bomb on Hiroshima we understood that that was going to be the end of it. It really was, they put another bomb in Nagasaki and that

11:30 sort of convinced the Japanese that something should be done about it. I think everybody was pleased that it was over, and that the men who were still around on the islands were going to come back alive. That didn't really happen, because some of the Japanese stayed on these islands and they fought well after the peace had been declared, and there were still a lot of casualties coming in after that.

12:00 Mainly rejoicing. The people working in the city got out and they threw tickertape all over the place and danced in the streets, but school boys, I didn't have to go to the city, I just went back home.

12:30 Very, very pleased that it was just over.

Your father had been a merchant seaman, had he been involved in the war in any way?

Yes, he was mainly running around the coast of Australia and New Guinea, and he was involved in that. I found out afterwards the number of ships that were sunk was quite horrendous

13:00 around Australia. He told me that they had had sightings of Japanese submarines following them, but they always had some sort of an escort. They also had their own gun on the forepart of the ship, and I think they had machine guns at the after part.

13:30 The number of merchant ships that were sunk was quite large, but we weren't told about that.

So what was his role around the coast?

They were just delivering normal goods, coal and all sorts of things.

14:00 Prior to that, before the war, there was a fairly large passenger traffic running around the coast from Perth right up to Cairns. That was serviced by ships that were fifty per cent passengers, they might carry about three hundred passengers and the rest would be cargo.

14:30 The cargo in those sort of ships might be machinery, they had large carriers for coal, and they were going from the Hunter, from Newcastle, to Port Kembla, to Wollongong, and then they were bringing food down, of course, from Cairns.

15:00 So they had a lot of varied cargo, as well as defence stuff I suppose, but he never really discussed what they carried. They obviously were carrying stuff that had to be got from point A to point B at a certain amount of risk. Our roads couldn't handle some of the tanks that we had.

15:30 Military tanks, they just couldn't go over the bridges, so a lot of the heavy equipment had to come through as deck cargo, something like that.

When you went to technical college, what was it that you thought you would end up doing? What were your aspirations?

I was doing architecture, so I was going to be an architect. I had two years of that, I didn't mind it.

16:00 I went back to it later, when I came out of the army, not quite architecture, but engineering. I just thought that I would prefer going to Duntroon and getting a very good education, because we did the civil course there at Duntroon as well. Getting that sort of a life,

16:30 I fancied that sort of a life in the army. We'd never had any military people in our family before. I had a cousin who was the son of my mother's brother in London, but they were a lot older than us. He'd been in the British army, pre-war, since he was about seventeen.

17:00 He'd served in India and elsewhere. He'd been captured at Dunkirk, and was one of the first British soldiers who'd escaped from his thing just before the end of the war, they reckoned he captured Berlin at one stage. So, they had this huge

17:30 newspaper which says 'Sergeant Jones captures Berlin'. I think he was just lucky to get out quick and lively, and get into Berlin and meet the Russians.

What attracted you to a life in the army?

Well, it was certainly going to be an upgrade in your learning and your potential, that's what I considered.

18:00 It just appealed to me, being in the army, being able to have my own troops and make those sorts of decisions. It was the sort of thing where I could say I could upgrade my whole life. I wasn't that happy with

18:30 spending days in a drawing office designing houses or anything like that. I never was happy with that, but I just thought it would be a better opportunity for me.

How much do you think growing up in World War 11 influenced your interest?

Well, it did, because in 1943

19:00 during the war, I had tried to go to Duntroon, because at that stage I had my intermediate certificate, and they were taking people at that stage for the intermediate certificate. But I was only fifteen, and the course at Duntroon varied during the war, it was ostensibly four years, but during the war they decreased it to two years, and then one year to get

19:30 through more fellows out into the force. I tried to but my mother and father said, "No, you're not. You're too young to have a go." Of course they thought I'd be straight into the army, and being shot at at fifteen or sixteen years old. That's when I said to Dad, "Can I apply

20:00 to be a cadet midshipman?" He said, "No, I don't want a son of mine going to sea," because he thought

it was a terrible life, and it really was a very hard life to be at sea. I'm sure my mother would have preferred to have my father home more often than he was, and it wasn't till she became very sick

20:30 right after the war that he eventually came home from the sea. He dropped the sea completely and stayed home. So, it was not a good life for anybody, really. Long absences, and my mother actually had to bring up two sons on her own. She did that,

21:00 I hope she did a good job. We always thought she did. It wouldn't have been easy for her at all. By the same token, I'm sure my wife would never had been happy being an army wife. That's one of the reasons that I got out of the army, not the real reason but most of the reason.

21:30 It was one of the bonuses, I knew that my wife would be happier being a civilian than being an army wife. Army in those days had very poor conditions, it was a very small army, so you didn't have accommodation for your wives, or there was accommodation there, but it was hard to come by.

22:00 They didn't really look after soldiers a great deal.

What was your parent's reaction when you said to them you wanted to go to Duntroon?

They thought it was okay at first, they didn't do anything at all to say I shouldn't do that. They wondered why, my mother particularly, why I wanted to forego architecture,

22:30 and start off something completely new. They didn't like me having to leave home, because it entailed going to Duntroon in Canberra, and you were there virtually all the year, except in the more senior years you had a couple of leaves during the year.

23:00 You had a long leave at Christmas time. Again, it was a hard ship on them too, because when I first went to Duntroon, you weren't paid anything. We got a living allowance, which was credit to us every month, and we had a mess book that we had to sign, but everything that was credited was taken out again.

23:30 We had to pay for our own laundry and our messing, special things that went off the total at mess, even the extra mess service, we had to pay for that even as cadets. I was just looking at my account book last night, getting ready for what was going to be happening today, and it was surprising.

24:00 We had no money, but my parents had to give the army an amount of money which would be doled out to me on a scale every week. All I could get when I was nineteen as a cadet was five shillings a week.

24:30 That was in 1948. At the end of 1948, they'd upped it to seventeen and six. That's what we had for the next year, and after that they decided to give us pocket money themselves from the army.

25:00 We only got something like a pound a week, which went nowhere, really.

What was the selection process for getting into Duntroon?

Well, it was a pretty heavy physical process. You had to have thirty two of your own teeth in your head, and you had to have

25:30 no problems medically, even a broken leg could put you out if you're not good. No things like asthma or other diseases you could be tossed out as well, you wouldn't have been considered. We had a stiff medical test, a stiff psychological test, and then the

26:00 interview. The commandant would come down and you'd be interview in Victoria Barracks in Sydney. There was a large library up there, you'd be interviewed in there with the commandant. There'd be a psych [psychiatrist] fellow at that, and probably the adjutant of the college and another officer.

26:30 They would ask you questions, "What do you want to be? Where do you want to go? What was your idea putting yourself forward?" Any referees you had, they'd look at them. It could be daunting, it didn't worry me at all, but it was something that

27:00 you wanted to perform well at. You know, they asked you things, whether you had any girlfriends, all those sorts of things, to look and see if you were a straight up and down fellow. They didn't worry too much about your background, you had to have certain qualifications as far as leaving certificate was concerned.

27:30 I suppose the majority of people that presented themselves for Duntroon could have been PGS [private grammar school] blokes. There were three from Scots in my year, about five of them tried to get in. There was

28:00 Grammar, St Ignatius Riverview, a number tried, two actually got in. I became very good friends with those two and the Scots boys. There would have been in Sydney alone about two hundred, and they only took about twenty. Of the sixty that went in, about a third were from New South Wales.

28:30 A third were from Victoria, and the rest of the third were taken from New Zealand and Tasmania and Queensland.

What qualities do you think they were looking out for?

One might think leadership qualities. You went through a series of small programs where they divided you up into teams,

29:00 and they put you through various things and see how you behaved in that team, and whether you actually performed or whether you gave any leading in that team. These were all quick decision exercises of how to get from A to B, across a river, how would you build a bridge over here, how would you get from there to there. The idea was if you were any good

29:30 you would be seen then as putting your spoke in and showing what you were going to do, and it had to be well thought out. They were looking at you all the time, that you were in those sort of things.

Can you explain what it was like to first arrive at Duntroon?

Shocking. It was

30:00 the worst thing you could even think of, probably the worst English public school type of thing you could ever think of. There was no fagging, not people running messages, but they'd do what they call fourth class training on you.

30:30 The idea of it was to form a very close-knit class, and it did. Our class was about sixty six when it went in, and we all stayed together, and you acted as a class. They would ask you all sorts of questions, even at meal times, what they called bastardisation.

31:00 The senior class had, not a life and death point of view, but they could make you tow the line, because you wanted to tow the line, I mean, you accepted it. They asked you all sorts of questions at mealtimes, about who was the Minister for Defence, topical things, what was happening in the world.

31:30 You had to know a lot about how the army was structured, about certain generals, and also how Duntroon was founded, all the people in that basis, and topical things that were happening. So they kept you on your toes, and really

32:00 you accepted it because you understood that you'd have your turn at this one day, when the next student class came in, and it was good for you in a way you were being taught a lot of things that were vital to know and your performance was being looked at from the people in the college, not only the officers that were teaching you,

32:30 but also we had a buddy rating system, so that the senior class rated the junior class. The junior classes never rated the senior classes, and this was a psychological thing we were undergoing all the time. This was explained to us later by the psych officer that only ever worried about the people on either end of the scale, those that rated

33:00 very highly and those that rated very lowly, the ones in the big bell shape, in the okay range, they're the ones that they didn't worry about, but the two ends, the extremes, they did have a look at them.

How did the rating system work?

Well, you just got a rating sheet, you had to put

33:30 the other classes in from one to fifty, or however many it was.

On what basis?

Good value, or bad value. You rated them as whether you thought they were worthy to stay in the college. That was almost like a self cancellation thing, and that went through for about three years.

How often would that be done?

Well, twice a year.

34:00 **Were any boys unable to cope?**

Yes. One got out after two days, he couldn't stand it. After that, in my first year there, I think we lost about eight fellows, for a variety of reasons.

34:30 One would be attitude, the attitude of that cadet to the army life as a whole, the other could be academically not good. Unless they were sick, there were a couple of fellows that were let out, because they'd broken limbs or had severe ailments that would come against them

35:00 as a serving officer. But there was mainly the schoolwork, or the study work that you did, both civil and nautical that we did. Your attitude, if you didn't have the right attitude, you were finished. You had to conform, that was the thing. We all, at that stage, conformed. It was all, "Yes sir, no sir, three bags full sir,"

35:30 which didn't suit everybody, it didn't suit me, because I was a little bit older, I was two years older than most of them. There were three of us that were about the same age.

How did you cope?

I buckled down and I coped. Well, I probably passed in football, that was one thing. No, I coped reasonably well, my military work was okay.

36:00 My studies were not bad, I had patchy studies, academically, because I wasn't really interested. I was more interested in the military stuff. I coped reasonably well with the whole thing, mainly because I was a little bit more mature than the others, I think.

36:30 I could take a lot of nonsense which didn't really worry me a great deal.

Were there any instances that you can remember when you were personally involved in that bastardisation?

Not ones that really upset me, ones that I laugh about.

Could you describe some of them?

Yeah, I could.

37:00 Our initiations could be horrendous. Soon after we joined the college, the senior classes would say, "There's an exercise on tonight, you'll get dressed in your full marching order, pack on your back, rifle," and we went out for a march supervised by senior class men.

37:30 This was something that was organised by the cadets, but with the full cooperation of the staff, the staff knew this was going on. We'd do this six mile or eight mile march in about three hours or something, come back to the gymnasium, and then we'd get into our PT [physical training] gear,

38:00 we'd get in to the gymnasium, they'd hose us down, and they'd put us up walking up planks and all sorts of stuff. Going through tunnels, coir mats made into a tunnel, then the last thing would be, you'd be shot out the end of it, and they'd dug a big trench behind the gymnasium which they'd filled with all the

38:30 grease trap stuff out of the kitchen and rubbish. Old vegetable peelings, with an ice block on top. Then we would sit on this ice, then they'd hit the ice with a sword which was connected to a generator, and you'd get this almighty shock. You'd slide into this rubbish from this tank,

39:00 and they'd duck you for every letter in your name, so I got Freeman, so I got seven ducks. There was one fellow in my class whose name was Bishop-Kinleyside, and he got one for the hyphen as well. You didn't get too worried about that. We used to rag the senior class.

39:30 We had shower in the morning and shower in the evening, to get into mess dress. You had to learn to dress very quickly. We had bugles for five minutes to go to mess or parade, and then a two minute alarm, and you had to be on parade in two minutes time, fully dressed in your mess dress.

40:00 If you were going to meals, you didn't have to wear a cap. The senior class would delay us in the shower room, they wouldn't let you get out the door. You'd start off with the dry fives, they'd call it. You'd be dry, and at five minutes to go you were allowed to go to your room and get dressed. Then they

40:30 got that down to a wet five, so you had to end up drying yourself, then it came down to a dry twos. So you developed little quirks where you put your mess boots on, but you didn't put any socks on. You had a shirt with a tie that you could just go bang like that to. You developed all these little tricks to get past, because we had high necks on.

41:00 You weren't allowed have a bath. There were baths and about six shower recesses, toilets. The senior class could have a bath, except I was able to have a bath in fourth class, because we had a boxing competition, and everybody boxed in fourth class, you had to box. We were all pretty fit, and there were some

41:30 bloodbaths in boxing matches. They were all Queensberry rules with three two-minute rounds for a start, and the first boxing match I had was a company competition, so I was fighting another fellow of my own weight in another company, a classmate of mine. I happened to win the thing.

Tape 3

00:30 **Roy, could you just go back to the start of that story about the boxing match?**

We all had to box, fourth class had to do that as a thing, and my first boxing match I had this classmate that I hammered, and he ended up in hospital. Because I'd done so well in the boxing that night,

01:00 our corporal said, "You can have a bath tonight, Freeman." So I luxuriated in the bath, and thought this was fantastic. The next time I fought, I fought a senior class fellow, and whilst I stayed erect, he beat me, and I wasn't offered a bath that night at all, I had an ordinary shower. They would make us have

cold showers and sing

01:30 'God save the King' underneath them in the cold. We used to have regattas on the bathroom floor, which would be flooded, we'd form up a rowing eight, and we'd have to row. Or we'd have to perform a certain scene out of Romeo and Juliet over the toilet doors, or sing at their bequest.

02:00 Those things were, if you took them the right way, they were quite funny. We enjoyed ourselves and we enjoyed it in a way, but there were, not that I can remember, but there were some instances later on, where some people were severely hurt with injuries from bastardisation. Some cadets, not in my time,

02:30 were actually fired because of their attitude to fourth class training. So it was a thing that we didn't mind as a class, and we came out of it all right, because we accepted it really, we didn't have any great problems with it, but there were problems like, even at mess, they would say, "Freeman, you will eat a square meal," and you had to eat

03:00 your meal up as a square meal. You had to sit with your back two inches away from the back of the seat. You'd have to tell them, they'd say, "Freeman, how's the cow?" We had big milk jugs, and I'd say, "Oh, the cow. She walks, she talks, she's full of chalk, there's enough there for two." We'd say, "There were two cups left in there."

03:30 If any spare meals came around, the steward would bring any spare meals to the table, and then you'd have to play for it, you'd play what we called 'junken poor', you know those stone, scissors, paper? And if you didn't answer the questions of the day, they called that 'pluffing', you were made ex-pluff, so you couldn't play for the extra food that came around.

04:00 They did all these little things, and it seemed silly, some things, but in that context we accepted it. As a result of it, your class became pretty well welded together, because you had a certain amount of strength in being all there.

04:30 We got over it, we didn't have too many worries about it, really. It depends largely on who was doing it, some of the senior classes were never liked because of their attitude to the fourth class, and I think we learnt from that ourselves, so we were fairly reasonable with the junior classes after us.

05:00 We didn't have any trouble.

So what made a member of the senior class more brutal than others?

Oh, they weren't brutal when I was there, there was never anybody that was brutal. They could be just pernickety and I remember once when I was in fourth class, we had an Indian cadet there, his name was Arvon Goray,

05:30 And he was a third class. There was another fellow called Tony Martire, and he was a Maori from New Zealand. I was walking through there at lunch time one day, and they collared me and said, "What's my name Freeman?" Of course,

06:00 we always wore a badge on our hat that said "Freeman." I said, "You're Mr Martire," and he said, "No, I'm not." Arvon Goray was up there and he said, "What's my name, Freeman?" And I said, "You're Mr Goray." And he said, "No, I'm Martire," so they'd toss you about like that.

06:30 I used wouldn't be bugged by them, I said, "You're Mr Martire, you're Mr Goray." So they let me go after a while. They didn't give you any physical abuse, but they made you stand up for yourself, which was one of the good things about it, really.

So, in hindsight, what role did this initiation and bastardisation play in war and in your service?

07:00 It made you self reliant, but also that you could rely on your friends and on your classmates. You could rely on your classmates, that was fine. At the end of that year, you became very friendly with everybody else, the senior class as well.

07:30 We even leapt a year, we got there at the beginning of '48, the class that graduated in the end of '48, we remained very good friends with the class that graduated in '48. Not so much with the class that graduated in '50, a year before us. We went in '48, they went in '47,

08:00 they graduated in '50, there was no graduating class in '49, because Duntroon was just going back from a three year course to a four year course. The senior class in '49 were senior class of '49 and '50, and I still see the senior member of that class, a bloke called Pembrack.

08:30 He and his wife and Paula and I play cards regularly. We both go to the same church, so we have quite a good rapport with him. But the rest of his class, some of them were okay, some of them were not.

In that first year, what were the noticeable differences between the private and the public school boys, and the cadets and the non-cadets?

09:00 Usually, the people who were in the cadets and the public schools like Riverview and Scots, and they'd

been boarding, they were okay, they had no troubles at all, because it was fitting in to a boarding school again, that was what it was all about. I didn't have any trouble, I'd never boarded before, but I was a little bit older than the rest of them,

09:30 so it didn't worry me at all. There were some fellows that were very young. Some of my classmates were just barely sixteen, they'd done the matriculation down in Melbourne. They graduated when they were about twenty one, I was twenty three when I graduated.

10:00 It made a bit of a difference to those first years, but after a while, they were all okay.

So what would be the differences in the way they would approach the military education?

No different, really. Cadet training wasn't a great deal of help to them. I mean, I'd had no cadet training at all, I'd been in Scouts, which was the nearest thing

10:30 I could come to the military, I suppose. I was quite able to look after myself. The only thing I had a problem with was that I'd never done any rifle draw before, and I was a little bit left handed on that. But in a week, that was all over and done with. We had a wonderful RSM [Regimental Sergeant Major], the RSM, his name was Watson,

11:00 we used to call him 'Fango'. He was the senior warrant officer, he was warrant officer one, and we always had to call him 'sir'. He would berate you and he would froth at the mouth, and he'd come up behind you and say, "Freeman, I want you to go to the barber this afternoon, and tell him you want a haircut exactly like me."

11:30 And I'd say, "Sir!" Because he thought my hair was a little bit long, you see. Or he'd come up and look at you in the eye, and say, "Did you stand close enough to the razor this morning, Freeman? You've got a little bit of mud on your boot, have one extra drill." The official penalty for doing something wrong, doesn't matter what it was, it might have been small,

12:00 it was to have one extra drill. That drill was the way that they disciplined you, as an eighteen or nineteen year old. You had to get up in the morning, and defaulters, you were called a defaulter, defaulters started at 6.25 in the morning, and you went on to the parade ground, and it was just like being in the French Foreign Legion, you had your marching order pack with everything in it,

12:30 from spare socks to your 'hussef', you know your little housewife thing with your sewing and your steel helmet, your rifle cleaned, cap on properly. You were inspected on the parade ground by the orderly officer, then by the RSM, then you were given a marching drill,

13:00 and rifle drill. You were fully laden with a pack on you back, a little pack here, a bayonet here, and water bottles full, the whole thing. You did this for about twenty minutes, and that was one extra drill. In the earlier stages, one extra drill would be one day's extra drill, so you had to do that in the morning, and then after work,

13:30 in the afternoon. And then you had a special report at lights out, you had to make sure you were there. So, they were the penalties that you had, and the senior class could give you those penalties, or only certain members of the senior class could do that.

14:00 I can remember at a reunion a couple of years ago, we were allowed to see disciplinary reports, and Paula wanted to have a look at them. I said, "You really don't want to have a look at those," and she said, "Yes, I'll have a look at them." So they pulled it out and they said, "Who's this fellow Pembroke? An extra drill from Pembroke, from Pembroke, from Pembroke." This is this fellow we play bridge with now.

14:30 So, these things sort of wash over fairly easily.

Why was the RSM called Fango?

Mainly because he had a wonderful set of teeth, and he frothed at the mouth, and his fangs were always out, ready to bite you. His name was Gordon Watson, and he was a marvellous

15:00 role model, as a soldier. He was always smart, even in civilian clothes. His boots were polished and his hat was on right, and he wore wonderful sports clothes to our sporting things. He used to stand ram-rod straight. I can remember going in to see the armourer, and the armourer had his work room and office there,

15:30 and the RSM had his office in the same administrative building. I came in the foyer, and Fango saw me. He was standing speaking to somebody on the phone, and I heard him say, "It's the RSM sir, I'm standing to attention," he was telling the officer he was standing to attention while he was talking, because that's what we had to do.

16:00 He made sure that I knew. He had a trick that when you were newly commissioned, and it happened to our class as well as the classes before us. We'd go down to the administration block to get our pay, our first pay as a lieutenant in the army, and he would be there round the pay master's area,

16:30 and he'd see us coming down one by one to do this, and he'd jump out and give you a terrific salute, you

know, bang! Of course, some of the fellows would say, “Good morning, RSM,” and just a bit slack, and he would say, “Mr Freeman, that’s not the way I taught you to salute, you give me a proper salute, sir.” And that’s what he’d do,

17:00 an amazing fella. We thought a great deal of him. I can remember once, I was in the senior class, and we had this swot week for our exams, it was in our final year, I’d graduated to infantry. We had what we call a ‘battalion commander’s day’.

17:30 Battalion commander’s day was a Thursday, and you had a map in your room, and you changed your linen, the bed was stripped down to the mattress, and the pillows were put up on the edge, and your rifle was taken apart and laid out on the desk. I’d just come in from lunch, and after a heavy lunch with all that stodgy army food with scones and bread and God knows what. I thought, “Oh, God, I think I’ll have a sleep.”

18:00 I happened to be in the corner of the building near the administration block, and I sort of laid my mat down beside the bed, didn’t get on the bed, thank God, that would have been worse. I put the pillow underneath my head, and I went to sleep. I suddenly woke up, and

18:30 he had what was called a ‘pace cane’, which was a cane made like a pair of dividers. He gives you the correct marching pace, and he used to walk round marching with it. This pace cane was done up in one big cane about that long. He was bouncing this cane beside my head in my room, and he said, “Mr Freeman, what are you doing?” Of course, he always called you ‘Mr’, but you always called him ‘sir’, you see.

19:00 I said, “I’m having a sleep, sir,” and he said, “You know what you’ve got to do, haven’t you? You’ve got to put yourself on a charge, Freeman.” I had to go and wait out at the charge for him, and he said, “For lack of zeal in the interest of military duty.” I had to make this charge form out, and it had to be done out exactly. So I put myself on a charge, and I got two days CB [confined to barracks] for that.

19:30 When we were graduating a few months after that, my mother and father and brother came up to see me graduate. We had a cocktail party, and of course we invited Fango along with our parents. Of course, he had to mention it to my mother and father. But it was all good fun.

What did they teach you in the classroom in that first year at Duntroon?

20:00 Well, from a military point of view for the first few weeks we did drill, PT, drill, PT. Then we had civil exercises, I was doing mathematics, physics and chemistry, and technical or geometrical drawing. We did those civil subjects at university standard.

20:30 We also did military law and military history, and what they call ‘imperial military geography’. I don’t know why it was imperial military geography, it depended on the empire at that stage, you see. They were the subjects that we were taught. When we got on the military subjects, we were doing

21:00 infantry minor tactics, that could be out in the field, and we’d be acting as troops under our own control. Someone would be made a corporal for the day, and we made a lieutenant for the day, and we’d raid a hill or get into bunkers or something. The drill and PT was pretty standard for the first three weeks,

21:30 because for a start they wanted you to be able to wear a uniform reasonably well. The first time you put a uniform on, it was sagging and bagging, and the belt wasn’t done up properly, and you didn’t have your hat on right. So they wouldn’t let us go into Canberra on leave, even to the movies, for about twelve weeks, because they didn’t trust us to look well dressed.

22:00 Our boots weren’t up to the standard of being polished properly, so that was one of the limits. After that twelve weeks, we had a marvellous thing called the “fourth class tennis party,” and the senior class would say “We’ve got some girl friends that we’d pass on to fourth class,” and we’d have a tennis party.

22:30 We’d be playing host with these lasses for the first time, with the view to us taking them out, and bringing them to the balls that we had, we had three balls at college. If they were Canberra girls, then we could get invited out to dinner one night to their homes.

23:00 It was all a bit of a socialising with the local people. There was that sort of thing. We had to look reasonably fit and reasonably well turned out, before they even let us into the denizens of Canberra, then we could only go out with a leave pass, we had to say where we were going.

23:30 We had to be back by a certain time, that was very important, because you could get into a lot of trouble if you took a girl out, and some irate father said, “Where’s my daughter, she’s not back here by eleven o’clock.” We had to be back by twelve o’clock. This happened one day when about twelve of my class

24:00 met one of the daughters of the Irish legations. One of them had taken out this lass, there were about twelve other girls in this party, they’d gone to this party at the Irish legation. Unfortunately, one of the girls involved was sir Robert Garran’s

24:30 daughter. sir Robert Garran was one of the fathers of the ACT [Australian Capital Territory], I think. His granddaughter was taken out by one of the cadets, and he happened to know the commandant, a bloke

by the name of Brigadier Vowells, and he rang up Brigadier Vowells about two o'clock in the morning and said, "Vowells, my granddaughter has been out with one of your cadets,

25:00 and she's not home yet." That was a terrible thing, and about twelve of these fellows were at this party, and they eventually were picked up for not coming in at the right time. Of course they got fourteen days' CB, which meant they had to do extra drills for fourteen days, they had a really tough time. But that was the type of thing that you had to do

25:30 the right thing, and be on time, and not disturb the populus of Canberra, especially their grandfathers that had some pool somewhere.

So how did the education evolve after that first year?

Well, it was pretty standard, after those first few months, you just went to lectures at about eight o'clock each day.

26:00 Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays you went to about half past three, or four o'clock. Tuesdays and Thursdays you usually were out by half past two, because Tuesdays and Thursdays you had to be involved with the sport. You could play Australian Rules, or rugby or hockey.

26:30 That was the established days that we practised those sports. In summer time it was either swimming or cricket, or golf. We had golf access, too. Every afternoon after work, doesn't matter what time you finished, you had to do something,

27:00 go on a cross country run, or play your sport that you wanted to, or you could go and play basketball or tennis, or whatever you liked, but you had to do some sport. That was carried right through to Saturday, because we had morning lectures on Saturday, then Saturday afternoon we had the main sport in Canberra.

27:30 We played rugby in Canberra or over at Hall or somewhere else, or at RMC [Royal Military College], because we had very good grounds there. When we got in our senior year, we went on a cross country run. We weren't allowed to drink at Duntroon, ever. They are now, of course, they've got their own bar, but in my time

28:00 they weren't allowed to drink. We used to save up the pennies and we'd run over to Ainslie, the Ainslie Rex hotel, and have a beer, and then run back again. It was about three miles there, and about three miles back, so we really earned that beer.

Roy, how did they teach and train you to be a leader at Duntroon?

Well, you had all these things like

28:30 infantry minor tactics, and discussions and also the lessons on weapons and things like that. They had you actually drilling your own class in marching and rifle drill. That became quite extensive, you were doing major parades on your own.

29:00 They had you take certain roles in infantry minor tactics, so you might be a motorbike rider at one stage, and you might be a captain doing an exercise or a lieutenant doing something. With military law, we did military law from the Australian point of view,

29:30 we had a couple of text books on that. We then assumed a role playing. Some of us would be an accused, some would be the president of the court, and he might have a couple of odd sods on there. Then you'd have the defending officer and the prosecuting officer, and you would go through the court case. It would all be role playing, because

30:00 if you're a brigadier in the court, you'd have a red cap on, so you did the whole thing, like acting. Instructing, our main thing we were training for to be junior officers was how to treat your men and how to instruct your men in the weapons they had.

30:30 We had rifles and the Owen gun and the Bren gun, and then you had the Vickers machine gun. You had to adopt roles in all those things, so you would be told by the instructing staff how to do it, they would do the lesson, and then you would take it over and you would do that lesson again, so that you knew how it was done.

31:00 This was ongoing stuff all the time.

From a psychological point of view, how were you trained to motivate and mentor men in a combat situation?

The army at that stage, you were on deck seven days a week, twenty four hours a day, it's not that now.

31:30 I was always told, and the officers that we had in front of us were very good role models all the time. We were always told that you looked after your men, and your horse, better than you looked after yourself. First you looked after your men, then your horses. That's how it was, it was that old training.

32:00 You'd see that they were fit, that they were bedded down well. See that they did their things that they should do. If they had problems at home, you were told that it was your problem too, you had to do something to get that sorted out. You had to ensure that they were comfortable, they had all the things that they should have, because it was your responsibility if they didn't have it.

32:30 That was one of those things. In action, you had to make sure that they looked after their feet and their bodies, they had a wash when they could have. I was reading some things on that last night, and I had to inspect my troops to see that their feet were okay, to see that they had clean clothing on, or as clean as they possibly could have.

33:00 I had a laugh about that. And then, in Korea, we had to make sure that they took malaria tablets, you had to physically give them the tablet and make sure they took it. That was all instilled in us, you had to look after our fellows before we sat down and had dinner, and we did that,

33:30 that was the way it was done. That carried right through to Korea. The army these days is 8.00 'til 4.30 job, then they go home. Poor old soldiers like that can't understand that, it's surprising, it really is. We just think they've lost a lot out of it.

34:00 You say, "What were we taught?" In my final weeks at Duntroon, we were almost ready to graduate, and this is how pukka the place was, we were given instructions on etiquette, so that we each had to get visiting cards, and when we went to our first posting,

34:30 we had to call on our commanding officer and his wife, and we had to leave two cards in the tray that he had, then he could invite us, or his wife could invite us to tea or something. This is 1951, and this happened. I bought cards, had them done by John Sands, and I think I used about two of them.

35:00 My first posting was to Kapooka, where my CO [Commanding Officer] was a fellow called Vin Dowdy, and his wife was Mercy, and they had four children. We had an officers' mess. Our instruction would be over by about 4.00, we'd be in the mess by

35:30 about 4.30, and Mercy would come down for a drink with the boys, and shock, horror! Mercy pulled out a packet of roll your own tobacco, and used to roll her own cigarettes in the mess. This young Duntroon graduate thinking, "My God, what's this woman doing here, having her beer with us? What was I going to do with all my cards?"

36:00 It was a bit of an eye opener, it started then, and it gradually got worse I think. Not that we wanted that sort of thing to happen, but it was not as we were told it was going to be.

36:30 It was a different kettle of fish altogether, and in some respects, the training at Duntroon in those things were a bit old hat. Very, very old hat, but it gave us the things that we had to look after our men, and we all did that without too much, I don't think anybody failed in looking after their men.

37:00 That was one of the things we had to do. And then we looked after ourselves. This twenty four hours a day, seven days a week thing was something that we accepted at the time. I mean, as an officer, I couldn't go on leave when I wanted to. I had to tell my CO, and he'd say, "Well, I'm sorry, Freeman, you're orderly officer this weekend."

37:30 So, I'd stay in that weekend. I had to do other things beside that. They made me sports officer for the battalion, so I had to run a rugby union team, a rugby league team, and in my spare time I had to make sure an oval was built, so I had to build a full oval.

38:00 The CO said, "You can get the oval done, and we can use it as a parade ground." There we go, that oval's still standing up at Kapooka. I said, "What do you want to do with the oval? There are a lot of people who want to play Australian Rules, as well as rugby" And he said, "Put up the Australian Rules posts and we can use those for rugby too."

You mentioned Roy, that you moved into the field of infantry

38:30 **while you were at Duntroon.**

Well, I graduated in infantry. We all were trained essentially as infantry officers, but then in our last year we didn't do any civil work, we did military law, and we specialised in our arm of the service, so I specialised as an infantry officer. I did extra stuff on what the infantry had,

39:00 you know, extra weapons. Where we had cooperation from the armoured corps, or the artillery, we could also function in those as well. A graduate from Duntroon could go and step, he does exams, from lieutenant to captain, captain to major,

39:30 major to lieutenant colonel, that was a staff college job. The graduate from Duntroon could easily pass the major's exam without any trouble, but he didn't have the experience, that was the thing. So he had to probably wait about ten years before he could become a major. We could function as an army service corps,

40:00 requisitioning things, or as an ordinance bloke with explosives. We had a certain amount of expertise as an artillery officer, same as armour, and we knew what was happening in the other arms, but we were

not specialists. Then that year, I was one of the original sixteen infantry officers,

40:30 my class was fifty three when we graduated, so we lost about fifty per cent on the way. The artillery and armoured fellows, ordinance corps, they took another sixteen, and made us thirty two graduating. After two years, they referred it back to their original arm or artillery or armour, or ordinance or service corp.

41:00 A lot of them didn't return to those corps, a lot of them stayed in infantry corps, it was a better thing for getting more people involved in it, so that's what they did.

Tape 4

00:33 **Roy. I wanted to ask you, when you were training at Duntroon, how much knowledge did you have about what was happening in Korea?**

Pretty good knowledge, we were kept up to date with that. Of course, it was very near to our hearts, we were all saying we were going to graduate in '51, "Is the war going to be over before we get there?"

01:00 We wanted to be exposed to that, that's what we were training for. Whether we liked it or not, that's what was expected of us. So, we had lecture nights, and they were quite intensive. One I can remember was some Gloucesters,

01:30 the British regiment came down, and this was before we had any real problems. They came through with the divisional commander, a fellow called Major General Cassells, a British Army officer. And they all came in their mess kit with their kite blue jackets and their patrol collars, and their little green caps,

02:00 very impressive. They let us know what was going on up in Korea at that particular time. That was probably in the 1950s that we had that. We were interested in what was happening to the class of '48, because they were right into it. They went over to Korea in September 1950,

02:30 when the whole of the South Korean Army and the American Army had been pushed back into Pusan, which is a tiny port, the largest port on the north west coast of Korea. They were pushed into a very small perimeter. When MacArthur broke out in September,

03:00 he landed at Inch'on, and they were able to break out, and they pushed the Chinese back almost back to Pyongyang. Then the Chinese came into the war, and pushed the Koreans back to Pyongyang, and then the Chinese came into the war and pushed us back again, but not as far back as Pusan. We recovered from that and pushed them back over the 38th parallel. But we were very interested in what was happening to the class of '48, which had gone in

03:30 very early in the piece, in September 1950. So that kept our interest on it, and what was going to happen to us when we got there. We were very keen on knowing what was happening.

Were there casualties that you heard about from that class of '48?

Yes, we knew them, all very well. We'd had a year with them in Duntroon before they graduated,

04:00 and we knew that the infantry members had spent some time in Japan at BCOF [British Commonwealth Occupation Forces] and had gone from there over to Korea. The 3rd Battalion had been beefed up by some Second World War officers,

04:30 and a lot of Second World War veterans, and it was because of that they had performed so very well, because they had a great deal of experience which came in through those people. The lieutenants that were handling the platoons at that stage were all very well known to us.

How did it affect the college when you heard about

05:00 **a casualty in Korea?**

It was taken as a matter of fact that that was the thing that would happen. You were going into a dangerous situation, and it was every likelihood that you would be wounded or killed. That was accepted, of course we were saddened

05:30 **when fellows we'd spent some time with were killed or badly wounded, but it happened to the classes ahead of us, and it happened to my class. I can remember one particular one, one of my own classmates was wounded and I was still in Australia at the time. We looked at the**

06:00 **casualties list at breakfast one morning, and we noticed this bloke had been wounded in action, and this fellow had a peculiar way of marching, with his backside out. He was a bit of a butt of the jokes. One of the fellows says, "I bet he got shot on the arse."**

06:30 **And he had been shot on the backside! Through his own stupidity, he'd been shot in the backside, but that was that. He put a standing patrol down, and had gone to see if they were alert, and one of the troops in the standing patrol said to the corporal in charge of the**

standing patrol, "I can see something moving over there, corporal,"

07:00 **and the corporal said, "Are you sure it's not a bush that you thinks moving or waving?" And he said, "No, something moving," and the corporal said, "Well, put a Bing gun burst through it," and the Bing gun you can put two shots forward in one. He got this fellow who was creeping forward on his stomach, and they got him in the bottom. So he was wounded in the arse.**

07:30 **Which wasn't very comfortable for him, because I saw him a couple of days later, when I was over there, and he was lying on his face with drains in his bottom, it wasn't very comfortable. It's all funny now, but it wasn't funny then, was it?**

What kind of thoughts did you have about your own mortality?

Oh, very much, always concerned about your own mortality.

08:00 You try to put that out of the way, you try and make your peace with the world, and you try to be doing the right thing, that's all. It's one of those things you look at, and you say, "Well, I'm going to do everything I can to stop that happening," and you became very alert on those sort of things.

08:30 It's amazing, and you expect everybody else to be helping you do that, too. Because you are relying on your troops to get you through these things, and they're relying on you to get them through and make the right decisions, so it's a real team thing. Your troops have got to react that way, as a team, do as they're told, and that's what your training is.

09:00 Your training has gotta be automatic. If I tell somebody to "Go over there, do that," you've gotta go over there and try and do it. That was the main thing, your training had to be exact as that, they had to do it properly. That was not always easy to do, because you'd come in as a reinforcement officer, and you take over from somebody that's already had them for some time, and you're a new boy.

09:30 They're wary of you. They really don't know how you're going to react, whether you're going to be a reasonable skipper or not. You've got to make your mark, they've got to realise that they're going to have confidence in what you're going to do, and that you aren't going to try something stupid on your part, endanger their

10:00 lives, because they've got exactly the same feelings that you have. They don't want to be killed or shot or wounded. But they've got to do a job, that's the thing, they've got to understand that it's important to act as a team on these sorts of things. And the officer must be prepared to put up or shut up.

Before you left for Korea, while you were still at Duntroon, what perception did you have about how the war was progressing?

10:30 It progressed very badly, initially. But when I'd graduated, we were holding them on set lines, and we were over the 38th parallel, which was the dividing line between North and South Korea.

11:00 It was a very static situation, and it was one of those things that was put to us that it was virtually like the Western Front. We were living in dugouts in pretty cramped conditions, but we were very well served,

11:30 we had terrific support. We knew that was happening, we knew we had lots of artillery, we knew we had mortars. The patrol commander, going out in the valley, could pull up regimental artillery, you could pull up brigade artillery. Given time you could pull up army artillery, and these are big heavy

12:00 9.2 cannons that were coming back at them. They were very accurate, and if needed be, I could get an air strike, so the amount of power that a platoon commander in the valley had with fourteen or thirteen fellows was massive firepower. The war was

12:30 stabilised because, whilst they had men, innumerable men, we were probably outnumbered almost ten to one, but we had massive firepower. They tried to get through a number of times, and particularly the last stages of the war were horrendous, and the casualties that were inflicted on our numbers,

13:00 two thousand in a night, in one little spot. It was quite amazing the firepower that we had, and we needed that to protect ourselves, because they had the men, they could walk over us if they could get through it.

What thoughts did you have on the politics and the ideology of the war?

Well, no I think we were

13:30 conditioned as right wing people, we were not conditioned to think anything else. I think that was the way we looked at things, we didn't have any socialist leanings. Everybody wasn't equal, everybody had a job to do, and they

14:00 slotted in at their job, you could go from job to job and increase, but everybody wasn't on the same level at any stage. It was virtually a leadership role that you adopted, and that you'd earn, and those people that were subordinate to you reacted accordingly.

14:30 The troops were of the same opinion, there were no socialists in the army that I could think of, there weren't many atheists either. A lot of them found religion quickly if they hadn't had it before. Not too many atheists around.

15:00 It was a fairly right wing liberal, if you like, attitude to the whole thing.

How did you see the threat of communism at the time?

We thought it was very bad. We thought that it was the start of the domino effect. We realised that the petition in Korea was the result of

15:30 opportunism by Russia. Russia had nothing whatsoever to do with Japan, until about two weeks before the war ended. They raced into Manchuria, at the time, or Korea, or Chosen as it was called. They took the northern part of Korea.

16:00 At the peace it was decided an arbitrary line was drawn across Korea, at the 38th parallel, and the Russians had the influence north of the 38th parallel, and the Americans had the concern of the southern part. Out of those five years,

16:30 the ideologies of America and the ideologies of Russia were imprinted on personnel that they had. When the war started, America had something like sixty thousand odd troops in Korea, which was there to make sure the Russians didn't come across the northern approaches

17:00 of the 38th parallel. I don't know how many Russians there were, but there were certainly Russian fighters in the air, and there were reputed to have Russian advisors with the North Korean troops.

17:30 When I got there, we had virtually complete air control, over the whole of the battlefield. I don't remember hearing any about any Russians being there at all, but there were certainly North Koreans and Chinese. Where we were, on the right of the Commonwealth Division,

18:00 we were sort of right in the boundary between Chinese troops and North Korean troops.

How vulnerable did Australia feel to the threat of communism at that time?

Well, not really vulnerable, we didn't realise there was a threat as far as that goes, until 1954, I think it was, when the Petrov affair came out, and we realised that what had been going on

18:30 through the Russian embassy in Canberra, and what was really what they were trying to do. The Labour Party was trying to draw a line between socialism and communism, but not everybody saw it that clear cut line. I think that's one reason why the Liberal Party, or the United

19:00 Australia Party, as it first was, labelled the Liberal Party and the Country Party, were able to stay in power as a government for twenty three years, because of the threat of communism. It was founded, it was quite bad. There was a case in the (UNCLEAR) about the domino effect they'd take out. They already had

19:30 China, they wanted to knock off Korea, and then the next thing after that was going to be the rest of south east Asia. That would have included Indo-China, but also the Philippines and Indonesia. That was another thing that they were worried about, that they would get down that far. They really did very well,

20:00 getting down through Vietnam. That took another twenty years to do that, but they did it.

So when you arrived at Kapooka, what were you doing there?

They had what they call the Korean Forces involved, and they brought up a couple of battalions of troops, who had particularly

20:30 joined up or enlisted for the K Force. The idea was that those troops that were there, the majority of them had experience in World War 11. There were a lot of recruits that were recruited in England for the army, so they came out

21:00 by plane, and they were then put through a twelve week course, getting them back in the army again. That could have been a very difficult time for young officers, because some of those fellas were thirty, twenty eight some of them. Some of them had been old lags, there were people running away from their wives, there was a complete polyglot

21:30 of recruits. Some of the Australians were in that order too, they weren't very discriminatory about who they enlisted, so you had to be very wary about the recruits you had, and you had to really know what you were doing with them. It was a very good training ground for young officers to do.

How did you find it?

22:00 I found it hard work. It wasn't hard teaching them, because a lot of them knew what was going on, but in relating to them, off the instructional. Seeing what they were doing in their free time, making sure that they were not corrupting other people that were around, there were some other local

22:30 fellows that ran two-up schools, it was controlled. We used to run a two-up school in Korea. The CO would say, “If there’s going to be a two-up school, you’re going to look after it, you’re going to make sure that it functions properly, so everybody is fair and square.” That would be the officers’ task.

23:00 This was the same thing, I mean there were some people escaping the law and their wives and all sorts of things. Some with assumed names, you know you had a whole host of people. There was a detective sergeant in Wagga, and he had an offsider called Lundy.

23:30 The detective sergeant himself was called Cloak. We used to call him ‘Cloak and Dagger’. Every Monday morning, over the weekend there would be cars stolen, people drunk and disorderly, radios knocked out of cars. Monday morning, Cloak and Dagger would arrive at the battalion headquarters and he’d say, “I’d like to have a look through your companies.”

24:00 He’d be given access to the company parades, and he’d say, “I want to see you, and I want to see you,” and he’d pull out three or four, and he’d take them away and have a question mark about them, and we mightn’t see them again. They would be people that he’d been looking for, or he knows about, or he knew they’d knocked off a car, or something like that.

24:30 It happened quite frequently. So a lot of them were more worldly wise than Duntroon cadets would have been, but we learnt to pick the good soldiers, and we got those and we fostered them, or that’s what I did. I could see somebody who was going to be okay, and who’d had some experience, and

25:00 I’d make sure I’d give him some responsibility, and make sure I’d got him into somewhere he’d be nice and comfortable and he’d been on my side. That’s what you did, the same thing that happened in Korea. My platoon sergeant was a bloke called Blackwell, and Blackie, as we used to know him, he was a British,

25:30 ex-marine commander. A real terrific bloke as a platoon sergeant, just made for me, and for my first couple of weeks when I was making myself, the platoon were getting to know me, I shadowed him and he shadowed me. He was very good value, and we got on very well.

26:00 That was one of the things, make yourself comfortable with your platoon sergeant and your section commander. I had forty troops that I had to look after. Towards the end of the war, the last four months, I had ten Koreans. What they call KATCOMs [Korean Army Troops attached to Commonwealth Division], that were handed over to me. Every platoon had a number of KATCOMs, and I had ten.

26:30 These are fellas that, as male Koreans do, they walk around hand in hand sometimes. That doesn’t sit well with Australian troops to see a couple of fellas walk around hand in hand, but they had to be looked after too, that was another problem that came in later on. You just had to handle those sort of things.

27:00 If you had a good platoon sergeant, and he knew that you were okay, that got down to the troops very quickly. You didn’t have very much trouble. You always get somebody that might cause some trouble, when you’re in a rest area, never had any trouble when you’re on the line. The first time we were on the line for about six weeks, and then out for four, in a safe area. Then you’d have trouble.

What kind of trouble would you have?

27:30 Well they’d get drunk. You’d get to a village somewhere, and the people there had all sorts of diseases, from venereal diseases to scabies and tuberculosis, and they also made their own whiskey. Of course, they’d get onto that, then they’d come back and you’d have them reporting to the doctor because they had gonorrhoea or something.

28:00 This was a great problem. They had to be very careful because those people in those safer areas, you’d be worried about them, because some of them were known sympathisers with North Korea. So you had to be careful with what was going around, what was said.

Coming from the rarefied atmosphere of Duntroon,

28:30 **were you shocked by the quality of some of the troops of K Force?**

I wouldn’t say it was a rarefied atmosphere, we knew what to expect. At Duntroon we had

29:00 fellas from all walks of life, it wasn’t a hothouse of public school boys. There was a great sprinkling of people whose mother and father were not well off. My own mother and father were not well off, but they were just middle class.

But you were certainly coming from an officer’s training?

Yes, but that knocked some of the raw spots off you too.

29:30 A lot of us had raw spots or one thing or another. We were told to look after ourselves, and we knew that we were better educated than them, and we knew that there were better things that they could do, and we were trying to make sure that they knew we cared, and we wanted them to conform to what we wanted.

30:00 So we made it our business to look after them, and make sure that they didn't transgress, if they did transgress they were in trouble. We made it pretty clear, and we relied a lot on their buddies saying, "Look, you cause trouble with the skipper, he's going to cause trouble for the lot of us, so

30:30 Charlie, you tow the line, or we'll be having a piece of you outside the back of the tent." And that's what happened. You usually pull them into line by making sure that they knew that they were going to pull down the wrath of God, for want of a better word, on the rest of them. They behaved pretty well,

31:00 if you were fair and consistent. They sorted you out pretty quickly, I think.

How long were you based at Kapooka for?

January to August, so it was just about six or seven months, then I came down to the (UNCLEAR) battalion, which is the reinforcement holding battalion. That's when they

31:30 did more advanced infantry training there.

Where was that?

At Ingleburn. They had training fields out at Green Hills, where they would go out to Green Hills and actually live in a bivouac type situation on Green Hills and do exercises and things like that.

What kind of differences were there between the men you were

32:00 **training and how your life was on camp in term of everyday routine?**

I had virtually a home in the officers' mess. We ate just as well as the troops did, never better,

32:30 but I had a batman, in those days you had a batman who was a personal servant, who used to look after your needs. You look after the troops and make sure they were fed and clean and clothed and all that sort of stuff, and he looked after you, that was the main thing. So that's how we operated in those days, I had a batman that would wake me up at about six o'clock in the morning with a cup of tea.

33:00 He'd do my washing for me, and ruin my underpants, and lose my cufflinks and all that sort of stuff, but he did it. That was the cross I had to bear, I had to bear a batman. But in Korea, I had a batman as well, but he was more or less personal bodyguard.

33:30 He went out on patrols with me, and I had a Korean house boy, that I'd pay, and he did my washing and all that sort of stuff when I was up on the line. He came up to the line with us, and every officer had a house boy. They messed with us.

34:00 We had to be careful with them, because we wouldn't let them get near to any maps or anything that we were doing, they wouldn't know what we were doing. We'd keep them out of the way. We also had a large Korean labour force that would come up the hill, they'd bring up water and clear out some of the trenches sometimes, if we weren't clearing them out ourselves.

34:30 We had a labour force of about two hundred Koreans that were allotted to the battalion to do menial things like that.

How were they recruited?

Generally, they were just picked up along the road. I don't know about the labour force, they were usually older men, because the Republic of Korea, the South Koreans, they had very strict recruiting laws for their own

35:00 troops. The house boy that I had early, a fella called Kim Bon Shik, he vanished one day, and I found out that the Korean Army had got him. He reckoned he was only about sixteen, he was about eighteen, but he didn't want to go in the Korean Army at all. The Korean Army was very tough.

35:30 They had a different sense of feeling about life than we did, life didn't mean the same thing as it did to us. That was very well explained, not explained but demonstrated to us one morning.

36:00 We messed by companies when we were on the line, so we had a company sergeant and an offsider who did the cooking, and then they were brought up to your platoon area. A big larder and food stuff. We won the right of the line, the Commonwealth Division, and the Republic of Korean forces were on our right.

36:30 So that was the line between the South Koreans and the Commonwealth Division. The cook had been noticing things going missing, butter and sugar and stuff like that. When we were moving over the line, going back to the rest camp, one of our platoon commanders was left as rear guard officer. He happened to catch two

37:00 Republic of Korean troops with butter and bread and some sugar that they'd stolen out of our kitchen. He took them over to the company commander of the Republic of Korea, next door to us, just over the hill, being only about two hundred metres, and told the company commander. We had liaison officers with us.

37:30 The Korean liaison officer, and they could speak a little bit of English anyway, he told him what had happened, that these fellas were stealing out of our company kitchen. And the company commander, this Korean, lined his company up, and shot these two fellows, shot them, bang like that. That's how they reacted.

38:00 Bill, when he came back, said, "If I knew he was going to do that, I wouldn't have done a thing," but he was visibly shaken with the whole business. That's the way it was, just like ammunition, or anything like that. If you steal like that, if you steal stuff. No corroboration, they didn't ask for any proof of it, but that's what happened, you can't understand that.

38:30 **Did all young men in South Korea get conscripted into the South Korean Army?**

Yes, and if they looked young enough or old enough to be in the army, they were conscripted into it, yeah. We had a liaison officer, in the 3rd Battalion called Sung, he might have been Captain Sung, but he was a lawyer in

39:00 civil life, and he was very hard. We'd go through exercises when we were out on the line, we'd go through the villages, and he would beat the peasants, get them out of the way. He was very cruel and hard on anybody he thought

39:30 was underneath him, in particularly he didn't try that with Australians, he was the liaison officer, but with the Koreans, he was extremely nasty to them. He had a very nasty reputation, Sung.

How difficult was it to work alongside the South Koreans in that way?

It was difficult,

40:00 because they didn't have the same thoughts about hygiene as we did. They didn't eat the same, they were completely, I was going to say subhuman, I suppose we counted them as such, because of the reaction they had. They were really

40:30 very badly educated, they seemed to be very badly educated. They weren't a pleasant people to be with, they were not nice at all. They're different now, completely different. I was over there in 2000, and they were terrific to us. We were back with an army group,

41:00 they went out of their way to help us. They had developed their place, and they've got different ideas now. In those days it was shocking. You've got to think of it too, the peninsula of Korea, the Chinese had been down through it three times, just about. When they went through it,

41:30 they would have raped and pillaged and God knows what. By the time we got there, they'd had enough of us. Seoul was a place that had about two million people in it by then, but it was raw sewerage in the streets, bombed out buildings, and everything was sort of makeshift. When I went back there in 2000.

Tape 5

00:31 **Roy, you were talking at the end of the last tape about the attitude of the Republic of the Korean army, and the anecdote about those troops who were caught stealing food. I'm wondering what was their approach to, say, enemy captives, or villagers that were suspected of enemy infiltration, I mean, I've heard stories about the military police?**

01:00 Well, they were very hard on their own people, too. I mean there were stories, and it was well advertised and well reported actually, that they had North Korean prisoners on an island down the south of Korea, off into the Sea of Japan, and they were being mistreated.

01:30 Our troops did that too. The Canadians had a military police holding area in Seoul, and they were brutal with anybody of the Commonwealth Division that were sent down there. If a digger got

02:00 fourteen days CB, he was sent down to the military police in Seoul, and we had one fellow, he'd offended a couple of times, and he had come back from fourteen days with the Canadians, and they had mistreated him, as they did in those things. Making him sweep the corridors with toothbrushes,

02:30 and making him stand to attention and the occasional beating, I should say. After being stupid again, when he was faced with another fourteen days, he shot himself. Just shot himself, bang, like that. Wouldn't go back there again. Admittedly, he was probably a stupid, silly fella, but you don't expect that to happen.

03:00 After it came out in the brigade that that was the reason why he'd done it, anybody above the field rank, majors and above, could go into that military police establishment at any time of the day or night, and inspect it. Of course, they wanted to tidy it up, it was a mess. But these things happened,

03:30 and people would gravitate to those sorts of jobs. You can see what's happened in Iraq recently, with the

American military police in the jail at Baghdad. That's what happens, some of those people are sadists, not masochists as much as sadists, and that's where they get their rocks

04:00 off, I guess.

What sort of offences might this man have committed?

Insubordination, I suppose, gone over the hill, into a village, and got drunk, which he could have done. Or he might have threatened an officer. He could have done anything, I don't know what things he'd done, but he'd done enough to get two lots of fourteen days' CB, which meant that he was going to be

04:30 incarcerated for fourteen days.

I've heard things from other veterans about their opinions, some derogatory things that have been said about the Canadian forces. If reports of that mistreatment came back, given that you're part of this United Nations force, how would that have had an impact on the men?

Well, they were isolated, and then the military police in any situation were never

05:00 very well thought of. But, we didn't have very good thoughts about the Americans either, we thought the Americans were terrible troops, and mainly because they were young National Servicemen. Nineteen, twenty year old kids, not very well trained,

05:30 certainly not very well led. We had the same thing, to a degree, with the Brits. They were National Servicemen, their officers were National Servicemen. We were lieutenants, and they were first lieutenants. We had two pips, they had one pip. But they also were a little bit different, because they had the history of

06:00 the regiment behind them. We served with people like the Black Watch, and the Durham Light Infantry, and they were famous regiments which went back two or three hundred years. The Black Watch probably longer, so they had a lot of traditions they had to uphold. When you got out into an exercise, the only ones that were holding that I could see,

06:30 were not the junior officers, because they weren't experienced enough, but the senior NCOs [Non Commissioned Officers]. Some of them were old soldiers, too. That's what kept them together. Their junior officers were National Service, they were in there for six months or something, they didn't have the same experience of being a soldier as say, a Duntroon graduate might have had.

07:00 Even a Sandhurst graduate only had eighteen months before he was let loose. There was a bit of that about. The Vanders, the 22nd Regiment, which was a French speaking, Canadian regiment. They were not good at all, you couldn't understand them.

07:30 They spoke this bastardised French, which didn't equate with our school boy French. They were also frightful as far as hygiene goes. When we took over from them, there was rubbish and excretory all over the place, they just didn't have discipline about that. It was frightful.

Can you recall some incidents specifically that were indicative of

08:00 **this incompetence, or lack of discipline of some of those UN [United Nations] forces?**

We had problems with the Americans. 355 was one of our main features in this static line, and our battalion was on it twice while I was there. The first time was went I first went on the line,

08:30 and we took over from the Australian battalion. No trouble at all, no trouble at all. They'd taken over from the Vanders, and they'd had all the trouble with the toilets and the crap all over the place, it was really bad. When we left 355, around about February '53, or early February, late January '53,

09:00 American battalion came in. We went back in there after four weeks, into virtually the same place as we had been. We lost about thirteen people killed, and about twenty wounded just getting back to where we were. Australians and the

09:30 Brits were supposed to patrol aggressively. That means we went out through our mine wire, and over the valley to the hills on the other side, and we make sure we occupy those at night time, so if they came through from their lines, we had ambushes for them. Now, the Americans didn't do that. They just went out to their mine gap, and they just propped there,

10:00 they didn't do anything else. And they admitted it, they told us that they didn't do anything else. As a consequence, with the Australian brigade, our policy was that we took hold of no man's land, we didn't let them establish it, they didn't get near our front,

10:30 our minefields at all, but if they knew that they were there, that was their problem, they had to try and get through that minefield. They knew where all the minefield gaps were, because if anything happened they'd mortar the minefield gaps, so that we couldn't get back out of the valley. It was very hard going after going in after the Americans. The last three days of the war,

11:00 one battalion was on The Hook, and we were in reserve, behind them. My platoon was right on the back

of them. We used to go down every day, The Hook was a very nasty spot to be. At night time, the forces would be about forty metres from each other, it was very, very close, almost like Gallipoli was.

11:30 There were a lot of casualties coming off that one. By that time we were on the left of the Commonwealth Division, on the left of us were the 1st Marine Division. There was a big re-entrant between us. We'd go down every day, I'd take a working party down and we'd clear out the mess that had been made the night before, there'd been blown in trenches and God knows what.

12:00 We'd have a working party down on that. We could get casualties on that too, somebody poking their head up above the trench. Anyway, on the third night before the was ended, and we all knew it was going, this was another one that knocked morale about, everybody was getting anxious about seeing out these days. The Chinese put in what we call

12:30 a 'brigade attack', they had something like three thousand men come in between the Australians and the marines. The Australians had a machine gun section on the marines area firing across our front, and there was another machine gun section firing the other way. They came up this re-entrant between them, and, as I said before,

13:00 we had so much firepower, we had air burst shells we could put into the air, and they could burst about one hundred feet into the air and throw shrapnel down. We brought in all that firepower. Of those three thousand there were two thousand dead the next day. It was shocking. There was virtually a truce

13:30 while the Chinese came in and took their dead and wounded out. Then they did the same thing the next evening. While all of this was going on, the marine division decamped, they got out, this battalion, they ran back. They left this machine gun section there, on its own, and they stayed there all night.

14:00 It was quite amazing what they did. The marines, eventually, were forced to go back in again, and take over the positions that they'd bugged out from. They happened to shoot one of the machine gunners, because he'd put his head up, they didn't know he was there. He got shot and killed

14:30 by one of the marines.

Who had fled?

Yes, he'd fled back. The next two nights, they had a similar incursion of another three thousand of the brigade, and it suffered the same problems.

15:00 Then the next night there was some minor activity, and the next morning, before the truce, I was told through my company commander, by the CO, that I would take out a wiring party and I would go from point A to point B, where I had to go with map references, and I had to provide a three wire fence

15:30 along this area. That was to be the first part of the line of demarcation of the troops. The war hadn't finished, I had my forty fellows out, and we did this barbed wire line, four hundred metres on the other side were the Chinese doing exactly the same. Nobody shot each other,

16:00 we just looked at each other, that's all. About eleven o'clock that day, the truce was signed. You say it's absurd, over those nights they lost about three thousand killed, and I don't know how many wounded,

16:30 but there wouldn't have been too many got away without being wounded, either badly or lightly. All they were trying to do, they knew the truce was coming up, as we knew that the truce was coming up, so they were trying to get over the bit more land, so they could use it as a leverage. That's all they wanted to do, and they lost all those men, we lost some too,

17:00 but not anything like that.

What you're describing is almost like a sacrificial kamikaze.

It is, but Chinese troops were not automated, we knew who was Chinese, we could make that out pretty well. The Chinese troops were pretty well led.

17:30 A number of times, if you struck them at all, you get either an officer or one of their NCOs would really go out of his way to try and kill you. No doubt about that, he'd do all the right things, what you would do if you were in a similar circumstance, he'd come up and he would get behind something and he'd bring his troops up. Do everything by the book, but the thing was

18:00 we had a better firepower than them. We had more weapons, heavier weapons firing, plus artillery going right back to army, plus an aircraft, and air strike if we wanted to.

Roy, speaking of absurdity, what thoughts did you have about the peace negotiations going on while you were losing men as a platoon commander?

18:30 It was frightful. I didn't blame our side for it, I blame the Chinese side for it. The Chinese were the ones that were taking the running of the whole Korean War. So that they were only doing it, trying to make a point against the capitalist nations of the world.

19:00 The Australians didn't suffer like some of the other people did. I can remember, just before Anzac Day in

’53, I remember that because I associate it with the Turks. The Turks had a brigade there. We only had two battalions, that’s roughly

19:30 two thousand men at the most. The Turks had a brigade, about three thousand plus, and I can remember one particular week when we knew where the Turkish battalion were, they were probably about ten miles on our right, but they were being hammered, day in, day out. Mortaring, and with shell fire,

20:00 from the Chinese and North Koreans. They took that for something like a week, and they weren’t badly mauled by it, they lost a lot of casualties, but not as much as one would think by listening to it and seeing it, but we used to get our mortar and shells in. We might get five hundred in a day, but they were getting every ten seconds or so, it was horrendous,

20:30 reign of terror. After that happened, I remember we had our Anzac Day parade, and the Turkish brigade commander came down a laid a wreath on our gun carriage. It was just one of those things where they really loved Australians for some reason or other. I remember when I first went to Korea, I got off the aircraft

21:00 at Kimpo, which was the airport at Korea, and there was a fella to meet me there with a jeep, and he took me to the officers’ club, he said, “I’ll be back to get you,” and I walked into the officers’ club in Seoul, and there were four Turkish officers there. They saw me come in, I was dressed in a parka, and I had a slouch hat on, winter gear and my pack and everything else.

21:30 They said, “Oh, Aussie, come over,” I couldn’t buy a drink, you know? It was amazing. They’re quite unusual, and you’ve got to accept it, they’ve got some very brave men, some of those Turks. We didn’t see much of them, because we weren’t in action with them, we were watching what was happening, but that never happened to us.

22:00 We were doing it for somebody else in front of us, between the Americans and ourselves. There were lots of things going on, nobody saw everything that was going on, but what you did see was the stupidity of it, sometimes.

Just going back to that issue of coming back,

22:30 **to the hill, say after the Americans had been there, and finding out things were chaos. Were there any attempts, that you know of, made to liaise with any of these UN forces to develop some sort of uniformity in that occupation?**

Well, it was the Commonwealth Division which was an entity, and it was probably just as well, because they were an entity, because we all spoke English except the French Canadians.

23:00 Generally speaking, the Commonwealth Division went into one place, bang, like that. They looked after the three brigades, and we had our own artillery, so we were sort of a fighting task force, that’s what it was.

23:30 There wasn’t the liaison at battalion level. The Americans had something like sixty thousand there, no more than that. That’s what they had when they started off, they would have had something like three hundred thousand men there. It was a great commitment by them, they lost almost thirty thousand dead.

24:00 Who can say to them, “You’re cowards, you’re not doing the job properly.” You’d just have to wear it, that’s all. That’s one of those things. The only thing we could do anything about was the Royal 22nd Regiment, the Vanders of Canada.

24:30 There were two Canadian battalions that were there, one was the Royal Canadian Regiment, and the Vanders were there at one stage, then the Princess Patricia Canadian Light Infantry, they were there. They were a very famous group. So buried between battalion and battalion.

25:00 Of course, if you’d go to the brigade, the brigade commander would be told by the battalion commander what sort of a state they’d left the place in, and somebody would get a rocket, and they’d try to clean up their act, but we never saw that happening, we never saw the effect of those sort of things, we were just too busy worrying about our own little neck of the woods at that stage.

25:30 It did impinge on you, when you took over from somebody, and then you had to fight your way back over the other side of the valley, and that was difficult, and that’s where you lost men. You’d do that, it really hits home to you. It’s very unfortunate that we’re all not the same, but there you are.

26:00 The Australians probably had their own problems, too. We might have been a little bit lackadaisical with some things, but I don’t think we were, we tried to be very good soldiers, and think of everybody else that was coming in after us. We thought we dealt with a pretty professional attitude to the whole thing, whereas, I’m afraid, we thought the

26:30 Americans were really amateur about it, mainly because they had so many young fellows there. We were lucky, we had a lot of more mature people there. I was probably one of the youngest there, and there were a couple of fellas who’d been with me at Duntroon, they were

27:00 two years younger than me, so they'd have been much younger than some. The general digger was around about twenty four, twenty five, twenty six. Some of them were over that, nearly thirty. We had a good sprinkling, and that's only in two battalions, the Americans had such a large spread, you couldn't expect them to have all that much experience anyway.

Roy, I just want to got back to

27:30 **Australia before you left for Korea. How were the troops prepared for the conditions in Korea, what were they warned about Korean people, and what was the fraternisation policy?**

There was no fraternisation policy, except you were told,

28:00 not only in Australia but in Korea as well and Japan, that the worst thing that you could do was to associate with any of the villagers in Korea, because for a start they'd done tests. I remember they said that small pox was rampant, everybody had scabies, and tuberculosis, there was about a

28:30 seventy per cent casualty rate in the villages they tested. The other one was that the rate of venereal disease was horrendous. Around about seventy per cent, same as tuberculosis. The casualty rate of venereal disease in the Australian battalions was two hundred per cent. Now you work that out.

29:00 That means some people would have it twice, maybe three times, and that's what really happened. Some of these fellas were prone to getting venereal disease, because they didn't necessarily associate with Koreans, but they associated with Japanese on leave. After four months, we had leave in

29:30 Tokyo, six days. After eight months, we had leave in Tokyo for another two weeks. Of course, that was on, that's where it happened, the venereal disease that I saw, plus the fact that we had a lot of people going through. A battalion in the year would probably go through twice,

30:00 and a battalion's around about two thousand people that would go through. They were talking about two hundred per cent of venereal disease, and that's horrendous. They had accepted ways of handling venereal disease, proffering it wasn't something very nasty. Gonorrhoea was just a shot of penicillin at that stage. I'm sorry to be talking to you girls about those

30:30 sort of things, but that's one of the things that was really crippling to any force, and that's what happened.

We've talked to lots of Korean and BCOF veterans about VD [venereal disease] and fraternisation about particularly Japanese women, and I did hear from one person that in order to combat the problem, there were military sanctioned

31:00 **brothels.**

Not in the Australian Army, never. I can't remember that happening at all, not when I was there. There might have been in Kure, that the people would say, "That's the safest way to go," but it wouldn't be sanctioned. They wouldn't put the imprimatur on it at all.

31:30 I can remember as a cadet at Duntroon, one of our worst lectures was on venereal disease. It was given to us by Doc Nemo, who was our regimental medical officer, and he'd served in the First World War. He told us stories about the troops at Cairo when he was there in the First World War. He said that the diggers that came to him as a medical officer,

32:00 and said that they'd had VD, the fellas would say, "Well, I must've picked it up off a toilet seat." He rejoined then it was a strange place to take a woman. It's always one of those things, but never sanctioned. Talking about films, the worst film we ever had were the

32:30 dental films, they made people feel worse than VD films, because they showed frightful diseases of the mouth and the gums that people had. In technicolour, shocking.

And were the VD films similar in their themes?

Similar, but probably not

33:00 as explicit.

So what could the men do to avoid catching VD?

Nothing much, really, just abstain.

Was that practical?

Well, yes it was for a lot of people, they didn't want to risk it. I would say a lot of them didn't

33:30 cohabitate certainly with Koreans, because they were not in the loop, but on leave, when they had money, in Japan, that might be a different thing altogether. It wasn't well known, but that's the casualty list. We had casualty lists for all sorts, but one of the things was VD, it didn't keep people out of the line,

34:00 because you had that wonderful drug, penicillin, which would get rid of anything.

Prior to embarkation, what were the instructions in terms of what to expect of the enemy?

Nothing really, other than the Chinese particularly were very good soldiers, and they were brave.

34:30 There were no pushovers, but that was about all. We expected to have almost like Japanese Banzai charges, which we did have. We had some Australians that were just as easy to do Banzai charges as anybody else when they did.

35:00 I can remember one particular one when Jeff Smith was killed, or went missing, he's still officially missing, on that snatch group. A fellow called Morrison had got a DCM [Distinguished Conduct Medal], and I'd been out with him on this particular occasion, but he was the leader of the snatch group of Jeff Smith's. He got into the Chinese lines, and they killed a few

35:30 Chinese, and they couldn't get any prisoners, and the five of them were coming back. They saw the fire fight over at the firm base, they could hear it, and they could see the flashes. They knew that they were in trouble, so they decided to get out of the Chinese lines, and they got back and they'd gone past these buns, these rice paddies which had steep sides, buns they were called.

36:00 They saw about twenty Chinese coming across, and they were all loping across with their weapons, and they got behind the bun, and as they got up there, they sprayed them with their own guns and knocked over the twenty. They raced over to the fire park, where the firm base was, and it was just chock a block with Chinese,

36:30 sorting out the troops that were there. Morrison had five people with him at that stage, he led these five people through a mass of Chinese. This is the story he was telling me, and I was the court of inquiry officer for where these people had got to, and how many had been killed. He told me that they went through, and there were so many Chinese that

37:00 he was grabbing them by the necks and shooting 'em. It was so hand to hand, it was all over the place. He said that it was amazing, but he was a wild, wild man, the old Morrison. He had five people that got through, and they joined up with the remnants of the party, and they went back to the advance party and got them out too.

Who was Jeff Smith?

Jeff Smith was a classmate of mine

37:30 that was killed over there.

38:00 **Roy, how prepared and equipped were you for the Korean conditions in terms of the climate, and like you said, this kind of warfare, by the time you got there, was like the Western Front?**

We were prepared, we had much better gear. We had good boots and good clothing, and we had parkas and string vests and woollen shirts, we were very well equipped, physically, for that.

38:30 You still had problems in the snow with frostbite, your weapons would get very cold, and you would hit the metal parts of your weapon, say from your rifle or the stock of your gun, you could freeze your finger to it, and you'd tear off lumps of your hand if you weren't careful. We used gloves, and they had special gloves with a trigger finger in them.

39:00 Like a mitten, but you could put your finger out in the finger hole, and bang, you could use your rifle that way. We had fairly good food, the food was okay. We had toilet facilities which were deep hole thunderbox. We had what we called 'pisser phones',

39:30 in which we would just get a cartridge case or a cartridge holder, put it into the ground and that would be for urinating. The Chinese used to mistake those for chimneys sometimes. We had these choofers, little potbellied stoves that we'd fill with diesel, and they'd keep us warm in our bunkers.

40:00 We had a flue going up. There was one spot where the Chinese used to raid very quickly and overrun the place. The idea was that people on that area would bug out, let the Chinese go over it, then they'd go back again and we could reoccupy it. It was quite unusual, because the Chinese would go through and put these grenades down the pisser phones, and they'd blow up all the pisser phones!

40:30 So that was hygiene. As far as washing was concerned, it was frightful. I'd get my houseboy to bring up some hot water from the cookhouse. I had an aluminium basin which I would stand in, and I'd have a bird bath in that, you see. That's what I could do probably once a day,

41:00 nearly every day I would get that. As far as showers were concerned, we didn't have a really good shower until we went to a rest area in a place called Tongduch'on-ni. The Americans came in and connected up to a river. They pumped the water out, heated it up, had a battery of about twenty showers going,

41:30 and the Americans would just go in on one side. They'd keep their cap and their boots, that's all they kept. They'd take off their singlets and their trousers and shirts and then they'd get fitted out at the other end with completely fresh, clean gear. When the Australians get their turn, we went in by

company, but when we were in the rest care we could wash our own clothes, but we kept everything.

Tape 6

00:32 **Roy, I wanted to ask you, when you were in Australia before you left for Korea, what was the last place you were based in?**

Ingleburn. I was at Ingleburn, but I came down for the last few weeks as GO [Guard Officer] Commander at Victoria Barracks. When I'd finished that, I had to be best man at one of my classmate's wedding on the Saturday,

01:00 the 28th of November and then on the 5th of December I went away to Korea with two other of my classmates, on Qantas.

Where did you fly to?

We flew to Darwin first. It started off in the evening, it's a nine hour trip from Sydney to Darwin. We got to Darwin about five o'clock in the morning,

01:30 very humid heat, and we had breakfast there and a swim. We went from there to Manila. We got there after another nine hours, stayed at the Hotel Manila, and in the morning we went off about six o'clock in the morning, and we flew from Manila direct to Hikone, which was in

02:00 the south of Japan, that was a big naval and air force base there. From there I went by ferry to Kure, where the army has what they called the RHU, the reinforcing holding unit. They had a battle school there, I was there about a week. On the 13th of December I went over to

02:30 Korea in a DC3.

What kind of preparations did you make in Kure?

You get kitted out, had a few night exercises with some troops there. That's all, a few minor instructions for the troops, I was instructing them as well as taking them out on exercises in the hills around Kure, Kawajiri and that way.

03:00 Then that was it, so I had about a week in Kure, then straight over to Korea, to Kimpo. On the way over, funnily enough, I was sitting in the DC3, you sit on the side, and I was next to Brigadier, Jackson, who was going over with me. The pilot came out, and I recognised him.

03:30 He was paying his respects to the senior officer, Brigadier D R Jackson. As he went past, I said to him, "Is your name Snellgrove?" And he said, "Yes," and I said, "I'm Roy Freeman, we were in sixth grade together at Clovelly Public School." So he was the pilot taking us over to Korea. That was quite unusual.

04:00 **What were your first impressions of Kimpo?**

It was a massive American airbase, planes everywhere. Large planes coming in and going out, big Globemaster planes, which are the biggest troop carrying planes at the time. I came back from Korea to Tokyo in a Globemaster,

04:30 the wings actually flap in it when it's going, it's quite disconcerting. You've got two tiers of troops lined up in it, it takes about seventy four troops with about ten crew on it. I had about seventy two soldiers that were sick going over on that plane, going over to Japan.

05:00 Big planes, they weren't all that comfortable, but they were efficient. You could drive a truck right up into the bowels, and you could take all these servicemen with it. About six months later, one of them crashed at Tachikawa, and killed the whole lot of marines on it. They had their problems, but that's service flying, I suppose.

Was that the main source of transport between Japan and Korea?

05:30 Not really. When I came out of Korea, I bought some troops down from Seoul, and I came down by train, right through the centre of Taegu to Pusan. That took a day to do that. Then, I stayed there overnight, and I took seventy two troops on

06:00 the little Chinese ferry, called the Wonsan, which plied between Pusan to Kure. That took twenty four hours in this little Chinese ferry. That was the normal way for bringing back lots of troops in a leisurely fashion.

06:30 If you didn't have the air craft, we didn't have a lot of air craft. As far as transport air craft in Australia, we relied on American air craft.

So what had you been told when you were in Kure about what your specific role would be?

Nothing specific. Whilst there were some fellows there that I had been at college with,

07:00 they were senior class fellows, the OC [officer commanding] of the Reinforcement Holding Unit was a bloke called Jack Gerke, who had a reputation for being a very hard man. He was most uninformative for what we would expect. He didn't think that was his prerogative to tell me

07:30 anything I was going to do as a junior officer. I remember that Korea was a junior officers' war, it wasn't a senior officers' war. The war was actually fought by the men and their immediate two commanders, their junior officers. That's what it was. I can now remember

08:00 two events which occurred when they had a company commander leading a company in the attack, in my time, when I was there. They were very isolated things. A company commander usually stayed in the company lines on the hill, and controlled patrols.

08:30 He probably had three or four patrols out. He was the link between us in the field and the firepower that we had back at battalion and regiment and brigade. So that was his essential part, so he was divorced from getting out and getting in the hustle and bustle. And most of them had Second World War experience. Ralph Sutton was my company

09:00 commander in my first five months. He was an excellent company commander, and he'd been an Australian paratrooper in the Second World War. There weren't too many Australian paratroopers around, and they were very quickly trained, paratroopers, I think they had one jump before they jumped into action. So he was a very

09:30 efficient soldier, and a very nice fellow at the same time. The one that came after him was hopeless as a company commander, he hadn't had any action at all. He had been in the Second World War, but not as a platoon commander. The other company commanders in 3 Battalion, that's my battalion at that time, I had been at Duntroon when

10:00 they were company commanders at Duntroon. I knew them from three years back. Two of them were my football coaches, one took over from the other at Duntroon, so I knew them very well. My brigadier was a fellow called Tom Daly, later on he was General Sir Thomas Daly, and he'd been our Director of Military Art at

10:30 Duntroon. He knew me very well, and I knew him very well. I don't know him as intimately as my class mates, but I'd had two years of him as virtually my CO at Duntroon. He wasn't the commandant, he was the next one below the commandant, the Director of Military Art. He made it his business when he came to Duntroon that he knew everybody.

11:00 He came into our studies or our classes in the field, and we were asked a question by the directing staff, we would stand up and state our name then answer the question. The commandant was a bloke called sir Henry Wells, major general, he was the one that started it all, they both were a team at Duntroon for two years.

11:30 They were fantastic officers, and of course, they knew us very well. The first time I arrived in Korea, I went up to my battalion, and I arrived there about half past five in the morning by jeep from Seoul, and the orderly officer said, "You've got to go to John Humphrey's tent," John Humphrey was a classmate of mine from school as well as Duntroon.

12:00 We'd both gone to Sydney Tech High School. He greeted me in a very peculiar fashion, which I'll tell you about later, but he said to me afterwards, "You've got to come down and meet the brigadier, he wants to meet you," you know, a junior officer coming into a battalion, that's what he liked to do, and it was Tom Daly.

12:30 Humphrey drove down to brigade headquarters, which was about five miles away, and we arrived at brigade headquarters. The moment we arrived the fire bell rang, 'clang, clang, clang'. The worst thing that could happen in the headquarters was a fire. Somebody had set the brigadier's caravan off, he slept in a caravan, he didn't sleep in tents or anything like that. So Humphrey and I dived into the brigadier's caravan, and we're

13:00 grabbing all his personal effects and taking them out through the door, and he suddenly appeared and said "Oh, hello Freeman, how are you going? What are you doing here?" And years later, he was still calling me Freeman, he always liked our class, because we were a special class to him. He and his wife knew us very well,

13:30 he was a very likable fellow, a very good officer. So Henry Wells came through another time, that's another time I got into a lot of hot water from that wretched CO of mine. We were told to meet at the company command post because the CGS [Chief of the General Staff], who was Sir Sidney Rowell, was coming down to inspect us.

14:00 He was being accompanied by some other officers, and who should come down first but sir Henry Wells, my old commandant. He said very much the same thing, because I'd seen him a couple of times about my mathematics, and he said, "Oh, hello Freeman, nice to see you here, how are your mathematics going?" Then I took him around my platoon, and showed him where my fellows were, and

14:30 I got in all the trouble in the world, because I'd completely forgotten about sir Sidney Rowell coming up

behind him, I should have stayed for him, you see. I wasn't very much the flavour of the month for that.

Once you got to Kimpo, where did you go from there?

I went to the Commonwealth Officers' Club in Seoul, and that's where my Turkish friends first of all experienced

15:00 an eastern version of an automatic toilet. And that was something to behold, because they used to have an open timber seat and a sort of a pan underneath that. When you put the seat up, everything was deactivated, but when you put the seat down, suddenly there was this terribly grinding and flailing about, and what happened was that putting down the seat actually turned a flail,

15:30 this chain came down and wiped everything out of the place. So you wouldn't want to be seated at the toilet when that flail came into place, it would be very nasty. That was a little thing. I had to wait there 'til the next night, and then I went down to my battalion, or early the next morning.

What was the officers' club at Seoul like?

16:00 It was pretty primitive really, when you think of what some officers' clubs are. It was placed just like a bar, a few tables and chairs around and a barman. We were paid in British Army sterling notes, these were special sterling notes that were printed particularly for the British occupational forces.

16:30 We could cash those in the canteens. The British army had a compass type fund called NAAFI [Navy, Army, Air Force Institute], you often heard of NAAFI tea, well these NAAFI are almost like the Salvation Army, they have these small canteen areas that they run around, and you can buy a cup of tea from them or you can buy lollies or something,

17:00 but they're usually back from the line, whereas the Salvation Army in Korea would come right up to the front line, in fact they caused a lot of trouble, the Salvation Army. The only trouble was that when they came up, say to 355, you come up to an area called 'the bowling alley', and this fellow, a Salvation Army major called Jack Simmons, I remember him particularly well.

17:30 He came up every afternoon at about half past two, quarter to three. The drill coming up from the rear position is you come up to this big camouflage net across, and you go behind the camouflage net, and suddenly the driver would say, "Are you ready, skipper?" And you say, "Yes," so he'd turn out from behind the camouflage net, hit the accelerator and we'd scoot along for about

18:00 four hundred metres, until we got to the edge of the ridge that was coming down. The Chinese could see us from the camouflage net onward, so they knew that any vehicle coming up there was going to go up behind 355 and there was a track running up. Of course, what they used to do, they got very cagey, they'd wait till they estimated that we were up the top somewhere, and then they'd lob in mortars over the hill and hit the

18:30 road behind us. Jack Simmons used to do this every day, of course, he'd park his jeep and he had a big tea urn on the back of it with tea and cake, and he'd give the fellows afternoon tea. They'd all congregate, and then suddenly we'd get mortars coming over trying to hit this jeep that he brought up. There was a lot of trouble going around, trying to get out of his

19:00 way, and trying to keep him out of his way because he caused some anguish, but it was all good hearted stuff, he wanted to help. The bowling alley was a dangerous little place, because they could see right down that alley, about four hundred metres while we got out from the camouflage and then headed up right behind.

19:30 That was when I virtually first came under fire, before we took over from two battalion, the company commander and 2IC [Second in Command] and the three platoon commanders, we went up to reconnoitre our place where I was going in as the forward bloke to bring everybody else in. I had to go and see

20:00 where everything was, and so did the others too, where they were going to take their men. We went up through the bowling alley, and in the side of the hills we had these trenches where we could drive a jeep in, and the road still went up, so we put our jeep in one of these revetments and started to walk up.

20:30 The next thing I saw was the company commander and the 2IC diving over the side of the road, and then suddenly I heard this noise, like a squelching noise or a squirting noise, and it was a mortar, then I realised that I should be getting out of the way, too. They were mortaring us as well, and that was my very first time I was shot at by somebody that was angry at me.

21:00 **Whereabouts was that?**

That was in 355, or behind 355, before I got onto the line.

What was it like to join up with the battalion for the first time?

It was quite good, sort of like coming home.

21:30 Most of the junior officers were classmates of mine, some of the senior class before me were just coming out after their turn. The company commanders were fellas that I knew from three or four years

of college. I didn't know Sutton, my company commander, he hadn't been at college, but Morrie I knew, Bill Morrow I knew, two of the company commanders, I knew them. 3 Company was commanded by Ralph Sutton.

22:00 I still speak to him, I spoke to him only two weeks ago, he's down in Victoria now, he's eighty. It was unfortunate with him, because in about April of '53, we went to the line in '52, but in April, his wife was living in Victoria Barracks in Sydney, and they had a married quarter there.

22:30 He got the signal to say that his wife had contracted polio [poliomyelitis], he had a couple of young children, a boy and a girl. So he had to take compassionate leave to come back to Sydney, so he stayed in the army for a little while after that, but he was mainly looking after his very sick wife.

23:00 She only died about four years ago, so she had a long road with that. He was a very well thought out bloke, he didn't drink, he didn't smoke. He didn't say any bad swear words, he didn't swear,

23:30 but he was a very compact, together bloke, a very good fellow. He was very good at organisation, he ended up organising the Queen's first trip to Australia, and he got a Member of the Victorian Order for that. He just didn't go ahead in the army because of the fact that he had this very sick wife, and he

24:00 ended up retiring as a colonel. It was a pity in some ways, because he was an extremely competent man.

So when you met up with him, what were your instructions about who you would be in charge of?

Oh, I was posted from the beginning to C Company, to him, who I didn't know, and I was to get 7 Platoon.

24:30 On the rotation system, the 7 Platoon commander, Bill Harrington, had reached the end of his year and he was due to go out, so that's how it was. 3 Battalion was continually reinforced for three years, whereas in the beginning, they were the only ones there for over a year or eighteen months. Then 2 Battalion came in

25:00 April 1952, and they brought a whole battalion over, and then in April '53 they went out completely as a whole battalion. They'd had some reinforcements that came up to cater for casualties and things like that, so the ones that hadn't done the year, they transferred over to 1 Battalion that came up to take over the year. So that was the way it was worked, but 3 Battalion were

25:30 continually being reinforced, they stayed there right the way through, and even up to 1956 after the war.

So what do you remember of meeting 7 Platoon for the first time?

Well, it wasn't a shock, it was pretty easy, really. I met with my platoon sergeant, and we just took it from there.

26:00 One was just thrown into it. That's not quite right, Bill Harrington was there, so there was a takeover period of about three days, and by that three days, they were all out of the line. We had Christmas out of the line that year.

26:30 It was a fairly simple process to get to know them in that sort of a media. I didn't have any troubles with them, and being there with Harrington eased the pace a bit, so after three days, after he went, I took them into the line just after Christmas,

27:00 it was fairly simple to do. It doesn't matter much what you're doing out of the lines, it's what you're doing in the lines. That was where the whole testing period was on, not only for me, but for them as well, because of course we had to relate somehow to each other, and have some confidence in each other. You soon pick that up.

What had those men been through already when you joined them?

27:30 Well, mainly patrolling. Some of them had not been there very long. Some had been there for a second term, it was quite common for some NCOs and senior soldiers to say, "I'll stay up here for another year," and they were allowed to. So I had a couple of lance corporals and corporals that had

28:00 been there for their second term. They'd been there virtually over a year, going on for a second year. That was either a good thing or a bad thing, depending on them. Some of them were better off not going back to Sydney, or to Australia. Some of them liked that sort of a life, it was a very dangerous life. It was dangerous for all of us,

28:30 whether we were there for two terms or not. Not a great deal of them, but a lot of them preferred to stay there.

Why was that, do you think?

I think it suited them better. A lot of fellows in those days, there were some loners around, you know.

One officer, particularly, used to go out and patrol on his own.

29:00 He'd just wander off into the valley, he was quite an unusual fellow. He ended up being commissioned, and being a captain in Vietnam, but he was quite an unusual bloke, very quiet, not the usual warrant officer type, you see, but very quiet and dedicated to what he was doing, which I didn't think was very good.

29:30 **Why was that?**

I think it was damn dangerous and foolish, cause he could have got himself shot or shot somebody else. I mean, he was actually going out there stalking them. He was like a supernumerary. The CO knew what was going on, but they reckoned it was all right for him to do that. He knew what was going on, so he knew what was not happening

30:00 and happening. But he's the only one that was rather like that. There were a lot of fellows that were lonely types, real lonesome types. They seemed to be more comfortable in that sort of a situation.

When you are the platoon commander when you are in charge of a group of men who've already been

30:30 **at war for a year or so, and you've come in from Australia, how do you form that bond and that sense of trust?**

You get plenty of time to do that, we didn't go out in large parties every day, a platoon commander would go out on patrol probably on average once every three day.

31:00 But the other days you might do recce [reconnaissance] patrols, and you might do a fairly long all night patrol, but you might go out with yourself and two men, a signaller and a Scout. That's pretty much a very intimate little group, when you get out there on your own. You get to know each other very well in those situations.

31:30 Just the way you handled yourself, and they way you handled the men. There are some fellows that you wouldn't like to go out on patrol with, they were too nervy, or too worried about something else. There could be a tendency to take always the one fellow out that you were happy with, and you could relate to him, and you knew he'd be there right by your side when you needed him.

32:00 You had to make sure that that sort of load got shifted around. It depends how you looked after them too, you had to know what they were going to be thinking next, and what they wanted next, and make sure they got all they were entitled to, and that they were comfortable, they had enough clothing, I mean these fellows were living

32:30 in pretty primitive conditions and you'd see backsides out of trousers and people wearing dirty clothes, and you'd have to go up to them and say, "Get those things washed," and do something about it. Had to have a shave every day. If you did all those things right, and you were consistent with it all, then you could

33:00 put your stamp on it as well. They knew what you were about, and what you wanted to do, and if you went out on patrol with them, you did exactly what you were supposed to do. You went to the places where you were told to go, you didn't have to run into any trouble, but if you ran into trouble, they could see how you reacted to that as well. So, there was a lot of mutual

33:30 confidence going on as well, you didn't get that readily, you got it after a while. It was all right once they called you "skipper," it was okay. If they didn't call you skipper, you were in trouble. Officers had to be, in a way, all things to all their men, doesn't matter if they liked them or not. There were some fellas who were the biggest shower of

34:00 so and sos you could imagine. And there were some smart ones around. I had a couple of cases where I had to act as a defending officer for a couple of days in war time, and these were hanging offences, one was desertion. He'd gone over the hill, and he'd not come back. They picked him up in Seoul.

34:30 I managed to get him off with absence without leave, so that wasn't too bad. Another one I got, he had struck an officer, and I'm just a junior officer, he'd struck a captain, an acting commander.

35:00 He could be a bit provocative in his time, and he did provoke this fellow, and this fellow laid one on him. So he got charged with striking an officer, which is a very serious complaint. I got him off on that too. As junior officer in virtually my first year of posting, and I was lumped with acting as a defending officer for things like this, and I wasn't the only one doing that,

35:30 there were a couple of others did some. We'd get out of the line, and I'd have to spend a day or two in court with a military court with these fellas.

Where would that be?

That would be held in battalion or brigade headquarters, with officers from the brigade or the battalion. You would act as a defending counsel,

36:00 they call it ‘the defending officer’, and the other one over the way would be the prosecuting officer. But we’d done all this stuff at Duntroon, we’d been presidents of the counsel, acting as brigadiers, we’d come up for lunch at Duntroon with all our regalia on. We’d be a brigadier at one stage, or we’d be dressed in civvies, and end up being some civilian with a claim against the army. So we had all these things,

36:30 we’d done them. It was acting, I suppose, we acted the part.

Where was it where you joined up with your platoon?

In a place called Area 6, a resting area behind the line, and it consisted of troops in marquees.

37:00 It was in a safe area, about six miles behind the line. We had trenches all around it too, in case it was overrun, but the sleeping affairs for the platoons were in marquees, and the officers had tents, but smaller two man tents. We had a battalion mess that we celebrated

37:30 Christmas in, and it was just in a re-entrant, probably about six miles behind the main line.

Could you tell me about that Christmas that you celebrated before you took the men into the front line?

It was very cold, we had turkey and we had ham. We made some very nice hot toddies, we used to get British Army

38:00 issue rum, so we used to make very nice coffee and rum out of that with mars bars and condensed milk, some of this British rum and some coffee crystals. That was very nice, we always had a wet mess, we had alcohol in a mess when we were in rest area. No alcohol

38:30 when we were out on the hill at all. When the parcels came up, the mail came in, Paula had sent me up for my birthday at one stage a hollow loaf of bread, and in the bread was

39:00 that alcohol made out of caraway seeds. Also in that, she’d sent me up a beautiful pipe, I didn’t smoke cigarettes, which I didn’t bring back with me.

39:30 She said, “How did you lose it?” And I said, “It was shot out of my face!” She never believed that, though. Her mother send me up a cake wrapped in calico. It was an iced cake, and around it she’d put packets of continental chicken soup.

40:00 She thought, “This’ll be a nice thing to send to Roy, he’ll be able to get some hot water and make some continental chicken soup out of it.” Unfortunately, in the trip up from Australia, it got busted, well and truly, so on top of the icing, I had all these hard noodles and continental chicken soup around the thing.

Did you serve the troops their Christmas meal?

Yes. That was a tradition,

40:30 we served the troops their Christmas dinner, and then we got our own dinner after that. They were each given two bottles of beer. The Comforts Fund in Australia used to send up fairly regularly little timber packets of beer, which contained two bottles, all in cardboard or straw.

41:00 In December, of course it was very cold, but we still liked our beer cold, so we could get it into something and it would be ice cold in no time at all. Even in summer we had ice, and Korea was very hot in the summer, it was just as hot as it was in Australia.

41:30 But they used to, during the winter time, get a cave, and they’d pack that cave with rice straw, then they’d pack in these blocks of ice into it. They’d build it up right to the entrance, and they’d pack the whole thing with rice straw and insulate the whole thing. They could walk into that and give you ice for your drinks in the mess. They were very economical with their stuff, the Koreans.

Tape 7

00:32 **Roy, before we talk about going up to the front line on 355, could I ask you to tell me in detail what happened when you were the defending officer for the man that was charged with desertion?**

I was just given a brief, what he had done, and what had happened, then I had a talk to him, he was in custody,

01:00 we had a small lock up there when we were out of the line. All of these things happened when we were out of the line, they were just put there in the jug until we had some time to handle it. When we had a bit of spare time to ask as a defending officer. I just had a look at the thing, he was charged with desertion because he’d actually changed his clothes, he was out of uniform,

01:30 and he'd been away for over three weeks, and they found him in some nightclub in Seoul. That's when they said, "Well, automatically you're going to be charged with desertion, which is a very serious offence, especially if you're in the line, it's deserting in the face of the enemy. It was, technically, a hanging offence, really.

02:00 **I'm just trying to work out physically how a man goes about deserting when he's on the front line?**

Well, he can do it. That's what he did. You can get out of the company, out of the area. You can pick up trucks going all sorts of ways, so you'd just get into a truck and say, "I've got to go back to the battalion headquarters, can you give me a lift?" And he'd be in uniform, and they'd take him there. Then he'd go from there,

02:30 and you didn't carry a passport around with you, all you had was your pay book. There weren't too many people that were going to interrupt him and say, "Where are you going? What are you doing?" It was fairly laissez-faire, after all, you were a white eyes, you knew what the Chinese looked like, and you knew what the Koreans looked like, so you could have been American or British or

03:00 Australian, but obviously you weren't going to be an enemy, he wasn't going to shoot you or anything like that. Once they got into a place like Seoul, with all the things that go on with about two million people, a large city which had had the tripe knocked out of it, there were lots of places for him to go and shack up with some Korean girl he might have met, or offer his services to some

03:30 café or something or other. That's what happened to him, but he didn't have enough sense to get out of Seoul, so that's where the MPs [military police] got him eventually, cause they saw this obviously European fellow in ordinary clothes, and that wasn't on. Nobody could be around like that, so they took him. It was almost automatic that

04:00 if you were away for more than two weeks, you were charged with desertion. So you had to prove that he didn't really intend to desert.

What was his demeanour like when you first went to see him after reading the brief?

You're going back fifty odd years now. I don't even know how I got the brief. I would have got it from my company commander or my battalion commander, they might have said, "It's Freeman's turn to have

04:30 these couple of briefs." But he seemed quite a nice digger, why would he do this? I couldn't understand why he did it, and when he knew it was desertion, he was really very nice, he didn't want to go up for desertion, so we had to find some way, and the only way I got him out of it was to suggest that he wasn't really deserting, he was only AWL [absent without leave], which was a different thing altogether.

05:00 It was a fine line between AWL and being a deserter, depended on times to a certain degree. He'd just gone over the time, and that's why they put him on desertion. So, you've got to think of the courts, it was all military, so the president of the court and three officers, he'd be a major, or at the most part, colonel.

05:30 The others would be probably a couple of captains, and they wouldn't want to send somebody up to be hung, or even put anybody away for more than a year. So they were anxious to look at this fellows record, see what he'd done, see that it wasn't going to be desertion anyway. If I could convince them that he wasn't going to run away, he was taking leave because he was sick and tired of being shot at,

06:00 and he came back eventually, that was all right. So it was a reasonably simple one, it's a lot of responsibility to lay on a junior officer like that. The other one was just as important, I suppose, but I was stroppy enough to query this blokes, the fact that he could provoke somebody.

06:30 I was only reading the things, I brought some of these papers back with me, and it's got instructions for defending officers, and what I should do. It's quite specific that I should try and cast the best possible light on this fellow, and try and make sure that the charges are not really true.

07:00 That's what I did, and I was lucky that I got away with it. And he was lucky he got off the striking an officer charge, because this fellow was known to be a bit of a provocateur, so that was that.

So the man that was found guilty of being AWL, what was his punishment?

He probably got about fourteen days' CB, but at that stage he wouldn't have been thrown in

07:30 to the Canadian one in Seoul, he would have been charged somewhere else.

So while you were in the Area 6 rest area, what sort of exercises were you conducting to get the men ready for going back onto the line?

Mainly we did a lot of sweep exercises. We'd go through an area, and we'd sweep the village.

08:00 There was no way we could rehearse going to the line, living in the dugout, then going out on patrol. Patrols were always a sweep, anyway, but we did whole battalions by company, sweeps of various areas to make sure that they were safe. We also did those sort of things with other battalions that came in

new. I spent a couple of

08:30 weeks with the Black Watch doing exercises and throwing around TNT [trinitrotoluene], small half things of gelignite to simulate shell bursts, so that all those jocks could see what it was like to be under fire. We were just playing at it, really, but they were good to be with, and there was a certain amount of

09:00 camaraderie between the Australians and the Scots. We all learned something for it, and we all had a good walk in the sun. Between them and the Durham Light Infantry, the Australian Army has got very little tradition, it's got tradition now, but in those days, you put yourself up against some of the

09:30 larger battalions, the old battalions of the British Army, who went back to 1646, or 1703 or something. You admired that sort of stamina, that they could still maintain their traditions after all these years. Even their dress, the Black Watch all wore the tam-o'-shanter, of course, and they

10:00 had their facial hair growing down like mutton chops, right across here, and that was established fact. The Gloucester Regiment had a cap badge, they also had a badge at the back of their collar. They had black tabs down at the end of it. And I knew why, cause I knew a bit about it,

10:30 the British regiments, it was because they went into action and they put their badges on the back of themselves, and they put these tags so other people could hang on to them when they were going into a night exercise in Waterloo or something. The poor Royal Tank Regiment, we had a couple of tanks in my area, they were Centurion tanks so they were right down and all that poked out was the gun, they were manned by the Royal Tank Regiment,

11:00 who came about from the cavalry, but they first started in World War One, in 1917. I struck a couple of these blokes on leave in Tokyo, and they all had this ash plant walking stick, that was one of their dress uses. I said to them, "Why do you carry that walking stick, what's the story behind that?" And they said, "Well

11:30 in 1917 when the first tanks came in, they were getting problems with the tanks, that they were going over mines and getting their tracks blown off, so the junior officers were given a stick, and it was their job to walk in front of the tank and prod in front of the track so they didn't run over a mine." You can just imagine the casualties in the junior officers of the Royal Tank Regiment!

12:00 **You said that the Australian Army seemed quite young in terms of these regiments that were two hundred years old. What was the awareness of these armies of the Anzac tradition at that time?**

They thought we were pretty tough individuals. I got that impression that they would rely on us, even the Americans would rely on us. We had a certain amount of

12:30 thing to keep on doing that, that was occasioned early in the piece when the third battalion, particularly and the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, they won a presidential citation in a place called Kap'yong, and this is where your friend

13:00 would have been in Kap'yong, after Apple Orchard. They stopped the whole Chinese divisional advance down the main road above Seoul, they stopped it for about two days, allowing the American forces to get out and regroup behind Seoul.

13:30 Because they got this American Presidential Citation, you see a third battalion always wears their presidential citation on the shoulder patches, blue with a gold frame on it, a little decoration. Those people that were at Kap'yong always wear on their right

14:00 breast the same thing, it's a dark blue silk badge with a gold frame on it. So they've got that, and they won that in conjunction with the PPCLI [Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry], and also it was an American tank regiment, a company of American tanks that helped them, too. That was in

14:30 1951, that was very early in the war. From that time onward, the 3rd Battalion, particularly, had a great reputation as being somebody that could be relied on. That's why they were called 'Old Faithful'. And Tom Daly gave them that name. That was largely it, and we made a point of

15:00 doing what we were told, and what we went in to do. So everybody in the battalion seemed to have that sort of attitude to it, even the bad guys. When push came to shove, they were prepared to be there, as well.

How did you travel from Area 6 to the front line?

Up to a point, we

15:30 came up to this bowling alley bit, and we didn't take trucks up past that. We took jeeps up past it. We travelled in trucks with dampened down lights, they had the lights with louvres on so we could see the road and that was all. At the moment we got to this bowling alley bit, we walked from there, and that was probably about

16:00 a good two miles, but uphill.

So when you went up to the front line for the first time as platoon commander, what was the state of 355 and what did the line look like?

Well, we were on the side of a hill, and it was the highest hill around the area for

16:30 twenty kilometres, at least. It was an area that had been fought over for a long time, and eventually in the Battle of Maryang San in October ’52, they’d taken it, and they held it ever since that time, and they weren’t going to let it go, because

17:00 it commanded the slopes. We had one area that was almost as high, area 317, and that was in Chinese hands. That could look down on some of our positions on the hill, we got blasted from there, but generally speaking it was the highest bit of land in the area, and we took a great deal of pride keeping it in Australian hands.

17:30 Of course, the Vanders and the Americans came over and took it over, but we got back into it after a couple of months, and we maintained it. It was the right of the Commonwealth Division, we were on the extreme right, and next to us were the republic of Korea. When we were down further on the south, down near the end of the war, when we were down by The Hook and the Samichon Valley, we were on the very left of the line, and the American marines were on the other side.

18:00 And they were both pretty rotten positions, The Hook was worse than 355, but between 355 and The Hook, in the middle of that area was another one called 159, and we had that for a tour, and we came in after

18:30 two battalion and took that over from them. We had a lot of casualties on that one too, because it was a peculiar area. It came out and jutted out of the Chinese line, and we had our company all spread out in a line, virtually. I was out on the south eastern flank, and then there was the other one just about there,

19:00 and the other two companies were back, probably about five hundred metres separating them. We had a lot of patrols up that flank, which were subject to Chinese infiltration. And we lost a lot of people in there, not necessarily from the Chinese, from our own, because a couple of patrols ran into each other. One going one hundred and eighty degrees out of where he should have been going,

19:30 and we had a couple of very bad clashes there, where our own fire killed a number of people, initially, and then my platoon was on stretcher bearing duty that night. When it happened, we took stretchers over to get the wounded out, and we had another five wounded and a couple killed, just getting the wounded out. The moment the Chinese saw something happening

20:00 they just went mad, they mortared it, because they knew it wasn’t any of their people, it was us having a fight amongst ourselves. Stupid.

So how far up the hill on 355 were you? I’m just trying to picture what the hill looked like, and where the lines were?

I’ve got a picture of it I can show. I was on the

20:30 eastern side of the hill, and I was just below the top of the hill. The company commander and his command post was just on the top of the hill. Just below him was my platoon, 7 Platoon, which came down the hill, then over a coal, or a saddle, then up on the other hill. Now, I came right down to the tanks, and the tanks were in my platoon area, and just below the tanks was the cookhouse.

21:00 Just below the tanks was where Jack Simmons used to come up and give his afternoon tea to the fellows. So the tanks were always drawing the crabs with mortars, and also Jack Simmons was always drawing the mortars. So, that was my part, just up the eastern side of 355. On the other side of the tanks there was another platoon in front, and then at the rear of the company position

21:30 was 9 Platoon, which was on the rear of us. And then next to them was the Republic of Korea forces.

Did you always arrive at the front line at night?

Usually. Usually we changed over at night, because they couldn’t see us. If they saw the activity. We kept the activity down as much as we could. When we went back into

22:00 355 my second time, we’d only been there a night. We came in that night, and the next morning the Chinese had big amplifiers on the hill in front of us, and they used to play us all sorts of music and give us all this propaganda, you know,

22:30 “All you boys should be home by Christmas,” or next year, or whenever it is. And, “What are those Americans doing with your girlfriends?” And all that nonsense, and, “Why are you fighting this war for the Americans?” And there’s a female broadcasting this, and they’d play some popular song. When we came in

23:00 that next morning, she came across and said, “Welcome, Australian diggers, nice to see you back again.” They were peculiar people, very fair in lots of ways. My first patrol I went on, when I first got there, just after Christmas on 355, I went on this recce patrol with two other fellows

23:30 and I had to go up to peruse this, and it was just a total chaos, there was wire all over the place and trenches blown in and bodies everywhere. I did two stupid things, I saw this body and there was what I thought was a map case hanging out of the pocket. I didn't touch it, and then as I went further up the hill,

24:00 I saw a stump of a tree that was there, and up in the stump of the tree was this little parcel about that big. Hanging down from the tree was a big kitbag. I said to Rocky Cross, who was my scout, "We'll go out to this little trench,"

24:30 I'd seen a British training film at Duntroon, and they showed you what was happening in France when the British landed in France. The Germans booby trapped everything, so when you went over anything the door would explode and blow you apart. And then one of these British teams got very cute and they came up to this farmhouse, they saw the door, and they tested the wire for the door

25:00 and they retreated into a ditch by the road, and pulled the door, and of course the ditch blew up. You couldn't trust them though. I saw this thing up in the crotch of this tree and I thought I'd try and get this down and see what it is, and it was this kitbag hanging down, I didn't know what was in that. We looked at that, and we could see that it had a lot of sheets of paper and propaganda sheets,

25:30 written in Korean, so it was the North Koreans or the South Koreans. In that kitbag, I eventually got that and took it down with a bit of telephone wire, and there was this cake, a particular Christmas cake that they have, the Koreans have for them to distribute for themselves.

26:00 This pouch up in the bough of the thing was concerning me more, I didn't know what that was, so I did the same trick as our British friends did, got into this trench, then I thought, "If they've done any homework, this trench will blow up." Anyway, I pulled the thing down and it came down without any trouble. I had a look at it and it was a Christmas present, I've still got it. It was written in Korean, in a calico bag,

26:30 and there was a thick paper serviette and a printed handkerchief. A small packet of cigarettes and some lollies in it, it was a Christmas present.

For whom?

From the North Koreans to the South Koreans. So we were having our Christmas, they decided they wanted

27:00 our Christmas. They used to come up to the barbed wire and they used to hang towels, like a little wrapped towel with a toothbrush and some cigarettes in it and sweets. Anyway, I'll show that to you afterwards. I took this back and in my patrol report I told them I got this propaganda material, and my

27:30 CO said, "What about the map case?" He meant the map case sticking out of this dead body, and I said, "I didn't want to touch it, I wasn't sure what it was, it looked like a map case. I wasn't too happy about touching it," and he said, "Well, you'd better go back and get it." So the next night I had to come back and get the wretched thing, which was not very good for my morale at that time.

28:00 But, anyway, we got it. It was a potato masher grenade. I don't know if you know what they look like, but it was thick, with a little furl on the top, like a cover that goes on the top, and it had a big blob of steel on top of it, and down this stem is the igniter where you take that cap off,

28:30 it ignites it, and you throw it with a stick. You can throw it a long way. It looks like a potato masher, that's why it's called a potato masher grenade. I thought, "Well, am I gonna leave it here or what?" So I put it in my pack that I had and took it back, and that caused all sorts of production. When you took that cap off and you threw it,

29:00 you had a little weight on the tag, and as the potato masher went up in the air the tag dropped out, pulled a pin out and the thing was alive. So I was just as lucky I didn't blow myself up with that.

Was that on a Chinese dead body?

Yes. There were a number of bodies all over that place.

Roy, because you'd been through all this training, and here you were

29:30 **on this hill for the first time with your own platoon, I was wondering if you could walk me through from the time you started, what happened on that first patrol you went on? In as much detail as you can remember.**

Well, to start with, I had to go down to battalion headquarters, I was the patrol officer for that night.

30:00 What I was going to do from the patrol master, from the intelligence officer, and the object of course was, to be over there just to see what was going on, because the Chinese came down on to Brutus and Julius and Flora at night, and if we weren't there, they'd inhabit it. We'd be so much more pushed over the side of the hill. The idea was to keep the presence over there, see what was going on.

30:30 It wasn't a very active place. I didn't see any Chinese up there at all, except dead ones. You don't get

the full picture when you're a platoon commander, you only see what your little part of the line. It's only when you go back a bit and you see what's happened. So it was all fitting into a scheme of what they wanted to do, and I'd get patrol notification, what we were going to do, I'd go back,

31:00 report to my company commander, tell him what was going on, tell him that I'd be out that night from last light and I would be coming back in the morning, I'd be in before first light. Tell him what I had to do, told him what all the call signs, we had code words. If I was challenged by somebody, they would say, for instance, "Mickey," I would say, "Mouse."

31:30 That was a call sign, there were signs like that , 'pots' and 'pans', something that we could understand fairly readily. But they changed every night, so you had a different code word every night. I'd give the company commander all those bits and pieces, they'd pass on to the other platoon commander, so they'd all know what was going on. I'd also get a panel, we had air superiority, and we had

32:00 two panels, we had the pink panel and the yellow panel. Every day they would be put down in the set design in front of our positions, so I would put them on a tee, you had pink and gold or yellow. He'd have all that information, and he'd know what all the other patrols would do, because I brought that information back where they were going.

32:30 I'd pick my two fellows that were going out with me, a sig [signaller] and a scout. And then I'd rehearse them what we were going to do, where we were going to go, and we'd have a look at it from our side of the hill. We knew exactly where we were going, so if anything happened they could get back to where they should be. Then I'd say where are we going, down through the minefield, out through the standing patrols, and

33:00 they would give me times where I would have to report back to my company commander. I might get over the outside of our perimeter and out into the middle of the valley, and I'd have to stop and give them a code word, like 'dog', that would be my first one. 'Easy' might be the foot of the hill, 'fox' might be up the top, so they would know exactly where I was

33:30 without telling them. And it had to be something quick, because the Chinese could see where you were. So that was all done and rehearsed, so the three of us knew what was going on, and so the company commander and the rest of the platoon knew what was going on. And then we'd get kitted up, take out all our personal gear, wouldn't have any photographs or identification, only our dog tags on,

34:00 no badges of rank, just get caps on. Go over information, test our weapons, make sure they were working okay, and then just before last light we'd get ready to go. The moment it was dark, out we'd go, down through the traps, out through the mile wire, and start our patrol with the program we had, so you see

34:30 the people controlling it knew exactly where you were, and if they saw anything happen they could say, "Well Freeman's there on the other side of the hill, he's past dog, he's going up towards the top so he's halfway up the hill." They'd keep a track on you that way. Then on the way back you'd do the same thing, but you wouldn't come back the same way. You would come back somewhere else, because sometimes if they observed you going out,

35:00 they would lay an ambush for you coming back that way, so you'd come back another way. And that was pretty well par for the course. Then I had to do a report in the next morning. We'd come back in the night time, in the morning, and the quarter master would be there, or the company major would be there. He'd give us a tot of rum each, and

35:30 self heating soup to revive our spirits, then we'd go off to bed and have a couple of hours' sleep. The rest of the platoon would be standing to, because we stand to half an hour before first light, and half an hour after first light we'd be up, dressed, ready just before dawn, and stand to just after last light.

36:00 **How many signallers and Scouts did you have in your platoon?**

Well, they were all trained to do signalling, it was just a matter of wireless training. They carried a small pack on their back, with pouches in the side. They were pretty vital fellas, usually the pack on the back one was

36:30 always a good target, because you had the big aerial sticking up. He could really cop a bit of a lacing if they saw him. But they were all trained to do a certain amount of signalling. They handled the set, and the Scouting was just a matter of rehearsing what they had to do, and doing the job properly,

37:00 and being alert. When you're out there on your own, in front of a few people, you tend to be very alert.

So during that first stint on the line, what sort of assaults were the Chinese making on the hill?

None at all. The first time on the line, there were

37:30 no assaults on the line at all. They came up and they attacked a few of the standing patrols. When we went out through the mine wire gap, outside the gap in the valley, then we established what we call standing patrol at the bottom of the ridges. Just outside the wire, so they were at least covered from the back by people not being able to get through the

38:00 minefield. That was usually a corporal and two fellows, they were in pits with a Bren gun and rifles. They had a churn up type of telephone. So they came straight back to my command post, which was maintained by me. If I was out, the

38:30 platoon sergeant was there. So, that's how the communications were, and I had another phone line up to my company commander, and we could all listen in to anyone out in the valley, on my radio, and hear what was going on with the patrols. That's how I knew Unsworth had been shot dead, because I was listening to him going out.

39:00 There were no attacks, but the Chinese did come up and try and get around the patrols, because there were only three men, and they'd just come up and they'd throw grenades at them, and machine gun them, but the fellas were in that trench, or in that hole, so they were largely pretty well protected. Except one spot, one I remember very well, was

39:30 when we were in 159, they came up and got this standing patrol, and they killed a corporal and they took the two private soldiers captive. They'd been both injured with grenades, these concussion grenades, and they'd been blinded and all, temporarily blinded. One that I know very well, a bloke called

40:00 Alan McInnes, he was one of the ones captured. He was so badly blinded that he couldn't keep up with the Chinese who were taking him back as a prisoner, so they dropped him onto the ground and shot him, and he had seventeen shots into him, but he made it back, he had thirty four holes. They shot him down the side. We all had

40:30 flack jackets on then, in those days, so they went down the side, there was no sort of armour down there. We knew that they'd been taken, and he wasn't in my platoon, but I had the stretcher party at that stage. My platoon were on stretcher bearer duty. They reported to me and they said, "We can

41:00 hear somebody calling out in the valley," and we could hear this, "Help, help," coming up from the valley. We eventually spotted him, and he was crawling, dragging himself back towards the Chinese lines, and he was one of our blokes, it was McInnes. They said, "We've got to go and get him," and I sent my four fellows

41:30 with their stretcher, and I said, "Well look, we'll put up a flag, and we'll put our weapons on the bottom of it. We'll shove up the stretcher, and we'll go down and try and get him." We did that, we went over the top, we went down and picked him up on the stretcher and started to pull him up.

Tape 8

00:32 **Roy, you mentioned you'd collected him on the stretcher.**

And another stretcher party came out to help, four more fellows came out to help. As we collected him, we were bringing him up the hill, a steep sloping hill, and the Chinese machine guns on both sides of us. We thought they were gonna have a go at us, we didn't know what was happening.

01:00 Anyway, we got him up to the lines, up into the trenches, and once we got into the trenches, they just let us have everything, mortars, machine gun, the whole lot, but the didn't while we were going up the hill. It's amazing. They had those sort of off beat minutes, when I got him into the trenches, the trenches were so sort of zigzagged,

01:30 you couldn't use a stretcher with any sort of degree, without tossing him out. So, being fat, dumb and ugly, I put him over my shoulder on a fireman's lift, and I ran him up to the jeep waiting up the top, a stretcher bearer's jeep. We got him on the back of that, but he was in a great deal of pain, and he kept saying to me,

02:00 "Skipper, put me down, I can't take it any longer." He was happy to be back, that's when I found out what had happened to him, because I could see all the entry and exit holes that had happened, there were about thirty four holes in him. He came back to Kure, to the British Army hospital there,

02:30 he was a Melbourne fellow. He went back to Heidelberg hospital. I wrote to Paula and told her that he was coming back to Heidelberg and she should go and see that he was okay, and she did. She saw him in hospital. I see him fairly regularly since, he always buys me a beer for some reason or another. He's quite a character.

03:00 We had accidents, he was one of these unlucky fellows that always seemed to run into trouble. About six weeks before that, we'd been in a place called Tongduchon-ni, or Camp Casey we called it. I think it was a Saturday morning,

03:30 and we were looking after our weapons and we had to clean our grenades and carry out a striker test. The striker test can, taking out the base plug where the igniter was. Having the safety catch in your

hand, and then letting it go, and letting it strike your belt, so you knew it had spring action going. Unfortunately he did that with the igniter still in, and the next thing

04:00 he's got a live grenade in his hand with no safety lever, and he's got about four seconds to do something with it. There's smoke coming out of the ports. So he threw it up in the air, and half the company had been dismissed to their tents, and it exploded in the air, about six foot from Ralph Sutton's head,

04:30 and John Morrison, 2IC. There was no shrapnel, we all got little bits of shrapnel, little powder burns all through our clothing and God knows what, but the heavy bit of shrapnel, some of them went to the tents where the fellows had been dismissed to, and one got the base plate, bang through there. He was one of my platoon, a bloke called Craker.

05:00 His eye just sort of twisted round, we got him out pretty smartly. I was still on the parade ground, it would have been about twenty yards away from me, and the fellow in my platoon called Kinnane got shrapnel that went into his throat. He was just bleeding from the artery. But, they were the two worst casualties of the whole thing, it was just a sheer stupid mistake

05:30 of somebody who wasn't thinking. He was only nineteen, this fellow. We were able to get a helicopter in, Korea was one of the first places where they used helicopter evacuation. They had these bell helicopters with two panniers on the side, and we put them into that pannier, and they were

06:00 back at the hospital in about ten minutes. An American MASH [Mobile Army Surgical Hospital] hospital, have you seen MASH? Exactly the same. So they both got reasonable treatment, they were both invalided out of the army after that. Craker never saw very well, but they otherwise would have died.

Accidents like that, did they happen regularly?

06:30 No, not often, thank God. But there were accidents that happened in full fighting, that they were firing at each other, and thinking each other were Chinese or whatever. The only thing that stopped a couple of fire fights, was when somebody let out an expletive, and they knew they were Australians. "What the so and so are you doing here? What are you doing this for?"

07:00 And those things, they had subsidiary effects, because the moment the Chinese knew something was going on, they mortared it, or machine gunned it. That caused other casualties, which were not worthy.

Did you have casualties in your platoon the first time you were on hill 355?

Yes, minor casualties, shrapnel from the mortars.

07:30 I had no casualties in action on that time, none at all. I was very lucky.

How long did you stay on the hill for, the first time?

About six weeks. Went in just before New Year's Eve, and came out I'm pretty sure, the first week in February. About five weeks, a bit more.

And where did you go from there?

08:00 We went back to camp Casey. This was Tongduchon-ni, and it was a very large, flat area which took the brigade. So there was us, 3 Battalion, 2 Battalion and I think the Durham Light Infantry were with us at that stage.

So what would you do in that time that you were at camp Casey?

08:30 We'd try and get clean. Have showers and baths, and wash our clothes. We'd do a few of the things that we had to do. There'd be training, a lot of the administrative work you've gotta do with some of the diggers. You'd generally have a rest.

09:00 It'd be like a make and mend type of thing. You'd have some visits to other battalions to do a bit of that. There'd be work, guards you'd have to maintain around the place. A whole system of guards, and with that you'd have to post sentries and all. So there was a certain amount of administrative work to be done. You had to make sure your water points were clean and clear.

09:30 Generally speaking, the normal housekeeping things with a battalion. It was pretty considerable to think you've got to have duties for cooking and all that. We went out on exercises, and we exercised particularly the officers and senior NCOs exercised us. Directing staff for newcomers to Korea. The other Australian battalions

10:00 or people like the black watch, all that type of thing.

So, the second time you went to the hill, what was the purpose of going back?

We were taking over from the Americans. They'd been on the hill for about a month, so we went back on the hill because we knew it. That's when we lost

10:30 a lot of people, getting back to where we had been before, over the other side of no man's land. The American's hadn't done anything at all, but just prop outside their wire.

Could you talk about that time of losing those men and what happened there?

Well, they were lost in the attempts of regaining a position we had, it was all very sad.

11:00 To our mind, if the Americans had done what they said they were going to do, or should have done, we wouldn't have had that problem. But they were not competent enough to do it, or couldn't see any reason to do it. It cost us a lot of casualties in officers and men to do that. We lost a friend I had, a bloke called

11:30 J Kinnane, who was the Assault Pioneer Platoon Commander. He'd been trying to determine where the minefields were, and he was out with about four of his fellows mapping the minefields, and they got ambushed by Chinese and killed. He was killed. I'd known him before I went to Korea, he was an officer who was seconded to

12:00 3 Battalion. He was a very nice bloke, only a young fella, about twenty five, twenty six, a bit older than me. He'd lost a couple of men there at that stage, and they just got back in a very disorderly fashion. Those things had to be done. If they don't look after where the minefields go,

12:30 and they've got minefields wire across the front of the minefield, so your own people don't run into them, the minefield's not safe, not mapped. We always knew where our minefields were, and the officer in charge, say in my area, I'd do a minefield check probably two out of three days mornings.

13:00 I'd go down there just before first light, and walk very swiftly across the minefield front to see that the mine wire was in, and that it had little red triangles on it. Because, very often, if a patrol is hit by a Chinese in the valley, they would break off and retreat back to our own forces,

13:30 you didn't come back through any track, you'd come back right across the valley, and they would depend on hitting the mine wire and then working along that to get out of the minefield gap. They couldn't always just come up at the gap, because they were actually being mortared anyway, so you were relying on that minefield wire to stop your own forces going in it. Lots of times,

14:00 there weren't any physical assaults on us by the Chinese, but there were assaults on us. We had shells, mortars, recoilless rifles coming in to us from the Chinese. We had to call what we a shell report,

14:30 and if necessary, pick up pieces of the shell, to see where they came from, so we could determine what sort of a piece was being used, how heavy it was. Those shell reports were pretty details, and you got to know by the sound of it what it was, whether it was a recoilless rifle, or a mortar, or a shell, and how big it was. They were all recorded down in the command post, so you might count a shell every

15:00 minute for ten hours or so. Or two shells in two minutes or something. They were all reported. We knew how many shells were coming down all the time. Some of those shells, they'd stop short, and didn't hit the hill. They would fall into the minefield, or they could fall on the mine wire, and blow the mine wire down, and these were things that we had to worry about, because the shrapnel would just cut the wire, and you

15:30 wouldn't have any protective minefield wire at all. In some cases, one of my classmates, a bloke called Brian James, he went through a minefield, and he was leading his troops going out on a patrol. He trod on a mine, and it

16:00 blew off his right foot, and a bit of his left foot, and injured his hands. That sort of started the Chinese bombarding him with shells and mortars, and then he evacuated, he got all his men out. He wouldn't get out until he got them out. Then they got him, they retrieved him,

16:30 and he's all right, he became a doctor in the end. He came back and served a couple of years in the army, and ended up going back doing medicine. After seven years, he joined the army as a regimental medical officer at Duntroon and he was in Vietnam with the

17:00 Australian General Hospital. He ended up as president of the RSL [Returned and Services League] a couple of years ago.

What do you remember of the first fatality your platoon suffered?

Well, it wasn't really my platoon that suffered, but that was Unsworth, my classmate, who'd come across.

17:30 He came from another company, and the idea was I was at the right hand of the battalion, and he was on the left hand company of the battalion. To establish knowledge of the area, the other company would come over and do some patrols from our wing, and we would go and do patrols from their wing. He came over to this patrol, and that's where he was killed. That was a fatality caused by our own fellows.

18:00 One of his own troops did that, because he was panicked and both he and the Scout had half a magazine each and a Bowen gun. That was a futile exercise, but that was very nasty.

How would that affect the morale of the troops when something like that happened?

It knocked it to pieces. I mean, I was upset for some time

18:30 after that. I had helped carry him up this steep sloping ice hill, and he kept falling off the stretcher, we couldn't hold him on the stretcher, shocking. You don't expect that, somebody you know. I had spent four years with him at Duntroon, a very nice fella. You know, I liked him. It's devastating, really. Because somebody just panicked,

19:00 somebody who shouldn't be there, who panicked. The other fellow, the scout, chappie Lord, we were devastated for him, he was on his second tour in Korea. A very big fellow, and he just died, bang, like that. There's no sense in that sort of thing, it's ridiculous.

19:30 **You mentioned snatch raids earlier, are you able to explain how that would work?**

You get control of two groups, then which you call the advance party and the firm base. You put the firm base down, and that usually is an NCO and about ten people, about eleven in all. Then the officer would go forward to an advance area,

20:00 and they would be close to the Chinese lines. He'd have probably himself and thirteen men on fighting patrol, and he would have a snatch group with him, which would be an NCO and four men. The idea was to go from that firm base into the Chinese lines and try and get a prisoner. Prisoners were scarce at that part of the war, we hadn't had one for some months.

20:30 They had to get one. They tried this several times, and I can remember mine was one of the first ones, that's when the snatch group ran into about two hundred coming up the hill at them. We had to bug out very quickly and then ten days after that Jeff Smith did the same thing,

21:00 and that's when he got, they were waiting for his patrol, they knew we were going out there. Been there before, they were just waiting for some silly fool to come out there and try it again. That's when he lost all these casualties. We had about five or six killed, and a couple of the advance group went back to the Chinese lines

21:30 and they came back the next day and we'd given them up, lost or being captured. Then the others came in with Morrison, about eleven of them came in because he'd picked up the firm base afterwards. So we probably lost about eight or nine people that night.

What's your view on that tactic now?

22:00 It was stupid, a waste of time, waste of money, waste of men, men more than anything else. Some of the ones that were captured, I'd had them in recruit training at Kapooka, I knew them very well. I had three of them were, Davoren had a leg blown off in that action, and he was captured by the Chinese, and he came home afterwards

22:30 in August of '53. Toole was another one I'd had as recruit training. And he stayed behind because he was looking after Davoren, they'd been together right through recruit training, so Davoren was badly wounded and he stayed with him on the hill when the Chinese took them.

23:00 He went into the can with Davoren, and the ones that came in next day. The commanding officer said to me, as I'd been there before, I knew what was going on with that sort of thing, I was to do the court of inquiry. You have a court of inquiry when you've got people missing and killed, to see what happens.

23:30 So I took a whole lot of evidence from Morrison who came in and these other two fellows that came in that day I was doing the court of inquiry, the second day. And they'd actually hold up in the Canadian, in the Chinese lines, and they'd come back the next night. They'd managed to get in through the mine wire gap by talking to the sentry there at the mine wire gap and telling them who they were. They didn't have any code words or anything,

24:00 so they got through all right. We were able to interrogate them, and they said that Smith at the firm base had said to them, "If there's anybody still alive, get down the back of the hill." I mean, it was just horrendous, the action that was going on there. They had what they reckoned were another two hundred group of men armed

24:30 with grenades and half with grenades and half with burp guns. Smith had said, "If there's anybody alive, come round the back of the hill." These two got down the back of the hill, and they looked up and they saw what they thought Smith prepare to come down the hill. And a grenade landed right beside him, and blew him over. That's the last we heard of them, we haven't seen Smith, don't know where he is, he could be still back up there in Korea somewhere,

25:00 I don't know. He's still officially listed as missing in action, believed killed. And we normally could get our people back, whether they were dead or alive. There was another classmate of mine captured, a fella called Yacopetti. He was

25:30 captured shortly after that, but he was wounded in a patrol clash where they were hit by about thirty Chinese in their small patrol. They hit them twice, and he was hit in the thigh, so he told his patrol to leave him where he was and he'd take it from there. He had another officer with him who was again

26:00 out on a familiarisation pattern, a bloke called Weaver, who was from my company. And in that same

patrol clash Weaver was hit in both arms, and he was a bit of a wag, Weaver, cause they interviewed him in the Herald, and they said, “What would have happened if they,” they came at them a second time, and he was hit both times, and he said, “I’d try to fire my gun with my teeth.” I think Weaver’s a bit of a card, he’s a wag.

26:30 He was our only Japanese speaking officer, he had been in BCOF just after the war, and he learnt Japanese, he was a corporal interpreter. And then they put him through school and he became a lieutenant. In his recovery, he was made Officer Commanding Marugame, which was their

27:00 little rest and recuperation area they had in the Sea of Japan, near Kure. He was in charge of that, with all these Japanese servants. Being the type of fellow he was, and being able to speak Japanese to them, he did speak very good Japanese, and all the Koreans could speak Japanese, cause they’d been under control for about fifty years in Korea.

27:30 He rode rough shot over these Japanese servants he had, the nurses and everything. When he left, they erected a pair of stocks, you know the old stocks with the hands and the head, and he used to use this and put anybody that misbehaved into these stocks, and the Sea of Japan was tidal, so they’d come rising up to their neck in water. They erected these, they left these there, and put a little brass plaque over them that says,

28:00 ‘Erected to commemorate the reign of King Weaver, who ruled Marugame from April 1953 to July 1953.’ He’s a funny man.

With these snatch raids, how would the troops go about trying to isolate a prisoner and capturing them? What would be the method of doing that?

28:30 Well the thing they’d do would be to jump into the trenches, their trenches, which is always a dicey thing because they tried that on Flora on one thing, and they found that the trenches were not like our trenches, but they were ten or twelve foot deep. They had footholds,

29:00 like a firing step up, and they had a couple of ways of getting up to that point. So when they jumped in, they jumped in well below their height, and they had trouble getting out again, and luckily when they did that originally in Flora, they got in and they shot a couple of Chinese who

29:30 tried to shoot them. Then they had trouble getting out very quickly, but they had to get out very quickly because the Chinese came in force, artillery and mortars and forced the company away. Gus Green I think has been interviewed by one of your teams, and he explained that pretty fully, he was involved in that, he was a platoon commander. He was platoon commander that led

30:00 the thing right up to the Chinese lines.

Were you in command of men who were going on these snatch raids?

Oh yes.

Did you go out with them?

Oh yes, I’d be the firm base. Then the senior NCO would take over from there and get into the trenches.

So how much communication would you have with them?

Wireless, he had a wireless set and I had a wireless set.

30:30 **And what kind of messages would you be getting back?**

Very little, because they were in Chinese territory, they didn’t talk very much. Very, very little. It was just that you could hear the switch go on, and say a code word, then that would be it. You wouldn’t talk for very long at all. You couldn’t do it, because you’d give yourself away.

How long would they be away for?

31:00 Well, in the one that I took on, with Blackie, I’d say no more than three minutes. Then he struck trouble, then he came boiling straight back. Then we all got out very quickly.

Whereabouts was that?

That was on the left of the line, at a place near Coolangatta, we had code names for it.

31:30 It was just off 355, but on the left hand, the western side of 355.

How long were you at 355 the second time around?

Only about four weeks the second time, then we went back into area six for about four weeks, then we went to 159, which was one of the Samichon features.

32:00 **And how different was that area to where you’d been on?**

Well, it was much lower. 159 was its elevation, while 355 was over twice as high. We could see 355 from 159, it was over on our eastern side, hovering over us. There was a very large floodplain that ran

between us.

32:30 In summer, those rivers were very, very wide, and very deep, and very fast flowing. The Imjin, which was a bigger river that ran up across the back of us behind north Seoul, in some places that was a thousand metres wide. If it stretched across the plain it could go for two thousand

33:00 metres. So it was a very wide, fast running river. Of course we used to get a lot of dead bodies floating down it from the other parts of the front, that fed into that.

Did you have to cross that river to get to the next hill?

Not the Imjin. Samichon we didn't go across, we stayed on our side of it.

33:30 In parts we could cross it quite easily, it was a subsidiary going into the Imjin. The Imjin River was a different thing altogether, there were several crossings, but you weren't always close to a crossing. Our nearest crossing was what we called Teal Bridge, and that was a bridge that had been blown up by us, and then blown up by the Chinese

34:00 and blown up by us again. I said previously that we had air superiority, we didn't really have air superiority. We had air superiority from fighter aircraft, but there's always what we'd call their check Charlie would come round. A little two-seater, two-winged plane. He'd come over about half past eight, nine o'clock at night.,

34:30 just to see what was going on. It was always one of those slow aircraft. You couldn't even pick it up with a jet aircraft, they couldn't even see it, it would be too slow to see it. Or it would be too fast to focus properly. So it was a regular visitor, and especially over Teal Bridge,

35:00 that's what they were after, to see what traffic was going on Teal Bridge, which was the main artery into the Commonwealth division at that stage. It was a pretty dicey old bridge, at this stage it had been pretty knocked about. It was pretty high from the water level. When we were at rest camp in summer, we used to go and have a swim in the Imjin River, and it was very wide and very dangerous, you wouldn't want to

35:30 get too far in it in summertime, because they'd get all the snow thaw from the mountains and it was quite fast.

How difficult was it in Korea during the summer?

It was very hot and steamy, it was pretty uncomfortable, but not as bad as being there in the snow.

36:00 When we were in rest area, one of our jobs that we used to do in our rest periods was, we had an area about fifteen kilometres behind us called Uijongbu, which we called Jamestown Line. That was a line of retreat if we ever had

36:30 retreat. It was right up in the mountains, running right down the valley to Uijongbu and across to the other side. We were preparing our positions if we had to bug out in an emergency at that stage. So I'd take my platoon up and they would take picks and shovels and attack the rocks,

37:00 and try to make holes there, trenches there. That was about the only time we saw a great number of Korean peasants. They all dressed as they did, the men with their little horse hair hats, and the women in traditional Korean clothing, and their babies. It must have been pretty terrible for them, because they had an arbitrary line put in on the 38th parallel,

37:30 they split up families completely, somebody over the other side was virtually divorced from the other side. That's been so for fifty odd years now.

What kind of evidence was there in terms of how civilians were affected by the war?

You only got to see how they lived in the village. It was only about this area, round about fifteen kilometres behind

38:00 where we were, where they even established their own fields and rice for growing things. Other times, the areas where they had small villages or housing farmlets, they were just derelict, and nothing was growing around them, only the wild flowers and onions,

38:30 and chives, things like that. We'd go through some of these places on a sweep, and you'd have vegetables growing on the thing. They had to walk out and leave them as they were. Chives was one thing they liked, they ate a lot of garlic. The cesspits were all there, even the houses were there, and the houses were heated, because they had clay.

39:00 They were built off the round, and they had clay tunnels through them, where they lit fires that heated them during the winter. They were very adept at that, beautiful timber floors in their houses, and they had rice straw thatch type farm roofs.

Did you see refugees in the countryside, moving around?

Not really, no.

39:30 There were people that were nearby working, usually labourers working for us, or working on the outskirts.

Tape 9

00:30 **Roy can you tell me what the nature of the patrols and the action was when you got to The Hook, and describe what sort of an area that was?**

Well, 3rd Battalion were in a reserve position. We didn't do any patrols, the only things we did was every morning, we used to take a party down and dig out their trenches. We were behind them,

01:00 to the rear of them and slightly to the side. The marines were in front of us, or beside us. So we could look down their left flank. 1 Battalion were in the line at the time, they were in The Hook position and we were in the reserve position, but on The Hook. We didn't do any patrols as such down that end are.

01:30 We did some minor patrols around our own perimeter, but we were all in a bunch, and the whole thing was concentrated in this little area. The Hook was a very small feature, and it hooked out into the Chinese lines. Consequently, at night time there was a rush by the Chinese, or by ourselves, to get down the hill, up over the other hill, which was

02:00 probably about forty metres away, and get into those positions that they had, opposite us. We didn't do any of that, it was all done by one battalion. That was a very hard place to be, very dangerous. It was very dangerous during the day, it was just as dangerous during the night. We were there during the day, so we gave them a cut lunch, and just clear out

02:30 the stuff that had blown in during the night before. For the last three days, we were involved in this sort of treading water, waiting for them to stop this stupid constant attack. They were getting into a re-entrant, so they were getting up a hill which was receding into nothing, and we were getting shell burst over the top of them,

03:00 and we were killing their men. It was a slaughter. You can't understand why they'd do something like that. It was horrendous, really. There you are, that's what they did, they came on wave after wave. The first night was probably about two thousand were killed, I don't know how many were wounded. But they were used to getting their wounded out pretty quickly, we didn't see too many, except on that Brutus.

03:30 There was a few dead bodies there. We don't know whether they were North Koreans or Chinese. The Hook was a very nasty place to be, for anybody. Even if you're only going there at daytime to dig it out. I had a lot of my classmates on that, some were badly wounded.

04:00 We had no officers that I knew of killed on there, but there were some troops killed there. And they were killed in various patrols or in the mortar shots they'd put down. We didn't get anybody killed in our own mortar batteries or in our defensive fires, they were all into the re-entrant, our blokes were taking cover in the trenches.

04:30 **What was the distance between the enemy lines, the front lines, and the rear guard?**

At that point, the front part of The Hook, about forty metres. Between enemy and us was about forty metres. The front line of the one battalion to the rear line of one battalion would probably have been about

05:00 four hundred metres, but they were all concentrated in that, they had four companies concentrated in that area. Battalion headquarters would be at the back, 3rd Battalion came round the side of them in reserve.

So, given the close proximity, how would these waves of attack occur, and how frequent would they be, and what would be the signal that it was on?

05:30 They'd just burst through, and you'd hear their bugles and whistles. They were mad with bugles, their attacks were usually led by somebody playing bugles, masses of bugles playing and whistles. That was a general hubbub, we didn't do anything, we might have yelled when we attacked, but we didn't play bugles or anything like that.

06:00 They had bugles, and it was not off putting, but you knew there was something going to happen when they did that. It really drove their men on, that's the way they would handle it. As I said, they were very bravely led by some of their men, the officers would get out in front and they would

06:30 lead the way up the hill, and get plastered for it.

So upon hearing the bugle, they'd storm out of the trenches and push forward?

Yes, or they would already be out of the trenches, and suddenly you'd hear the bugle go. Of course, these things were done at night, and unless we sprung them by letting off flares, which we did occasionally,

07:00 we'd let off flares, put flares down with a parachute which would hang down and we could see if anybody was coming. They were pretty effective, but they got over that all right, they could sneak up and then suddenly they'd just rear up out of the ground and then there'd be bugles and everything else.

What sort of weapons were they equipped with?

Generally, they didn't have rifles like we had.

07:30 They had submachine carbines or guns, which we labelled the burp gun, because they made like a burp when they went off. We had Owen guns, which were very tried and true, and they'd operate in snow, mud, water, anything. The burp gun was a little bit more complicated, but it did have a more rapid rate of fire than the Owen gun.

08:00 I used an Owen gun when I went out, but I had a pistol, which was issued to me as an officer, which was a completely useless thing. I usually gave it to my stretcher bearer or the signaller, because he didn't want to be lugging round a rifle.

08:30 When I went out with an Owen gun, I had strapped to my legs ten magazines on one leg and ten magazines on another. They were magazines strapped together like that, end for end. Each magazine had thirty two rounds in it, so I had about six hundred rounds. A couple of grenades, so each man in a patrol,

09:00 stretcher bearer or the signaller, had an Owen gun, we made sure of that. That was completely above what one would normally expect in the platoon. Normally in the platoon you had a Bren gun for each section, a Bren gun 2IC, and you'd have probably one Owen gun for the section commander, there'd be three section commanders in the platoon,

09:30 and probably the CSM [Company Sergeant Major] might have an Owen gun, but they upgraded them, so we had something like fifteen or sixteen Owen guns that could be called upon at any time to go out. There was all close quarter stuff, and you didn't have time to aim at anybody, just point and pull the trigger, so that was why the Owen guns were very effective. Americans had Garand rifles, which

10:00 had I think eight shots, automatic rifles, then they had a small twenty five millimetre small carbine machine gun. It again was a very complicated gun, and the Americans didn't like it, they liked our own guns so they could steal 'em. They stole our slouch hats and our Owen guns because they were much more effective in Korea.

10:30 **And what was their attraction to the slouch hat?**

They loved it. They though the slouch hat was fantastic. And they still do, they like our slouch hat. Anybody overseas loves our slouch hats. I've got a cousin of mine living in Spain and he said to

11:00 Greta when she was going over there twenty years ago, "When Greta comes across, make sure she brings a slouch hat for me please," so I got him a slouch hat and an Australian rising sun badge, and he thought it was marvellous, although he didn't get that one, because she left it on the train, so I had to get another one. When he got it eventually, he thought it was terrific.

11:30 They're nice hats, they're different. The South Africans used to have a hat, and the British used to have a hat, but in South Africa, but that's distinctly Australian.

Do you remember when you had to first fire upon somebody in Korea?

No.

12:00 You don't really fire at anybody in those sort of things. With a weapon like the Owen gun, you point it and spray, and you're running and you're puffing, you're breathing very hard, and you're trying to look as small as you possibly can, so you don't get hit. You really don't know who you've hit, wouldn't have a clue.

12:30 It's very rarely that you actually point a gun at somebody and you know that you've hit them, no way in the world. Jack Morrison, when he ran down that hill, all he could remember was that he was running through all these Chinese, and they were so taken aback by his action, that they virtually

13:00 let him and the other eight fellows that were with him run down through the hill. They were running down the hill against them, and all they were doing was collaring them if they got in the way, and holding them but their arm and shooting them, bang, like that. That's how he explained it. So matter of fact, they didn't even know what they were doing. The only other thing they did was when they hit the people that were running across the paddy field, they ambushed them,

13:30 and they shot them. They knew they'd shot them, but the only time I'd actually, really pointed a weapon at somebody and shot it, I went to another tank, and we could see from our command post that there

were some aerials across on the hill, and it was on the other side of the hill. I went down to the tank commander and I told him what they had, and he said, “Well,

14:00 can you lay the gun on it?” So I got hold of the thing and we racked it round till I had it on the point of where I could see these hills through the site. The antenna sticking up, and I said, “That’s the spot,” and he said, “Well, we’ll just drop it down a couple of feet,” and he lowered the elevation slightly, and he put one round through the top of the hill.

14:30 You could see it had a very flat trajectory, go right through the top of the hill, and the sand came out the side and exploded. I don’t know to this day whether I hit anything at all, but I certainly must have given them a fright if they were over there with their wirelesses. A lot of steam came up, that’s the other thing. They might have been cooking something over there, their rice, probably. I don’t remember

15:00 really pointing at somebody and knowing I had shot ’em. I’ve shot, but not at anybody in particular. I hope the troops weren’t thinking I was trying to shoot at them, either. It’s very rarely you get that sort of attitude. We had snipers, and they had snipers, too.

15:30 They’re a different kettle of fish. I can remember when I first went into the line, to see where I was going. I went up that day just before Christmas with my company commander and the 2IC and the company platoon commanders. We went up to the line and I went to the area where I was going to put my platoon, and a fellow called Bruce Boys was platoon commander.

16:00 I’d been at Duntroon with him, he was one of my classmates. He old soldiered me, and he’d been there probably a couple of weeks before I did, and he said, “When you go down here, duck your head, because there are snipers coming through here, you don’t want to get hit.” I’d be ducking my head, I thinking he was having a good laugh at me ducking my head in all these places, but he was doing the old soldier thing.

Can you explain that, what “old soldiering” means?

16:30 You’re a little bit more experienced than the other fellow, so you tell them porky pies [lies], you see, and they behave accordingly to those lies. You see them ducking and weaving when there’s no need to do that at all. That’s what it was. I suppose we’re all guilty of that, one way or another.

You’d spent four years at Duntroon, and then time at Kapooka preparing,

17:00 **was there a period of adjustment at all once you were in Korea, in terms of, well, now you’re in a war?**

No, I don’t think there was, really. It was fair dinkum, and everybody knew that you could get killed up there fairly easily if you did a stupid thing.

17:30 But training could be quite dangerous, cause you did training with real live ammunition, because you threw grenades, and you taught people how to throw grenades, which is not easy because you’ve got this thing. The way you teach people to throw grenades is you take them in to a sandbagged area and

18:00 they get the grenade, and the grenade has a pin and that pin keeps a lever which you are holding in your hand. So you’ve got to get them to take that pin and the ring pull and pull that out. That is a live grenade. All you’ve got to do is let that lever go and it’s got four seconds before it goes off. You’ve got to get these fellows to

18:30 get their arm back and throw the grenade out of the bunker that you’re in. Over the sill, and then you’ve got to get them to watch it and count it, and you’ve got to count it with ’em. You’ve got him by the shoulder, and you’re holding him up, saying, “One thousand, two thousand, three thousand,” then you duck. You’ve got to be able to see where the grenade lands and what it’s going to do before it explodes.

19:00 You get people always a bit gun shy with guns, that’s what they are with explosives. You’ll always get the one that will toss it lightly like that, and it will hit the side and bounce back into the hole with you. So you’d have to be there and throw it out. That was very dangerous, because some of these fellows were just petrified. Then you’d get very petrified about it too, because you could

19:30 see another two seconds and you’d have been gone, you’ve got to be quick. Training was dangerous. At Kapooka, we did training on the Owen guns, and an Owen gun was known to be able to fire anywhere at anytime. If you had it in a truck, it was likely to get jolted badly, it could throw a round.

20:00 When you come off the range, they’ve got to clear the weapons completely. I had a party that had been out on the range, the weapons had been cleared by the range officer, and we were unloading about thirty Owen guns off the tail of the truck, up near the armoury at Kapooka. Suddenly, one of the Owen guns,

20:30 one out of forty, drops down between the truck and the cart dock height, only about four feet. These two fellows are helping get the things off, and this Owen gun went off. It had a round in it, for a start, so somebody had fouled up and not said that there was a round there. The round went off, and it hit the ground.

21:00 The bullet came up through the fellow's crotch and came out his sciatic nerve. It hit the next fellow and smashed his elbow. So two fellows almost killed with it. One very badly wounded, and another with a broken arm. That was just carelessness. Those are the things that can happen.

How common do you think fatalities were in Korea as a result of accidents or

21:30 **friendly fire?**

Pretty common. Artillery was one of those things that you'd get a drop short. Instead of it going over into the valley into the Chinese lines, you'd have bad chemicals in it and explosions, and it wouldn't go as far as they expected it to do, and it landed in your area. We probably had about three or four killed that way,

22:00 in several accidents. That's just one of those things that happened. The ones that you couldn't understand why somebody would be one hundred and eighty degrees going south instead of north, or going north instead of south, you couldn't see how anybody that had done any map reading, could be that way. One officer was sacked for that.

22:30 He had a patrol come, the one I told you about, he was going north when he should have been going south, and he ran into one of these side patrols, and they didn't realise until one of them let out an expletive that they thought, "They're Australian," that team. When my stretcher party

23:00 was led out to get them, they had several casualties from that, getting them in, because the Chinese mortared them. That was the main thing, there were a number killed and wounded in the initial clash, and the platoon commander that was in charge, he was sent back to Australia. He subsequently left the army.

23:30 That wasn't very nice. There were always some crazy things happening with those sorts of things, especially those in rest areas. We had one fella, we were in rest area, I was the duty officer, and I was seeing that everybody was in bed. I suddenly saw this fellow loom out of the mist, and he had a rifle in his hand. I had the orderly sergeant with me, and I said to him 'we'd better see what this bloke's doing'

24:00 so we stopped him and I said, "What are you doing? Where are you going?" He said, "I'm going up to the officer's lines." And I said, "What are you going to do there?" And he said, "I'm going to see somebody." I said, "Well, what do you want your rifle for?" And he said, "Well, I always carry my rifle with me." I said, "You'd better give it to me," and I got it from him. When I opened it, he had a round up the spout.

24:30 When we investigated his background, I don't know whether he was going to go and shoot himself, or shoot one of the officers. He could be doing either, but he'd lived in Melbourne with his mother, and his mother had actually tied him to the table in the kitchen. He hadn't gone out of that kitchen until he was about fourteen or fifteen when somebody found him there, and

25:00 got him out of that sort of a household. His mother didn't want him to associate with other people. She was quite peculiar, and of course, he became quite peculiar, but here he is, up in Korea, a chap of about twenty, twenty one, with a rifle in his hand. He was sent back to Australia very smartly, too. So those sort of things get out of the net sometimes, they slip completely.

25:30 **Were you actually able to obtain that information from him records?**

Well, that's what came out at the investigation of why he was like this. That was the answer, that he had been an abused child, and he'd been kept as a virtual prisoner by his mother. He was quite dippy.

26:00 Out living a relatively normal life, they thought after his fourteen or fifteen years with his mother, and everybody thought he must have been all right. In situations like Korea, when the least little thing can upset people,

26:30 it can knock them about.

So how difficult is it as a platoon commander to monitor those psychological effects of war and the environment on your men?

You can see it happening. Some people fake it, too, of course, to try and get out of things. Whether they're faking it or not, you send them out

27:00 of the way, cause they're gonna be trouble. A few of those things happened, where you virtually had some of them shell shocked. They would behave peculiarly, and you'd just get rid of them. You'd get them back to the doctor, the doctor would get them out.

What would you look out for as a leader, Roy?

Well, they'd be withdrawn. They wouldn't talk, they wouldn't enter in to the usual

27:30 hullabaloo that goes on in a platoon. There's a lot of wisecracking and joking that goes on in those sort of things. Everybody joins in. It's like a family, really, like an extended family, probably. If you are wise, they don't do things they should do. They'd shave, or they'd try to get out of shaving, if they don't look after themselves well.

28:00 They do stupid things, you know, they say stupid things. But I can only remember a couple of my fellows in the last few months of war that were a bit suspect, and I didn't really have them around long enough to really assess them. I wasn't competent enough to assess them, so I got them back to the

28:30 medical officer, he could do that. Some of them maybe refused to go out on patrol, that's one of the things they'd refuse. Not many did that, but some did. You'd have a talk to them and say, "Look, you've got to do your share," "But, I don't want to go out, skipper. I think I might be dead. I had a dream last night I was gonna get killed." That sort of thing plays on them.

29:00 Or they have trouble at home, they get a letter from their wife, or their girlfriend, and things are not going well there. They can get upset about that. If you're doing your job, you mightn't find out unless somebody comes up and whispers to your ear, "Skipper, you'd better have a look at McKeig or Brown or whoever, he's not feeling so good, he's had a letter from home, and things are not too good."

29:30 You'd go and have a talk with him. And you had to do that in some cases. Other cases, the blokes don't want you delving into their private life. They tend to bottle it up more, get over it themselves, and I think that's generally the thing that most Australian men do. But, you'll always have to make sure that you're available for anybody that wanted to talk to you.

30:00 They know that they were safe talking to you about it. That's the main thing, they were confident that you wouldn't betray their confidences unless it had to be done.

So who looked out for you in that way?

I think you looked after yourself. You had good backup within your platoon sergeant. If you were pretty good with him, he'd tell you to

30:30 pull your head in. So much so that he'd say, "You're being a bit hard on Gillies," or whoever it was. "He's got some problems, so give him a break." Or I'd say to him, "Blackie, you'd better have a talk to so and so, because if you don't have a talk to put him right, I will put him right." And he'd go and have a talk to him and so forth. "Skipper says you've got to

31:00 drop into line or you're going to get the axe." He would do it. Things like that were happening all the time. Not everyday, but anything that happened, you could iron out between yourselves. If he was a good strong character, and fully confident with you, well then, you're okay. Some of those could be difficult,

31:30 but not that much. But we were always told to look after our men, right from the very first thing about going into Duntroon. Your men always came first, and you just did that. So there was a culture of that, looking after each other, and seeing that they were okay, so you did that automatically.

32:00 That was pretty well appreciated, not always, but generally speaking, they were. You wrote letters for them, or if they had something that had to get done, you helped them with that. Of course, some of these fellows were almost illiterate, and they'd get letters that they wouldn't know what they were about. So it's one of those fairly intimate things,

32:30 their wives were playing around or something like that. They'd realise that they had to have a talk to somebody about it. So you had to speak to them about it, and you'd try to help them, and the padres were there too. If it was too heavy for you to handle, there was a whole system of padres, Catholic, Church of England,

33:00 other denominations, plus the Salvation Army, and they were excellent. There was another of them called the, everybody's man, and they were very much like the salvation army, and they did a lot of letter writing, they supplied books for people when they were out of the line.

33:30 They'd bring books up to the front too, and people could read them. So there was a bit of a back up on those things if it got too dicey for you, you could always talk to your company commander, Ralph Sutton was a fantastic bloke to talk to. But I never really had to talk to anybody, I was pretty self sufficient on that one. Blackwell was the only one that I ever spoke to.

34:00 If I went to the company commander, he'd say, "Well, can you handle it?" Or that was the attitude, can you handle it, or can you not handle it? I'd say, "Well, I think I can handle it." And he'd say, "Ok, let me know if you run into any problems." So it was talked over, and anything that was like that, we got over it pretty well.

34:30 But there wasn't a great deal of that.

Did you have a particular way of dealing with the men or addressing them, or speaking with them, if someone was killed, or you had a particularly bad day in terms of casualties?

Well, see, I didn't really have a bad day in terms of that, but anybody that was badly wounded or injured or sent away, I usually wrote a letter to their

35:00 mother or their wife or their girlfriend. We were required to do that, only after a certain period, because they had to be officially advised, they wouldn't want to be officially advised by somebody like me, they

would be officially advised through the post or the telegram by the army, or in the case of somebody dying, they would send them somebody around to see them.

35:30 After a suitable time, you could then have the fellow's stuff packed up anyway, and then you'd send that back to battalion headquarters, and then you could send a letter to the next of kin. That was one of those things that you accepted that you did that. You didn't have to do too many of those, but you always wrote to them when they were in hospital, saw how they were going.

36:00 The Duntroon graduates that went up in that era, we were very lucky because in the British base hospital in Kure, was a couple of sisters that had been in our hospital in Duntroon. Sister Crouch was one, and Sister Malven was the other.

36:30 When we went to Kure first, we all went and called in on her, and saw how she was. She only just died recently, she died about four years ago, she used to live up here at Turramurra, we used to see her quite often. We even made her an honorary member of our class actually, she loved that. She was a great Scout, she kept us informed about

37:00 any of our casualties, any of our classmates that were wounded. She was right on the ball with that, while she was in Kure. Afterwards, we had enough nous to find out ourselves, but she was very good.

You said that your CO Tom Daly had said something to you in particular when you'd first arrived, and you'd tell us the story of that?

37:30 Tom Daly, when I went down to see him, he was the brigadier. He was my brigade commander, and I was a lonely lieutenant in one of his battalions. He recognised me, the fire bell rang, and Humphrey and I went into his caravan to pull out his personal effects before the fire got them. We met him coming out, with his underwear and the picture of his wife, Heather, as he was coming in.

38:00 He said, "Oh, Freeman, Humphrey, what are you doing here? Well done." You know, see you later. And we had an interview with him, and he welcomed me to the brigade, and that was just a normal courtesy that most brigadiers did to new officers coming in. They welcomed them, well they did that in the Australian army, anyway.

38:30 I didn't finish off telling you about Humphrey. I'd been at school with John Humphrey, he was intelligence officer, he'd gone off to Korea before me, and when I arrived, I was shown to his tent about half past five or six o'clock in the morning. I'd just had time to come in when his house boys brought him a cup of coffee. I heard this,

39:00 "Click, click," as the revolver went round, he said, "Is that you, Freeman?" And I said, "G'day John, how are you?" And he said, "You were out with Olwyn the other night." That was his girlfriend. And I said "Yes, as a matter of fact, I was," he said, "You bastard!" And I said, "No, it's all above board," I'd been the best man at one of our class's weddings, and

39:30 at the wedding was another lass whose husband was overseas, that was Kerry – I still see Kerry – Hanigan and myself decided to see Kerry and this other girl at this other army wedding that was going on, so we rang them up and said we were going to Carl Thomas' tonight, after

40:00 the wedding that we were at. We were all dressed in our blues and God knows what, and we said, "Would you like to come along?" So, Kerry brought Olwyn along too, and of course we went to Carl Thomas', and had a night few drinks, dinner and a dance, and it was all fair and above board. He was only joking.

40:30 So it was rather scary. The poor house boy wondered what was going on, of course.

Tape 10

00:33 **Roy, I just wanted to ask you about whether you had any leave while you were in Korea?**

Yes, I two lots of leave. After four months I had five or six days in Tokyo. Then after eight months, I had two weeks in Tokyo, so they were very

01:00 nice respites, it was very good to get away from the hurly-burly of Korea at this stage, whether we were in the line or out of the line. Usually we were out of the line, because we had really no back up for officers, for leave purposes. They would go on leave when it was convenient, and that was usually when we were out of the line.

01:30 **What was Tokyo like?**

It was a disaster area, I think. It was 1953, so there were still a lot of Japanese ex-servicemen in the streets with amputees, and they were begging. The people were getting

02:00 on with it, they were going well. There were some very large shopping centres open, Matsukaya, and I think that might have been the one that had a zoo on the top roof, it had an elephant and monkeys and all sorts of things on the roof of it. It was a great place to go, a different place altogether. It had

02:30 great nightclubs and at Tokyo it had the Ginza, which was the main street where they had the 'Tokyo Onsen' [club], where they had steam baths, and you'd go and get a steam bath, that was really something to have. Fantastic. Of course, coming out of a place like Korea, you needed it, a good steam bath, you felt like it.

03:00 The British officers stayed at a place called Ebisu, which was just out of Tokyo, in the area where they trained the submarine crews. So it was like a big hotel, in fact I think it was a hotel they had taken over, that's what it had been, but it was used for the Commonwealth Division

03:30 officers as a holiday place. The other ranks had a part of Ebisu, but there was officers, and other rank's places where they could go. We generally had two to a room in that, and then we were just left to our own devices, we had to clock in and clock out, so they knew if we were around. Provided we had the money, we could go and hit

04:00 Tokyo and all sorts of places. My first five days in Tokyo was extremely pleasant, we went and had some very nice food, which was fairly cheap, Japanese food, at a hotel. They were being swamped with American ideas,

04:30 they had the hamburger, and the hot dog, so they were having a lot of hamburger stores around. We did some shopping, I bought some things for Paula, some pyjamas and happy coats and some stuff for my brother's stepdaughter, and something for Mum and Dad,

05:00 and I sent them back. All the go at that stage was buying Noritake chinaware, because it was cheap as chips in Tokyo. They would put it in boxes and send it back to you. I wasn't too happy with that, because I did see at the markets one time, a couple of boxes with a friend's name on the side street, and I thought,

05:30 "Somebody's going to knock those off, or break them." So I didn't send any Noritake stuff home, Paula's always been angry with me that I didn't buy any of Mikimoto's pearls either, and bring those home, but anyway. It was good to see, we went to the Kabuki, went round the gardens. Five days didn't allow too much, but it just allows you to unwind.

06:00 It was just spring, it was coming up to April. The cherry blossom was out, so it was beautiful in Japan. When you get out of Tokyo, it was very nice, a very pretty place. Kure, on the south part of the island was not good, it was an industrial city, it was sixteen miles from Hiroshima, Hiroshima was just across the bay.

06:30 Of course it was a shambles, but it was a big working port. It was the large port for the American Navy and the Australian Navy that was there. It wasn't as nice a place to stay as Tokyo, so the leaves were all in Tokyo.

07:00 When I went to Korea, my things went up in a trunk, and it landed at Kure, and when they knew I was going to Tokyo for leave, they sent the whole trunk up to Ebisu with my uniforms in it and things like that. Our uniforms were worked out, we were given medals, and our colour patches for our medals.

07:30 We were very well looked after administratively, and they gave us money. We'd accumulated a lot of money, of course, from being in Korea for at least four months. I had the princely sum I think we were being paid about 14 pounds a week then, which wasn't a bad salary for a young fellow.

08:00 Particularly when you didn't have to pay anything for his keep in those days. We had a bit of money that we'd spend, and send stuff home to our friends and our lovers and all those sort of people. We had some nice restaurant meals. When I was on the fourteen day one in Tokyo, it was even better, because

08:30 the friends I'd gone over with all came out and did our leaves at the same time. We landed in Tokyo and Xavier Cugat, do you know Xavier Cugat? A Latin American band leader that was on films, he was a well known actor, or his band was in all the films in the 1950s and 60s.

09:00 He had his band at the Latin quarter in Tokyo, and we went and saw that, and it was quite a thrill. There were some girls we saw, there were some girls from the Canadian Embassy that we took out, and some nurses from the British hospital. Not a lot of that was available,

09:30 you had to be very lucky to score a white girl. Or shall I say, a European girl, because there were some Norwegian girls there too. A lot of the troops married Japanese girls, and they met them on leave, and they wrote to them.

10:00 Some of them were very good, they were learning English at school, this was surprising to us, that they were learning English. We thought that would probably be the last thing they'd want to learn. Anyway, that was so. My company stretcher bearer, that I still see now, Peter Wesley, he

10:30 married a Japanese girl, and she's a lovely girl. She's no girl now, she's probably about seventy four or seventy five, but they've been together all these years, over fifty years, he was married in Japan.

They've got a couple of nice kids. He was closely associated with me as a stretcher bearer, but he

11:00 came back and then did accountancy, and went in the taxation department, and he ended up my accountant. He was a very nice bloke, still is a nice bloke, he's in Canberra at present, not too well, but we still keep in touch pretty regularly.

How were relationships between soldiers and Japanese girls viewed?

Well, by the Australian authorities, they didn't worry about them.

11:30 They weren't very happy about marriages, they were made very difficult for the troops, but as far as taking girls out to dinner or out to a show or anything like that, they didn't worry about it.

12:00 As long as it didn't get too serious. If it got too serious, then all sorts of things were put into their path.

Like what?

Well, getting a Japanese wife into Australia. That was very, very hard indeed. And you had to go through a whole lot of questions and interviews to even get it to first base on that.

12:30 You had to be very, very sure that that sort of a liaison would stand the test of time. A lot of those sort of things failed through the massive amount of bureaucracy that had to go on. But, by the same token, a lot of them did marry, and quite happily.

13:00 That's awfully good, really. They've probably done a good thing for the country as well as for their country, too.

What about the brothels in Tokyo?

The brothels weren't really set up as brothels, or the ones that may have operated as brothels. They were not really set up as brothels. I remember going to a restaurant called Sapporo, or something,

13:30 with a couple of fellows. When we walked in, we were just going to what we thought was a nightclub, and when we walked in, I found that lieutenant Freeman was already there. One of my friends had called himself Freeman and Lieutenant Kelly was also there, and he was with me. So, these people were obviously a hotel,

14:00 I think they had a geisha show, a geisha were never strictly prostitutes, they were pure and simply entertainers, and the real geisha was, I suppose she could be a courtesan, she could have relations with somebody, but I

14:30 think they would have had a long term mistress type thing. But they used to, and they still do today, entertain people from out of town, business associates, because they are very capable musicians, they sing well if you like Japanese singing, and they hold a fairly good conversation in Japanese if you can converse in Japanese.

15:00 But, we went to the things like the Kabuki theatre and the No theatre, which had traditions going back years and years and years, where the Kabuki didn't have female actors, they had all male actors taking female parts and massive dresses.

15:30 Costumes, and things like that, large wigs. It was amazing what they did.

Were the troops welcome in geisha teahouses?

Not really. For a start, the Australian troops didn't behave themselves that well, once you got a few

16:00 grogs under your tail. What they had to be carefully looked after was the British Military Police, they had very few Australian military police. They would arrest them, and of course, that could start a terrible fight. In Kure, down in south island, during the occupation there were

16:30 some very, very savage fights between Australians and New Zealanders and Indians. That was before the Korean War, but there was the hangover from that. One had to be very, very careful about getting involved in drink and the Japanese culture. There was a sort of

17:00 requirement that we were occupying the company at their request. We didn't want to be bad guests in the place, that was the thing. Although it was pretty hectic that we were there for them, they also made a lot of money out of it, because a lot of the tourist type attractions, and plus the fact that they supplied a lot of food and material for the

17:30 war effort in Korea.

Did you have special responsibilities as officers being on leave in terms of the behaviour of soldiers, or were you purely on leave?

Oh no, we were always responsible. If we saw something that we had authority to do, we couldn't go into any British thing and say something to them. Well, we could, and they'd

18:00 probably respect that, but we had no more authority than Lily the cow. But with our own diggers, if we saw them misbehaving, we'd be expected to do something about it.

Was that easy to do when you were on leave?

No, not really, it wasn't easy to do, but you didn't see a lot of it. They got into trouble in some of the more sleazy areas, and we sort of stayed out of those areas.

18:30 We had a little bit more money, a little more nous, we had to think that we thought we would like. We would have a decent meal and that was that, we didn't go after the brothels at all. There were fellows that did, but it was just too dicey, really. It was something you didn't want to risk. We were told about that, there were risks with

19:00 venereal disease, frightful risk with some of them, so you kept out of that.

You mentioned earlier that the Japanese ex-servicemen were begging. What kind of impression did you have about how their soldiers were treated after the war?

Terrible, they were not treated very well. I could see that they were not treated very well at all.

How much shame do you think was associated with defeat?

19:30 This is five years after defeat, more actually, it was seven years after, and they were getting back on their feet. They were making a good fist of it, but everybody wasn't employed, or wasn't employed to their capacity, but they still had some very modern buildings being built.

20:00 They had a very good tourist program. They had the indigenous theatres going, and they had large department stores, where you could go buy very expensive crocodile skin briefcases or handbags. Very modest prices. Now you couldn't even look at those things.

20:30 Then Mikimoto pearls were out in the streets at that stage. That was a great leap in pearl production, you could have the Mikimoto farmed pearls. So, really, it was getting under way, they have always been a very industrious nation. They've pulled themselves out by the bootstraps, and they've done very well.

21:00 They were inclined to be a little bit aloof from the troops, especially the older people. The younger, more modern ones were adopting western lifestyles. You saw a lot of women wearing western clothing, probably a lot more now than there were at that time. The majority of the elder

21:30 women and a large portion of the younger ones were wearing Japanese clothes, kimonos and the wooden sandals that they clomped along on. That was still very much Japan. The food was very good, something different that we'd never eaten like that before. Raw fish, I had never eaten raw fish, but it was delightful.

22:00 Some of their sauces, and some of the way they cooked things, tempura was wonderful. It was a whole new thing being exposed to us.

Can I just ask you, Roy, about the truce in Korea. What do you remember of being told that that was happening?

Well, it was on

22:30 virtually from day one, there was going to be a truce in Korea. Nobody knew where or when it was going to happen. But it was gonna happen soon, and the fact that that was our attitude was expressed, and peace talks were going on when I got there. So everybody thought the war would be over next week, or next month, but very, very soon. Before things got very anxious if

23:00 you got killed or wounded or whatever. That didn't help morale at all, that was frightful for morale, because people were looking behind them to see that they were gonna be all right. That was something that had to be forced completely out of your mind, and it was very hard to do that. The last few days, we just couldn't believe it would happen. They'd been getting these

23:30 P'anmunjom peace talks, and for months they were gonna sign something, and it would all be over, we'd all be friends again, we'd all be able to sleep easy. But it didn't happen, and then suddenly when we thought it was gonna happen the Chinese put in these massive attacks for the last few days. So we were thinking, "Gee, this is terrible, it would be awful

24:00 to be killed on the last day of the Korean War." That's what everybody was thinking, so you tended to make everybody very tentative when they went on these things. It was very much, "Softly, softly, catch your monkey." The other side seemed to be very much hell bent on making mischief. We responded in the like manner, I suppose.

24:30 **In what way?**

We were hell bent on them not making any mischief with us, so we tried to kill as many of them as we could. Which is a very bold statement, but that's what happened. You couldn't afford to take your mind off it, really, because in sheer weight of numbers, they'd walk all over you. That's what they were depending on, that was one of the war of the mind,

25:00 handling of that.

So how was the cease fire finally announced?

I really can't remember, I think it came through the night before, and they said as far as I can remember, "Fighting will cease on the 27th of July at eleven hundred hours," or I think it was eleven hundred, it might have been ten hundred hours.

25:30 We said, "Oh, thank God for that, but this might be another one of their jokes or tricks," so we didn't really know if it was going to happen. Apart from the fact that whole teams of us were out in the valley with Chinese on the opposite side doing the same thing as we were, hitting pickets into the ground with barbed wire on them without any weapons at all. So we weren't sure until it really happened.

26:00 **And what happened, what was the sort of atmosphere when that was confirmed?**

Well, we almost went over like a damn squid, we were so happy. We still had our things to do. We still had patrols to do, I still was given the extra things of getting the listening posts up and running. We had to secure what areas we had, we had problems with ammunition that were open.

26:30 We had to package all that up and get our equipment straightened up, and prepare to decamp from where we were, cause in some cases we weren't supposed to be more than, I forget now how many metres away from, it was some miles, from the line of demarcation. That was the idea, they put the line of demarcation down,

27:00 and then both sides would step back from it, so that there wouldn't be any chance of anybody jumping over the fence and creating mayhem. That didn't worry the North Koreans, cause they started burrowing under the wire and coming up, thousands of metres down from the road. They'd been doing that for fifty years, infiltrating South Korea that way.

27:30 **That already started straight away?**

Oh, yes, they were doing that even in those days. The number of tunnels that had been found were fantastic.

What were you aware that the Chinese were doing once the cease fire had started?

Well, we could only see them. The only people we saw were on the distant hill, or we saw them in the initial part of

28:00 the cease fire when they were constructing the line of demarcation, as they called it. My feelings on the Chinese was the fact that I could smell them, and I could smell where they'd been, because they had a distinct smell. There wasn't a body odour, it was this oniony garlic smell.

28:30 I knew, when I was out on the valley, I knew if they were about. I could smell them. I was smoking at this stage, so I must have had very finely honed olfactory glands. But that's the way you found them, you more or less smelt them more than you saw them. Except if you're out on your own with a couple of diggers, and somebody says, "Do you see that hill over there, skipper?" And I'd say, "Yes,"

29:00 and he'd say, "Have a look at that," and then you'd see the bodies marching across it, looking as though they were trying to get behind you, so you'd do that very quickly. But I could smell them.

Was that from the food that they were eating?

Yes, it was from the food, and they probably could smell us, too, the food that we were eating. So, it cuts both ways. But obviously, we'd have a distinctly European odour.

29:30 **So how much time did you spend before you left Korea?**

That was the end of July, I was out of there by the end of August, and then I went to Kure, and I was

30:00 doing some work there in Kure for a short time, waiting for this draft of blokes to go back home. When that was filled, Kure was like a holding area, it was called the reinforcement holding unit. So people coming in or going out usually came through Kure. It was close to Iwakuni airport, where Qantas were flying in there.

30:30 So we got their Skymaster on the 13th of September, and landed at Guam, and I had something like 53 bodies on the Skymaster, with myself. We landed at Guam in the early morning, and

31:00 the diggers were taken away, they were American forces in Guam at that time. They were taken to the other ranks canteen, and I was given ten dollars by Qantas, and I was taken to the American force's officers club, so I was fed by them. That night,

31:30 at about eleven o'clock, we left Guam and headed for New Guinea. We arrived in New Guinea about nine o'clock the next morning, to be met by Lieutenant Colonel Bill Young, who had been an instructor at Duntroon when I was there. He was area commander of New Guinea, at that stage.

32:00 His ladies of the Pacific Island regiment had morning tea for us, and some Port Moresby beer, and we had about an hour and a half while they refuelled the plane, and we got on and came back to Australia, landed in Sydney. Bill Young lives up there, about two hundred metres away from me now, and he's about ninety two, I think.

32:30 **What kind of a reunion did you have with your family and with Paula?**

Well, Paula was travelling for a cosmetic company, and she was over in Western Australia at the time, so I didn't see her until she came back to Melbourne, that was her headquarters.

33:00 I arrived back in the middle of September, and my mother was a diabetic, and she was having trouble with her diabetes and balancing. She had to go to hospital to be balanced, she went to Sydney hospital, which was a full-blown hospital, it's not now. She died six weeks after I got back. She died from complications from diabetes and high blood pressure.

33:30 She had a cerebral haemorrhage, so it's just as well I got back when I did. That was a great shock to everybody, really. I had seen Paula, I'd gone down to Melbourne and seen Paula, and had a week down there and came back. Then the next time,

34:00 we were up in Wagga with her family, after my mother had died.

What made you decide to leave the army after Korea?

Well, lots of things. One of the things was the antagonism from this CO I had. I think that was based on a couple of things, obviously he didn't like me, we didn't get on.

34:30 That was probably my fault just as much as his.

This was the second CO in Korea?

My second CO in Korea, the first one I got on with very well. My first company commander I go on with very well, but when the new ones came in April, they were horrendous, to me, anyway. But they had trouble, other people had trouble with them all the time, they were rather prickly.

35:00 The CO in particular was a prickly person. When I came back to Australia, I had a talk with the senior officer in Victoria Barracks, and I used him as a mentor and I said what was going on. I wasn't very happy with it, and he said, "I can only advise you to get away from him as much as you can. Don't go near McDonald at all, he's a very prickly man, and he is

35:30 marked for better things than the army." He said, "If you want to stay in the army, you've got to make your peace with him somehow or other," and I said, "Well, I can't do that." So I decided to get out of the army, that was one reason. The other reason was we'd become engaged in the October, Paula and I, and we were going to get married that following year, which we did do.

36:00 The Australian Army was a very small army, it had three battalions, that's all it had, and my next posting was going to be a CMF [Citizens Military Force] agent in the middle of New South Wales somewhere, or the middle of Queensland, or Bullamakanka. I couldn't see myself settling down to that, not after Korea, and I couldn't see Paula settling down to it as an army wife, cause she'd been travelling all of

36:30 Australia for Innoxa at that stage, which was a British cosmetic company, and she was doing radio programs and she was doing big presentations in Myers and David Jones and Points West. So she had a pretty good career going.

37:00 So, I just got out of the army, and I was able to go back into construction, anyway. I went with a firm called Painter and Dixon, who are quite large now, they were quite big in those days, not as big as they are. So I went back into architecture, into construction, really. Then after a time with them, doing

37:30 some studies, I got a job in the ABC [Australian Broadcasting Corporation], the posting was an architect, engineer, so it could be either. I liked that, we were doing TV [television] studios for the now burgeoning television programs that were coming up. We'd already built part of

38:00 Gore Hill, and we were now in the middle of designing Toowong in Brisbane and the ones in Hobart, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth. So we had a team of architects that we would use.

I just wanted to ask you one last question if I could. What do you think you gained and took away from your experience in Korea?

38:30 I think a better knowledge of myself. A better knowledge of people, and I probably wasn't so stuffy as I was before that, cause I was a bit stuffy, I think. Inclined to be a bit stuffy. So I think I was more self reliant,

39:00 which I was pretty self reliant anyway. I think the time I had in Duntroon was fantastic, I made a lot of friends, and I've kept a lot of army friends. We still see each other regularly, the one that rang me and came in this morning was Jack Skipper, and I'd known him, he was a West Australian originally,

39:30 and we've been good friends ever since that time. He and his wife and us go out a lot together. My other

classmates, we do the same thing, we meet regularly. We've got a fine networking base, right through Australia and overseas now from

40:00 our contacts at Duntroon. Duntroon was a great place to learn things, you learnt a lot of things and you were very fit. If I only came away with four years of physical training and sport, that'd be enough, but there was a lot of other things involved with it. You know, man management, it suited a fellow like myself virtually

40:30 could do anything, because you looked at it from an army point of view and you had a set disciplined way of looking at a problem. You found out all the information that was available, on the other side and your side, and you matched them, and then you got a way through it to get what you wanted to do. You got the information of the enemy, and the information of your enemy, that you had yourself, and then you decided what you wanted to do.

41:00 Most people that had done that, went through the army, had got a very fine management training course, whether they like it or not. That set them in good stead later on.