

Australians at War Film Archive

Gerald Shepherd (Gerry) - Transcript of interview

Date of interview: 22nd April 2004

<http://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/1839>

Tape 1

00:39 **So if you could start with the summary as we discussed?**

All right, well I was born in Brighton, Victoria and attended Hampton Primary school, Hampton High school. I worked for a ship chandlers until I joined the navy,

01:00 and we used to supply ships with everything from food to the equipment that ships need. I joined the navy at seventeen years of age, on my seventeenth birthday, and I did my training at Flinders Naval depot as it's HMAS Cerberus

01:30 as it was more commonly known as FND - Flinders Naval Depot; went to Sydney to the naval depot there called - at Balmoral called HMAS Penguin and I was there for quite some time for a few months and finally went to sea,

02:00 a commission, HMAS Bataan, a tribal class destroyer, and we commissioned it at Cockatoo Island where it was built in Sydney Harbour and we were in Tokyo, we were named Bataan after the Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines. We were in Tokyo Bay for the surrender of the Second World War

02:30 and we stayed - we were the only ship to stay there for approximately six months - all the other ships went back to Australia - that's the Australian navy, and we stayed there for approximately six months. I came back with - sailed back to Australia then and later on I was put on a Australian corvette

03:00 called the Lismore - HMAS Lismore - we had to take five corvettes up to Trincomalee in Ceylon because the Dutch navy bought five corvettes off the Australian navy, of the Australian government so we took - I was on the Lismore and we sailed from Queensland to Trincomalee, which is now Sri Lanka of course, and we stayed there three months and

03:30 it was the corvettes crew - the Australian corvettes crew - the Dutch sailors took over the ships, the corvette and we came back - we bought the LSTs [Landing Ship Tanks] back - tank landing ships and we bought them back because we bought - the Australian government bought five LSTs off the British government, so we crewed - I was on the LST 2008 and when we

04:00 finally got back to Australia on the LSTs, shortly after I was demobilised, and shortly after being demobilised I did a rehabilitation course in carpentry and joinery. I moved right around the building trade - right across it and the Korean War started so I joined up there again and I was an

04:30 able seaman, gunner, and I joined, and I commissioned the Anzac, which was a - built at Williamstown in Victoria, the Anzac was a battle class British-designed destroyer - I commissioned that at Williamstown and did the shake down cruises - is what we call when you get a ship ship-shape, and then after a few months I

05:00 went back on and recommissioned the Bataan, which had been put out of commission to be altered, so I'm the only person in the navy to commission the Bataan - HMAS Bataan twice, and went up to the Korean War and after the Korean War, I was demobilised, went back into the building trade, went right across everything - ended up doing fine cabinet work and then I took up

05:30 wood work - woodwork teaching in secondary schools. I wasn't a trade instructor because in the high schools everyone's a teacher, and I had to study - university qualifications rather than trade qualifications, and my - so my life then was twenty-three years in the education department and the last 13 years of my teaching I was careers

06:00 advisor and, and then finally retiring at the age of sixty - just over sixty. I carried on doing various other - I carried on for about three years doing emergency teaching and oh, after that I got a job as assistant national park ranger at Cape Shank. I got a job as a

06:30 census supervisor recruiting seventeen collectors. I got a job as an electoral roll officer. I got a job as a

- in charge of a boat ramp at Rye in Victoria on Port Phillip Bay for two seasons, and finally fully retired at the age of I think approximately

07:00 sixty-seven, and I'm very active in the navy - I've been on the naval committees - they're state councillor - Victorian state councillor for the naval association; vice president of the naval commemorations committee, and a member of the naval historical

07:30 society, and I'm now very keen on bowling - I'm on the committee at the bowling club and I hope I can get many more years of bowling.

Perfect. That's one of the best life ark's we've had.

Oh bull dust.

No, no, no...

How come you're talking now - did you switch something off when

08:00 I finished then?

No, no, we're still rolling, I'm going to switch it off now though. Oh yep, so now we go right back to the beginning, so can you tell us about your mother and what type of person she was?

Well my mother - she was not - she wasn't a businesswoman. She was house duties, and they both my

08:30 parents come from England and I have five children - my mother had five children and my youngest sister and myself are the only two born in Australia - the other three were born in England and, but my mother was a very hard worker because during the - and my young days it was the Depression - people don't

09:00 realise today when they talk about recessions and that - they just don't realise how tough things were in those days. So my father was out of work and he was on the susso [sustenance work], as it was commonly called, the susso, which is short for sustenance - today you would call it the dole, but believe you me, you only got a few pennies, and if you did, if you're in a -

09:30 you had to front up to do whatever work they put you on, and my father was put down to Brighton along the Brighton foreshore and they built - the susso workers built the breakwater along the beach along there, and divan - the beautiful boulevard at Ivanhoe was built by susso workers, and going back to my

10:00 mother - a lot of sewerage and drainage works were done during the Depression by susso workers, and my mother used to - we had a wood stove and my mother would boil kerosene tins full of water - boil water for their tea and she was paid a few pennies on a wood, and she - I would just help Mum to carry the kerosene tins full of boiling water to the susso workers on

10:30 the trenches and so forth, so yes, it was pretty tough going for - really I think in some ways the mothers had the rough end of the stick during the depression because you could say the mothers always having to look after the family in many ways that - particularly in those days. In those days it wasn't - a

11:00 marriage wasn't so much of a situation where the husband was expected to pull his weight. The father was a little bit distant in those days to what they are now. So the mothers did have a pretty rough deal, but so one's trousers had patches and then patches upon patches, and it was - I feel

11:30 the quality of life - I feel that to go through those years as a young boy, the quality of my life is much better than most children of recent years in that you didn't - money wasn't a part of your life. You didn't look for money because you didn't have it so you didn't look for it. You didn't look for

12:00 you had an old second-hand bike, if you had a bike you wouldn't have a new bike, so really there was more - you would make - you would, the boys would wrestle out in the paddocks for something to do - wrestle each other and find their own way through their own means rather than using electronics and so forth. The -

12:30 most working men then, our fathers, you could say something like nine out of ten would push a bike to the railway station and hang their bike up in the rack in the - at the railway station and catch a train to work. There were very few working men indeed, and as a matter of fact going back when I was young - it wasn't really until the beginning of the Second World War - even at the beginning of the Second World War

13:00 it was - the working class family never had refrigerators. You could say it wasn't actually it was iceboxes, ice chests were still quite prevalent in say 1948 - there would be many working class families with ice chests. You could say refrigerators never really came into the working class until 1950. So as a young kid you

13:30 race after the ice carts going along the street and they - the ice men would always pick the great slab of ice into smaller pieces for - and we would always be out in the street picking up the little pieces of ice to suck, and you would shovel up horse manure with your billy cart - you would the shovel manure up from the bakers and everybody else and you would go around selling it for manure -

- 14:00 horse manure - you'd go around selling that, get yourself a few pennies just for that. So I look back and I'm pleased that I was bought up in that era rather than today. So my father eventually got a job as assistant caretaker for Brighton Town Hall
- 14:30 and he used to take me of a night to wind - while he wound the clock up with this great big handle - the town hall clock, and I used to look through the scratches in the glass at the clock and I could see all round Port Phillip Bay - I've never forgotten that, and being caretaker of a town hall, it enabled one to sort of be in the town hall with, where the normal boy
- 15:00 sometimes would not habituate. So that was quite an experience. I joined the sea cadets - the navy league sea cadets when I was about thirteen and I - we had a hall at Black Rock in Victoria and we had a hall also at Port Melbourne alongside Station pier - we had a building there, and I used to go to sea cadets in either place
- 15:30 and a retired navy officer was in charge of us and we - I really enjoyed the - being, you felt as if you were in the navy - we were given a navy, or actually we bought a navy uniform then - a full sailor's uniform, but today when the navy run the - that now and they're
- 16:00 given the uniform now, but many happy days were spent there rowing cutters on Port Phillip Bay and running round with a wooden rifle or something. But then I spent some time in dry cleaning before I went to the ship chandlers - Paul and Grey, and had quite an experience
- 16:30 there because the war was on and we used to splice fenders for ships and that - rope renders and the fellows that used to do the splicing were a couple of old sailing ship fellows, and they would be sitting down there with all their cordage and we'd - and sail actually during the Second World War, they even
- 17:00 utilised schooners and so forth - they used to have schooners travelling, sailing ships travelling from Tasmania to Victoria bringing timber across to the war, so sailing was quite - and horse and cart were, particularly with the shortage of petrol, horse and cart were running around Melbourne everywhere, so I enjoyed being at the
- 17:30 ship chandlers because I love the sea and we used to have the bosons of ships come and buy whatever they needed for their ships, and I tried to join the Merchant Navy - I was very keen to be in the Merchant Navy. I wanted to make my whole life at sea rather than the Royal Australian Navy, but the seaman's union was quite - yeah it was Communist controlled and so forth and
- 18:00 it was very difficult for the ordinary person - I found I couldn't get in anyway, so I joined the navy on my seventeenth birthday - I hope this is going all right.....

Yeah

And but believe it or not, from the Second World War on it took thirteen months for them to call me up - and that's unbelievable during a war - for thirteen months. I was eighteen and one month when I was called up.

- 18:30 The reason really for that was that each state, the navy had maybe a different situation to the army and air force, the navy took a quota from each state and if you were a Tasmanian from Tasmania or South Australia you - the day you went and joined up you were virtually in. But Victoria and New South Wales - they had that many applying that, well you were sort of like on a waiting list.

- 19:00 But however.....

We'll just stop you there Gerry for a bit and we'll go back a bit more and we'll get a bit more detail of the Depression and so on. With your father on susso.....

Yes

Was he treated any differently by the community?

No I would say that, that - you would say that virtually the community was - everybody was on the susso. People that worked on the railways they were

- 19:30 given half pay. The people in the services were given - public servants were generally on half pay but of course a lot of people in the public service were put off too. They couldn't afford to pay, so you could say that the, a large
- 20:00 majority of the community were susso workers. So, but you've always got in society, in communities you always have the upper crust, but they were rather - not really significant in the community. The community was just in such a bad state - just interesting at that time the - in Melbourne, the Manchester
- 20:30 Unity building in Swanston Street opposite the Melbourne Town Hall - that was built during those Depression years - and they employed people - they weren't susso workers, but they employed 'em for something like one pound, which was - a week, which was say \$2 a week - it was either that or go without, so the Manchester Unity building, which I think is one of the - it's like a mini New York skyscraper, but that was

21:00 built by people who were struggling to find work.

What did you do for food at that time?

Ah food, well, bread was, bread then was the staple diet, which I don't think is really the staple diet of today, but because bread was the staple diet, it was cheap and so -

21:30 but you didn't - you couldn't afford butter, you would put dripping on the bread - particular it was nice if the dripping in those days - which I don't understand why, but dripping in those days was much tastier with gravy in it than what you seem to get - I don't know what's happened to the meat, but it's not the dripping of the old days. But you used to enjoy a crust with dripping on it, and potatoes,

22:00 but even though you struggled to find money for food, the mothers always made puddings quite often - not that you'd have a pudding every night, but you would have a pudding often and puddings don't seem to exist really today - a boiled pudding, steamed puddings and all the like - they don't seem to be in today's diet,

22:30 today. But...

Did you ever go hungry?

Ah yes - when we came home from school you'd pass the fruit shops and you would ask them for specs, and specs was fruit with specs on them that really were hard to sell - people were - you know if you're - if you never chose your own vegetables and fruit in those days,

23:00 you would watch what the fruit shop was putting in the bag and you would knock back one if it had a bruise - when we say specs we're also talking about bruised fruit as well as fruit that's got specs on it, and they would normally be throwing that fruit out, so we used to just go and ask them for specs, "Have you got any specs?" Sometimes you'd go into

23:30 a milk bar and ask them could you have a glass of water, hoping to god that they'd give you a glass of lemonade instead of a glass of water, which was often the case because people really looked after people on the susso. There were a lot of people - a lot of fellows going around on bikes with boxes behind the back seat, and they would be fishmongers, they would be selling tea, butter

24:00 and all those type of things, and they were - some of them were managing to bring enough money in to keep their families alive. Going back then the - along the Brighton and right along the foreshore, people that were put out of their homes - they were living in tents on the foreshore and catching an odd fish or something to eat, because going back then

24:30 if you couldn't pay your rent or if you were paying a house off, the moment you virtually stopped paying the rent or stopped paying your house off, you were out, bang, there was no insurances or anything existing in those to carry you over your bad tidings, so people were living on tents in the beaches, they my parents were paying off a house in Brighton and couldn't -

25:00 when Dad lost his job and became a susso worker, we were put out, but we did get a rented house somewhere else in Brighton. We managed to stay in a house.

Can you tell us more about Brighton and in those days it was the outskirts of the city, wasn't it?

Yes it was, though really

25:30 I lived in East Brighton, which is back - well back from the beach and it was all paddocks and vegetable gardens and paddocks - market gardeners, but Church Street Brighton, which is a very up-market place - it has always been a place for the people with -

26:00 wealthy people - they built houses with towers - in Church Street - all those - a lot of them are still existing today with towers where they could look out across the bay and see the steamers come in, and but the back of Brighton where I lived was more of a working class, but today the whole of Brighton now is - if you've got a Brighton address now, doesn't matter where or where it is, it usually brings in a bit more

26:30 than many other suburbs. They built the Brighton Baths at Middle Brighton and then a few years later they built the Brighton Beach Baths, but Brighton Beach is much choppier and the storms kept on breaking the baths up so eventually they knocked the baths down, and of course Middle Brighton Baths have been restored, but going

27:00 back then in my days, they used to play records, so when you were swimming you'd be listening to Roll Out the Barrel and all these - and it was - songs like Roll Out the Barrel are very happy, sort of - it made you happy, so sometimes music in the old days some - some of 'em had that innate feeling

27:30 of making you feel good, which I don't know - I don't think songs today are like that. They're not trying to build up happiness in such the same way, but the baths at Middle Brighton.....

Can you sing us a bit of Roll Out the Barrel?

Oh well - Roll out the barrel, roll out the barrel, we'll have lots of fun, ring ding - or something like - no I've

28:00 gone a bit rusty on it, ah...

That's good enough.

That, and Weroona - as a young lad the Weroona, the paddle steamer which plied, went from Port Melbourne - Station Pier Port Melbourne to Sorrento in Queenscliff - it was built in Scotland on the Clyde and of course they had other paddle steamers before that - the Hygiea, and the Ozone and so forth

28:30 but the Weroona - they had a bar on board with the beautiful solid bar counters, and like a bar always used to have, solid bar tops - bar counters, and it had a good bar on board and it had a band on board and they used to play - the band used to play songs like Roll Out the Barrel and all the young couples would be standing around the band while you're going along the bay, swaying from

29:00 side to side - very romantic and happy and I'm quite sincere in saying people seemed to exhibit happiness more in that era than they do today. I know they have rock concerts today and all that, but that - even and they're quite good, I know, but there were more ordinary everyday

29:30 events that made you - things were tough, I s'pose that it's because life was tough, and you would be looking for happiness - you were searching, you needed it to survive, and we don't need happiness to survive today - we can survive with, with your DVDs [Digital Video Discs] and this and that and, but going back then, you had to find these avenues, and

30:00 people would generate it, and the, so it was two and sixpence for a child to go on the Weroona to Sorrento or Portsea - two and six was - that's about thirty cents, and five shillings, which was half a dot...fifty cents - an adult was fifty cents, or two and six, five shillings in the old language, five shillings, and the

30:30 paddle steamer Weroona would go to Queenscliff first and you could get off there or you could stay on board while it went across the bay to Sorrento and all the locals at that time - all the cars, if they had cars, they were called saloons - they had just gone from soft hood to solid roof and they were called saloons and people used to go down the peer

31:00 where they had these locals - to the peer, and take - they painted on their windshield with white finger paint 'back beach sixpence', and they'd take you to the back beach at Sorrento for sixpence, which is five cents in today's language. But of course most people didn't have sixpence, five cents - it's a mile walk from one side to the other, but those days on the Weroona were - because

31:30 people never had any cars to drive down the bay in those days, so it was quite, quite an experience to go down there and I've never forgotten when I was in the sea cadets, we were allowed to take the wheel of - and I've never forgotten to this day, there I was with this big brass wheel, and I was - most probably my head didn't even come as high as the brass wheel did and I

32:00 had control over that steamer - that paddle steamer, and you could look at the big huge pistons driving the connection rod that would drive the paddles and you could look down in the engine room at these big connection rods, and there'd been a lot of squirting oil on the, and it was something, you know, and the paddles that churn the water up and it was, you know,

32:30 it was an experience, yes.

Was that the first thing that got you into in wanting to be in the navy?

Yes, you could say yes - I s'pose being - living, although I did live close in Brighton, quarter of an hours walk or so - twenty minutes, and you'd be down the beach, so some of the time one was never away from the beach and

33:00 you've got ships coming into the Port Melbourne and ships, and you're there with the water, I s'pose that was part of my, and I s'pose my grandfather in England had a shipping company in London and I s'pose that interested me a bit and I've always enjoyed drawing and I'd always be drawing ships

33:30 or - I never stopped drawing ships - cargo ships and every - liners, and I used to go down to Port Melbourne and look at them talk to the sailors and all that sort of thing and sometimes I managed to get on board 'em and I was - oh I was over the moon walking around on a ship, I tell you - it was wonderful. It was wonderful, and ships in those days - they had lines about them. There was - there were lines - they'd

34:00 have the cargo roll, the sea ship-side really curved down where the hold so they could swing the cargo in, and there was the shape of a ship - it was, and it had something about it that made it what it was, but today they're just welded steel boxes, I mean the Queen Elizabeth the Second - the QE2 I should say, which is still at sea

34:30 honestly for a big liner at the time it was the - in recent - until recently it was the largest liner in the

world, but it had no lines, it was just a steel welded box with no flair about it. So yes, you admired a ship much more in those days than you do now.

It sounds like you really caught the bug.

Yes. I think if you

35:00 you're keen on the sea and ships don't really get into your blood - this saying, the sea gets into your blood - it couldn't be a truer statement. It just - and here I am with - living here, I made sure that when I retired and I had the money to build a house - I made sure that I could overlook the bay here and watch all the ships come and go, and I feel as if I'm a part of the sea living here, and

35:30 I've been in the coast guard - in the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol and teaching people seamanship and safe boating and I've always kept close to the sea.

Is something about the sea a sense of adventure or wanting to travel, get out of the place, or...

Well.....

What is it about the sea?

Well the sea - the, you join

36:00 the navy to see the world or you join the merchant navy to see the world, but really seeing the world was secondary. It's - being at sea - the sea has a magnetic - not to all people but to those that love the sea, it's magnetic to them, and the sea itself, the water, the sea is that is above all the,

36:30 I mean the sea can be - it is the mater even today - doesn't matter how big they build liners, the sea can sink ships today, there's no doubt about that - the sea is the master and we must never forget that - that's why people get drowned, they think they're the master, and the sea is the master. But nevertheless leaving the brutal cruel sea aside it is a fascination of loving - you love it,

37:00 you actually love the sea, and that is the crux of wanting to go to sea - for the sea itself. Secondary - a ship. A ship is - a sailor sees a ship as - not as a piece of metal welded together, but a living - like some people see a tree as a living thing rather than a bit of wood sticking out of the ground - some people can really

37:30 love a tree and sailors love a ship, though today it's a different situation today because in -when I was young you would sign on a ship and you would stay on it for a considerable time - it might be at least a year or more, many years, but today sailors on merchant ships, today they do six weeks on and they have six weeks off, and when they have their

38:00 six weeks off they most probably won't be going back on that same ship - the shipping office will tell them what ship they're going to go on. So you don't build up a camaraderie of the crew - there's a camaraderie there, but not to the extent that every six weeks the crew is changing over. So there's not the same innate camaraderie, and your ship is just a

38:30 not something that you're on it long enough to adhere yourself and become a part of, and it's so different, yeah.

Just before we finish this tape, a question on the Depression. Did you know of a lot of shoplifting and stealing that was happening in desperation in those times?

No. It

39:00 was not, there was certainly wasn't prevalent like it is - certainly was not; mind you the opportunities to shoplift weren't there. We didn't have supermarkets where you could take something off the shelf and slip it into your pocket, which I think perhaps most shoplifting now is mainly from supermarkets - they didn't exist. You

39:30 went into a shop and there was the fellow whatever, whether it be a grocery shop or hardware store - you fronted up and there was the salesman, the opportunity really was not there. I'm not saying it didn't happen, but it was odd, and generally the policemen then would give you a good clout over the head and tell you not to do it again, and you generally didn't do it again - if you did you were -

40:00 you wouldn't end up, you just wouldn't end up in court for shoplifting unless you were shoplifting something worth thousands of dollars, but no, the ordinary shoplifting was not seen as just a clip over the ear from the policeman. But no - shop lifting was not of note at all.

All right on that note, we've finished the...

Tape 2

00:32 **I was just young and I was around about oh fifteen to seventeen - from fifteen to seventeen**

years old and I was just moved around. I was - we had a sail making loft because sail was still prevalent - ships - they used anything that could float during the war

01:00 **and so we made sails and I was like an apprentice sail maker. I used to help them to - I was taught to splice - to make fenders, rope fenders for ships and well, we sold anchors - everything that - anything at all that a ship needs we would provide, so you could say in a way that much of my retirement was**

01:30 **a store manhandling all this equipment and so forth. But it - being in a ship chandler is a bit like on board ship in that the smell of rope and tar, cause some rope is tarred, and in some ways it's not unlike being on board ship with the smells. There's only one smell really**

02:00 **that you don't get - that you get on a - all fired ship and that is on all fired ships the smell of oil permeates right through the whole ship. But in a ship chandler's, well you haven't got a steam engine going. But I used to enjoy it because all the bosons that would come on - they'd buy the equipment for the ship - I could talk to them about the sea, which I was so**

02:30 **wrapped in, so I was very pleased to be able to meet people that I was very envious of.**

Was it hard work?

Oh yes, but you know going back then you wasn't - you didn't have the equipment to lift things, so the manual lifting and so forth, I mean you get barrels - we'd

03:00 have barrels and that and they take a lot of lumping around barrels - I'm talking about large barrels, and I'm talking about a cast more than I am a metal - a forty four - I'm not saying we didn't move forty-four gallon drums around, but wooden casts take - when you put one on top of the other and so forth - we used to have wooden barrels for the ships with all sorts of equipment in these wooden barrels

03:30 because going back then really there wasn't - I mean things were stored in wood - wooden boxes, wooden crate, wooden barrels - wood was probably the most used raw material to store, to keep equipment in and that. I mean fruit boxes - the fruit shops now have styrene boxes and so forth. Well going back then everything would come into a fruit shop in a

04:00 wooden crate - apple crate. So working in a ship chandler's your - wood was always a sort of a, and we would have - we would even sell - have masts and that for sailing ships - there was nothing that we didn't have that a ship would want - we had absolutely everything. Yes. So I was very happy at that work.

How long did you work there for?

04:30 I worked there for three years and we - they, the Paul and Grey were the name of the ship chandler's and they eventually during the war went into aircraft, supplying the air force with equipment for their planes. So - and I did work in that department where we had aircraft equipment, so I was really moved around the ship chandler's in every way possible.

05:00 **Now at this same time you were with a navy league..**

Sea cadets

Yes, can you tell us about that.

Well as I've briefly mentioned before, the sea cadets was run by retired naval officers - anything from a petty officer to a lieutenant - whatever, and we would have a cut - naval cutter that we would learn to row on Port Phillip

05:30 Bay. You would, of course knots are always part of a seaman's life, so we would spend a lot of time tying knots. We had wooden rifles to march with, and seamanship is something you - really seaman, whether you're in the navy or merchant navy or really say

06:00 the Royal Australian navy or whatever, the - when you join the army, you're taught to fire a rifle and guns and so forth and that, and in the air force if you're not flying a plane, you're in an air crew, you're looking after aeroplanes in some form or of another, but to them in the navy really

06:30 it was as bigger job learning seamanship as it was warfare itself, and a lot of people don't really realise that you are really learning a trade, if you like, and the war side of it is very important and you put a lot of time into that, but you certainly put a lot of time into ships husbandry - of looking after a ship and sailing it and so forth, which has got nothing to do with,

07:00 if you steer at a warship it's got nothing to do with a war - it's a ship and you're steering it, and you're tying it up and you're birthing it and you're mooring it, and everything you do, you're a seaman - unless you're a stoker in the engine room, but well, once again, if you're a stoker in the engine room you're looking after the boilers, which has got nothing to do with fighting,

07:30 so the air force and army - and the fellows that joined those two services - they really didn't - yeah, even an aeroplane - you don't live in a fighter or a bomber - you don't live on 'em, you go on a sortie,

you come back and you go and sleep in your barracks, and you – but with the seaman, a ship is – and the upkeep of it, the chipping of the paint and

08:00 the painting of it and the upkeep of the ship, you know, they're not war duties but they take a lot of learning. It's a trade in effect that you're learning, and then you're learning about the war itself – the guns, but a lot of people don't realise that a sailor in the navy has a double lot of knowledge to have

08:30 war knowledge and ships knowledge.

How old were you at this stage?

I was eighteen when I eventually got called up.

From what age were you in the sea cadets?

Oh from fifteen to seventeen. Actually, I was in it before that – before fifteen I was actually in the Australian Air League, which was like the same as the sea cadets, and

09:00 I was in that when I was thirteen, I think, when I went into the Australian Air League, but I went into the Australian Air League because I did not know then that there was the sea cadets, so and aeroplanes are – to young boys in particular, I think aeroplanes are a fascination, but no, I was in the sea cadets from fifteen till I went in,

09:30 you know, till I went in the navy, and not everybody that joined the sea cadets ended up in the navy. It was a bit – some of them just move into whatever, except I would say the largest majority in the sea cadets did end up the – not necessarily the Royal Australian Navy – it could be the merchant navy cause the

10:00 navy league sea cadets isn't wholly for the navy itself – it's also merchant navy.

How often did you go – in your spare time you used to go to sea cadets...

Oh we would go – once – one night a week and Saturdays and Sundays, or sometimes one weekend day, but sometimes both days of – Saturday and Sunday. So it would be one weeknight, yes.

Did you get rifle training?

Yeah,

10:30 with wooden rifles – we'd present arms and march with our, and so forth with wooden rifles because, well, going back then at that age you could – were not given a proper rifle. But things are a bit different now. I think people in cadets – I think they have – I'm not sure if they're rifles that fully operational, but they

11:00 do have proper rifles now and that.

Now at this point when I think you were seventeen and you wanted to join the merchant navy, why didn't you get in?

Well the merchant navy is con, well it's always controlled – even today by the seaman's union, and the seaman's union during the Second World War was

11:30 I think it was the most Communist of all par – of groups – the seaman's union was the most common because even during the war, the wharfies would not load ships sometimes – when I saw the merchant navy I'll include wharfies as well – the Communists had control of merchant ships and the

12:00 and the wharfies, stevedore, and I don't know – I had a mate the same age as me – he managed to get on a merchant ship – I don't know how he did and I couldn't, but you usually went in as a deck boy and you went on from there, and from a deck boy you'd go onto a seaman – able seaman, and if you studied you could end up a – going

12:30 back then in the second world in the merchant navy, you could virtually say that everyone that became a captain – a master – really they weren't called – on ships they weren't called merchant ships, they were called masters, and you could say all those nine out of ten of them were fellows that joined up as deck boys and studied, and they might've got to second mate, first mate, captain – but they came up from being deck boys

13:00 and it's pleasing now that you have more chance in the navy now of rising to – in the ranks from a ordinary recruit seaman – you had more chance now than you did in my days. It was virtually – during the Second World War it was almost impossible to become an officer. It was really – though they

13:30 were short of – they were short of officers, so when you did – you trained down at Flinders and if you – if they discovered that you were a real intelligent fellow, they would pluck you out – put you into an officers training course. But if you didn't get into that and you stayed as an ordinary seaman, the chances of you becoming an officer were very remote.

14:00 The language of sailors – both merchantmen and navy – the language is so much different to every day language that people speak – nothing – it's amazing, because ships call in all round the world, sailors

pick up names of

- 14:30 items and they use those. I think if we had a soft drink, we would call it a gopher, spelt G-O-P-H-E-R. I think that's - it's Arabic for drink, gopher - and sailors in French - if you're in French you're called a Matalot - Matalot, it's spent Mat-a-lot, but pronounced Matalow,
- 15:00 so when you're in the navy, you were a Matalot, and the navy never changed a great deal from Nelson's day, which was two hundred years ago, right up until the Second World War - the navy never changed in many ways. The living on board ship - the way you lived was much the same as Nelson's day. If you were punished
- 15:30 and it was a fairly serious crime, you would be marched out onto the deck and they would clear lower deck - that means everyone all - in fact the whole ship's company - the ship's crew would have to line up along the deck and the culprit would be marched out and the captain would read out the charge and the
- 16:00 punishment would be given - the punishment, well the only difference between Nelson's day of two hundred years onwards - going back in time, and the Second World War was you were never tied to a mast and given the cat-o-nine tails like they did in Nelson's day, but the ritual was identical - it really was identical. The crew would be told, "Off caps,"
- 16:30 you'd all have to wear your cap, and you'd take your cap off and you all felt as if you were the criminal, if you want to use the word, you were the culprit because it was so strict, and it was just like Nelson's day - they all got out on the sailing ships and they cleared lower deck and they'd have to take their caps off, and we were doing exactly the same then. But the work - but if it was serious, and it usually was when you were charged by the captain,
- 17:00 you were sent to Holsworthy - the service mainly army, jail if you like - you weren't flogged, but you were sent to jail off the ship. But what they would do to you whilst you were on board ship - I'm - I've never been on a large cruiser and all those large ships, I've always been on small ones, so you don't have a brig - so the Americans call it -
- 17:30 you don't have a jail on the small ships, so they would put you down in the till of flat, which is at the very stern - the very back of the ship where the steering engine is - it moves the rudder around - you would be put down there - there's no table, chair or anything, and you would - they, they'd bring you up and let you exercise - walk around the deck once or twice a day, but otherwise you were down that hatch with
- 18:00 this great noisy engine steering the rudder around, and that's the jail on board ship. That would be until you got to port where you were most probably sent on another ship or plane to - back to Holsworthy in New South Wales where you were jailed. But it was, you know pretty hard yakka when you're down there -
- 18:30 oh no, you could take your hammock down there and tie it from one apparatus to another. You had a - your own personal hammock, but there were no chairs to sit on - you can't sit on a hammock, and you couldn't sit at a table - you'd just have to put your tray - your food was on a tray, and you'd just have to put that on your knees and eat that way. So punishment on board ship was much the same as - a lot of people don't realise that
- 19:00 the navy really lived on its traditions in so many ways. But I was talking about the language - you - if your girlfriend, and I'm not talking about having a bit of good time with a flossy girl or something, but your girlfriend that you're on the square with - because you were on the square with her, you'd call her your Squarey because you were on the square with her, and
- 19:30 the second in command of the ship - that's the first lieutenant, he was called was called Jimmy The One, but very seldom you would say the one. He was just The Jimmy. But now they've copied the American situation where they're called the executive officer, or the XO [Executive Officer], but we would call them The Jimmy, and a captain would
- 20:00 call them Number One - I think the captains might still call the Number One now, or the captains might say 'XO' - for executive officer following the American idiom, and everything you did on board had a different saying, as I have mentioned. Gravy or custard was called jippers, and a pastie was called
- 20:30 a teddyoggie, and I don't know how you can get a teddyoggie out of a pastie, but that's what a pastie was, and sausages were snorkers as a rule - snorkers or bangers - but believe you me, there's, it is like learning to speak, so many words and you hardly use an ordinary word
- 21:00 during your day. I mean a ship doesn't have a front and a back, it has a bow, it has a stern. You've got a midships. You have topsides - the ship's topsides, which is the deck; it takes a bit of, and of course they go back to even to Nelson's day, or I don't know about
- 21:30 Nelson's day but they go back - when you go on board ship as a raw new entry or a raw recruit, they would tell you you've gotta go around looking for the golden rivet, and of course there's no such thing as the golden rivet. But they had - give you the biggest spanner they could find on the ship, and sometimes the spanners, you could hardly lift them off the deck.

How big are we talking - spanners?

22:00 Spanner? Oh spanner might be about - anything like a meter tall in length. It could be a metre long and it could be something like towards, towards six hundred mil, which is two feet - to take out something - they were enormous and they'd have you combing down the ladders with this great big spanner looking for the golden rivet, and of course they used to say,

22:30 "Oh bend over there, you might see it down there," and they'd have a bit of fun with you if you get the gist of what I'm trying to say when you're bending over - they'd have a bit of tom foolery with you. So when you were a recruit, you really cop - you copped it. I s'pose in the other services, too, when you were a recruit you'd also get initiated in, but the navy in particular has so many ways of getting stuck into you,

23:00 yeah.

Now when the war started, cause you didn't join up into the navy proper until 1943.

Yeah.

So you had basically like three years or more when since the war started.

Yes...

So well my question is then, is that do you remember firstly that day war was declared?

No, I don't....

What you were doing?

Oh,

23:30 I can remember that as a boy I was in the air - the ARP [Air Raid Precautions], and you would learn to put out a fire with an extinguisher or a broom or something like that, or how to get into trenches for anti-aircraft, you know, fire - the planes come over

24:00 you - most people, a lot of people that were able were in the ARP, that's Air Raid Precautions, and learning just how to cope being bombed by aircraft, and most - you'd find during the war, particularly in the early parts of the war, there were so many organisations

24:30 women would be in their comforts [Australian Comforts Fund], that would - they would knit socks or scarves and so forth - the Australian Comforts Fund, I think it was called, but people were in so many organisations, it would be hard to find a family where someone wasn't doing something for the war effort, yes, and

25:00 of course there wasn't any petrol much. You had coupons for petrol, which wasn't much petrol, so everyone was having - they had charcoal burners on the back of the car, which didn't improve the condition of the engines - burning, putting the gas from the charcoal, and so the car, sometimes the engine would splutter, and some people used to put power kerosene into

25:30 their engines, which didn't do the engines any good, but if you can't drive your car unless you put something in it, you do resort to pushing the engine a bit hard, putting things in that...but the charcoal burners were very common, and you know it kept the cars on the road.

26:00 You would've probably noticed also the American presence.

I'm sorry?

The building up of American soldiers in Australia.

Yes.

Did you notice this?

Oh well actually if you mention that, and you mention that - I could say that I, well I am unique in one sense that when I was in the naval depot waiting to go - to be put on a ship, Balmoral in Sydney,

26:30 I was sent to Warwick Farm racecourse - remember I'm a sailor, and Warwick Farm racecourse is out of Sydney - was very paddockey with gum trees around the racecourse - it was very country-like, and I was sent there because the war in Africa was coming to a close and a British need didn't need the fleet that they had because of

27:00 that African war coming to a close, so they came out to Australia and formed the British Pacific Fleet, and Warwick Farm racecourse, which had been an American army marine camp and an Australian Army camp, and they had left it and the British navy took Warwick Farm racecourse over as their headquarters in Australia - the headquarters for the British Pacific Fleet,

27:30 and when I said I'm unique, yeah cause I can't come up with another word, that there was three or four of us sent to Warwick Farm racecourse to prepare it for the British to arrive and

This is when you joined up the navy?

Yes when I was in the navy, stationed at Balmoral, which was called HMAS Penguin at Balmoral in Middle Harbour, Sydney Harbour, Middle Harbour,

- 28:00 and we were sent there to prepare the racecourse, the camp, to take the British Pacific Fleet. So we were there for a few weeks, and they commissioned - the British commissioned the Warwick Farm racecourse and they commissioned it and called it HMS Golden Hind, after Drake's sailing ship, galleon or - and I was there for the commissioning of HMS Golden Hind
- 28:30 but - as an Australian sailor, and one day we went for a walk out of the racecourse into the paddock at the back of the racecourse - gum trees around, and the St. George's river came fairly close to the Warwick Farm racecourse, and it had gum trees hanging over the river and so forth, and it was stinking hot and we were going to go for a swim, but a farmer come up and said, "Whatever you do, don't go in there. There's sharks."
- 29:00 And you would never think when you're seemingly in the Australian bush, but sharks did - it was a tidal river and sharks would come up so far - and I don't mean right up the river forever, but they would come in so far when - with the salt water. So that was the end of the swimming, ideas of going for a swim in the George's river. But it was very unique being a sailor being sent to a racecourse
- 29:30 I think that was - and also whilst I was stationed at, at HMAS Penguin, Balmoral - another unique situation I was in - they dropped me up with another handful of fellows at three o'clock in the morning, because the British Pacific Fleet were arriving, and we had to open the boom gate across Sydney Harbour for the KG5, which is
- 30:00 the right name was King George V - battleship - huge battleship, and they got us up three o'clock in the morning to help. You have a tug and you fix the boom - it's a wire net - when I say wire, wire rope - quite thick wire rope, and net, and that would be right across Sydney Harbour to stop submarines from getting in, and we had to - three o'clock in the morning we got up
- 30:30 and we helped to swing the boom gate open - using a tug - just as a matter of interest too - the British, the Japanese midget submarines - I think it was two that got into Sydney Harbour, or was it three? Two or three? Might've been three that got in - how they got through the boom was they come in right behind a merchantman, a merchant ship - right behind it, so the boom gate had to be open for the merchant ship to get through
- 31:00 and they got this - Japanese got their midget subs and got right up against, you know - very close to the stern of the merchantman and they got into Sydney Harbour, and of course they didn't do so much damage in that they fired at the US Chicago - I think that was a bit cruiser, and missed that and - yeah, the torpedo went into
- 31:30 the Kuttabul, which was a ferry tied up there at Garden Island and there was seventeen fellows went down on - it was a very old ferry, but it was used for accommodation - the navy used it when they needed accommodation for sailors, and a friend of mine who was a stoker, and he was on it - the Kuttabul, and he'd asked a
- 32:00 mate of his could he take his - he was on duty that night and could his mate take over his duty that night cause he wanted to go out with his girlfriend, so his mate took his duty over for the night, and he was one that went down on the Kuttabul when it was sunk by the Japanese midget submarines - he went down. So my mate was always never forgotten how his mate lost his life
- 32:30 for him - it should've been him that went down, cause he was the one that was on duty that night. So I ended up, and the large dry dock in Sydney, which is called a graving dock - that was built during the war between Garden Island and the mainland. They really just - they really didn't have to do a heck
- 33:00 of a lot because they had that sea between the - for a dry dock - they need to have the, and it was opened by the Duke of Gloucester and that was 1945 I think - it was opened by the Duke of Gloucester, and I was chosen as a guard of honour for the Duke of Gloucester to open the - captain - they called it the Captain Cook grave, which is the same name today - the Captain Cook graving dock,
- 33:30 which takes any ship at all now, not just war ships, and I was, and the Duke of Gloucester passed me by as I was in the guard of honour and they'd walk past the guard of honour, and oh well, he didn't impress me much actually. I mean some of the royal family were - I don't know inbreeding or something - they were a
- 34:00 bit different from the - well they're not so different from the norm now, but I think the Duke of Gloucester was known as, not...

Incest?

Beg your pardon?

Incest.

Yeah, yeah, but anyway it was an occasion I feel proud that I was the guard of honour for the opening of the Captain Cook graving dock, and Cap - and being a guard of honour for one of the royal family. So what with that

34:30 and being sent to Warwick Farm racecourse to get it ready for the British Pacific Fleet, I felt was unique and

Were you in a -speaking of the royal family, were you a monarchist at that time?

Ah yes, and I am still a monarchist now in a watered down sense in that I think Australia is - the way it's

35:00 been governed - I'm not talking about a particular political party, but the way our country is run under the Westminster system - the British way is called the Westminster system, I think our country is working very well as it is. The queen and all that - queen is queen of Australia - that's only a statement. She has no say in the running of Australia -

35:30 in fact, she doesn't have any say in running, I don't think she has any say in the running of Britain for that matter either, but she certainly doesn't have any impact on our - the way our country is run. So I'm a monarchist in that sense that I believe that we've got a good system here. You have all the other countries that aren't a monarchist country - in fact there's not many left now. What have you got, you've got Denmark,

36:00 Holland, your - Holland's called The Netherlands; they have a royal family, Denmark and maybe I think Norway still has a monarch, Norway, and then you've got some of the African countries that are monarchy of sort. But generally you'll find in my opinion that countries that are run with a monarchist, and we'll talk - now discuss

36:30 the British monarchy, that our country operates much better than even America with their presidential, I mean their, the way they run their elections with all their hoo-ha and this and that, and I think our country's run much better than the American system, so, and I use America as an analogy because we're so similar to the United States, but I

37:00 believe our country is run much better. So I'm still in effect - just for the running of our country, I'm a monarchist.

And you were then?

Yes, oh yeah King and Country - it was not Queen and Country, it was King and Country - yeah King George VI.

So empire was also important I take it then?

Beg your pardon?

Well were you fighting for empire at that time?

Ah well I myself

37:30 wanted to make my life at sea, and that was to me the ultimate - live, to be a sailor, to be a seaman, and the war was - I didn't really join up to go to war. I joined up to go to sea - you understand what I mean? The war yes, all right, I was one of the 'King's men', so to speak, and I respected that I was there to fight the war,

38:00 don't get me wrong, I, that, but my first love is the sea. That is above everything else, and...

How would you describe that? I mean sense of adventure - is that what you...

Sense of adventure, yeah sense of adventure. The sea is never the same from - even here - living here when I look out the front of my home - the sea is never the same. One day it's different

38:30 to the next, and it becomes an adventure through one's life. On board - on a ship at sea it is an adventure, and I'm not necessarily talking about going to another land, I'm talking about it's an adventure to be on a ship that is moving through the water. Sometimes you think the ship's going to sink because it's so rough - it is - that is an adventure,

39:00 it is an adventure. Just after the war one of our A-class destroyers off the west Australia coast, lost a few seaman when the ship struck a wave that turned it over almost at forty five degrees, because once you go - a ship goes - any ship goes over forty five degrees, they sink - it won't come back again. The equilibrium of the ship has gone over too much and our A-

39:30 class destroyer - it went almost to forty five degrees and some seaman were washed overboard, and never seen again. It's happened twice off the Australian coast where seaman have been washed off their destroyers and never seen again, and yeah I bring that point up to say to you - you asked me Sergi, that is - the sea an adventure, and I'm

40:00 bringing this point up as far as being washed overboard and never seen again - that we should say is a misadventure, but misadventures are something that could be avoided, aren't they? Misadventures are

generally a man-made type of mishap, but when the sea takes charge of a ship...

It's unpredictable.

It's unpredictable - it's an adventure, but certainly you wouldn't classify it as a misadventure. Not like the voyager

40:30 getting sunk by the Melbourne - that is a misadventure.

Now we'll have to stop now.

Tape 3

00:38 **Let's start talking about Flinders and basic training and what you went through there.**

Well I - everybody's got their opinions. I'm talking about the army and air force in particular. I'm not suggesting for one minute that army and air force training is not

01:00 hard, but I honestly believe that during the Second World War that the training for the army and air force was not anywhere near as tough as the navy. I did refer earlier in our talk, in our discussion that the navy ran during the Second World War, very much as it did two hundred or more

01:30 years in Nelson's day, and the discipline - I did touch upon that - the discipline was much the same. It, the, it's always been known that life at sea is tough - whether you're on a merchantman or a naval ship - it's always been recognised that living on board ship is tough. There's conditions

02:00 going back then were tough. You could not - when you were on board ship, unlike the army you might be able to go to the canteen or some other places and come back to earth a bit, but on board ship, you can't - there's nowhere to go. But in, so we were much talk about the actual recruit training. I have written a book which is sitting out there, a book, but I entered

02:30 the Department of Veterans' Affairs short story a few years ago. I didn't win a prize, but I - the book was, my book was highly commended and I had to sign a form for them to put it into the archives. So I do feel proud, that even though I didn't get a gold cup out of it, they saw fit to give me a, and to have it put into their archives,

03:00 and what makes me speak about the book that I wrote, there has been hundreds and hundreds to books written about warfare - army people and air force and navy - they've written their books and so forth, full of - in the navy situation, of naval engagements and etc, etc, so to win a prize,

03:30 I thought now there, the new entry training for the navy was so rigid and so tough that that's worth a Guernsey and that'll get away from the bank - I will not - I won't say I didn't discuss ships and firing guns, which came latter in my book, but the whole crux of the book was the tough training when you entered the navy. I called the book

04:00 You're In The Navy Now, and believe you me, it was tough. It really was. I know the army was tough and particularly army was tough, but the navy - because of life at sea - I think too that - in the army, I might be wrong, but the way I see it in the army, you're a soldier, and you're out there on your own, which is not good, I know, but you've gotta look after

04:30 yourself to survive, but basically it's your, you're not responsible, quite so responsible for other people's lives to the extent that you are on a warship, fighting. You can make some - you could be the cause of your ship going down and there's all sorts of things that demands that the discipline be

05:00 very tough to withstand what you have to - looking after your fellow shipmates, so when you join the navy down at Flinders Naval Depot - FND as it's commonly and affectionately known - FND, Flinders Naval Depot, which is not at Flinders on west - it's on Western Port Bay, but it is not at Flinders, it is at Crib Point - next to Flinders, but where Flinders is

05:30 the name it's got, but it's no longer used. It's called HMAS Cerberus, which it was also called in my day, but no-one called it the HMAS Cerberus. You had to get up and around about six o'clock in - you had your breakfast. In the navy going back then - the ship, whether you were on a shore establishment or a ship,

06:00 you were detailed to be the mess cook, but you didn't cook the meal - the cook's cooked the bean, but you'd go to the galley - whether it was a shore establishment or ship, and you would take your big containers called dixie and you would be given enough potatoes for that number in your mess, which might be twenty-five fellows in your mess, and you would have to - they would come up with their tin trays and you would deal it out. So you would get the - and then you would have to scrub the

06:30 dixies and so forth - all these containers you would be responsible and scrub the table and keep - you know all that sort of thing. You would, so in the - we go back to the actual recruit training that you were

all of a sudden finding that you were a mess cook and doing these jobs that was not the norm, and you - straight after breakfast you would go down to the covered in parade ground,

07:00 which was the big roof down at Flinders - just the roof, otherwise completely open, and we did physical training and the last one - we had to wear the uniform then - not overalls, we had to wear the sailors uniform, and the last one to be stripped down to the waist - that's just your singlet and trousers - the last one to be stripped down would have to frog march around the parade ground afterwards,

07:30 which is putting a .303 rifle, which I think is fifteen pounds in weight in the old imperial language - it's fifteen pounds - you would have to hold up above your head and get down on your haunches like a frog - they called it frog march, and you would have to hop like a frog with that fifteen pound rifle above - your arms straight ahead, and you weren't - you never did anything wrong, you just happened to be the last silly guy

08:00 to get stripped to the waist, that's all, and the last one after the physical training, and I was there in June, July so forth when down - FND, frost and - it's a very cold, frost place in the winter, and the last one to get dressed afterwards would have to frog march around the parade ground. So in the navy you can get punished for doing absolutely nothing wrong, but you can be punished, and I don't think that was quite the case in the

08:30 army or air force where you could get punished for doing absolutely nothing.

What were the reasons for that?

To make everyone get stripped quickly - get on with the PT [Physical Training] - get on - get there and start the physical training, you know, the exercises, and once again the last one to get dressed - get you on the guard, you know - gets you moving. None of this spending ten minutes getting

09:00 dressed - you'd go like a bat out of hell to be not the last one. So it was a discipline of getting you stripped and discipline of getting you dressed again quick smart. From the physical training you would march down to the wharf in Western Port Bay at Flinders, you were at Crew Point if you want to be precise, you would be allocated onto a boat tied up down oh -

09:30 tied up to the wharf, you'd have to climb down a cargo net tied to the boats, cause the wharf was so much higher than a pier, a normal pier, and you would go down - climb down a cargo, and they had various types of wooden boats - they had a cutter, that was the biggest and they were - that was like a galleon, huge oars, and you'd row out to a buoy out there, about a mile out to the buoy, and go round the buoy and row back

10:00 and then they had other boats - they had whalers - they weren't so bad - they had gigs - they were one of the best, the gig, but you'd always pray that you wouldn't be sent into a whalers, which felt as though you were rowing a galleon, you know? But the last boat to get back to the wharf would have to row back out again. And I'm now illustrating to you how tough your training was in the navy - I said to you, you didn't have to do anything

10:30 wrong to be punished, and you just happened to be the lucky - in the boat that was the last boat to get back to the wharf, so you've gotta go and do it all over again - row back around the buoy again.

Would you find that with the stripping down to your waist and this and the last guy getting in trouble, was it the same guy all the time getting last?

No, no, no, no, no - believe you me, There would be about - oh going back then there were over a thousand sailors, so it'd be pretty difficult

11:00 to be the same one, wouldn't it really, you know.

Unless he wasn't up to it.

Yeah unless you were a bit gaga or something - well you couldn't help it I know, but not - it was always some poor fellow. But I'm just illustrating to you how tough the training was - once again by going out in a boat and being on a boat and you just so happened to be - someone had to be the last boat in, didn't they? You can't all arrive back rowing a boat at the one instant, you know? So, and

11:30 we had the big drill hall, which has now been demolished - they tried to retain it, the people - the historical, it was a very - it was built when the - the drill hall was built in 1921 when the depot was built and it was a very historical building, but the - they reckon it was not, it was dangerous and it was pulled down. But the drill hall where you did your PT training during the day - which

12:00 I'm getting away from that - every morning was PT - during the day the class would go and all the PT instructors were ex pugs [pugilists], and if you're not quite sure what a pug is, it's a boxer, and they all had their broken noses from their boxing days and they'd become PT instructors, and it was - in a way in one sense it was more a discipline training than it was PT training they were so rigid and

12:30 so hard and difficult, they would scream at you for no reason at all.

Just stop there - no reason at all...

No reason at all – you – if you looked at them with your eyes, this is as much as to say, “You rotten bastard,” you know, with your eyes, you know you can read people’s eyes if they’re real – if you really think someone’s a bastard – a real bastard, your eyes – they tell the story don’t they? And if that unit that that PT

13:00 instructor, I mean, they would make you stand in line with your hands, your arms and hands to your sides until your fingers trembled with tension of having your hands so tightly pushed down, and if you, right, so they – you look at ‘em, say, “You rotten bastard,” with your eyes, they’d say, “Right Shepherd, I’ll see you down here at the end of the day.” You’d go down there at the end of the day,

13:30 they’d throw a pair of boxing gloves at you. You’d put them on and they’d put theirs on and they’d use you for a punching bag. Remember what I said – they were all ex pugs with their broken noses and so forth, and remember I didn’t do anything wrong, except to look at him, and I never opened me mouth, did I? I never used any physical movements at all other than use me eyeballs, and

14:00 right, using me for a punching bag, and you’d just about fold up with your legs going together, and he’d say, “You can go now,” and you’d say, “Thank God for that,” and you’d get one foot out the drill hall door, and he says, “Come back,” and you’d go back and he says, “Right, when you’re finished your tea, you’re coming down for another round.” Oh, when he says, when you get one foot out the drill hall door and he says, “Now come back,”

14:30 you say, “God, he’s going to give me the king hit now, really put me on the floor,” you know – then he’ll say, “Nah,” he said, “You finish your tea and you’re back here for another round,” and he uses you – until you’re pummelled to nothing.

Could you defend yourself at all? Did you know...

Oh yeah, yes, yeah you could box him, but believe you me they were all ex pros and that I mean professional boxers all of the like, you know? I mean how many, I mean, I s’pose you could say if they did strike someone that could keep up with ‘em

15:00 they’d tell you to go, wouldn’t they – they’d stop the bout wouldn’t they? They were in full control. They could just say, “Right, you can go now,” but I – they didn’t have to do that – I’d never ever, you know but that was our option, wasn’t it? To keep themselves out of trouble, they could get rid of you.

Did they ever brake your nose or anything like that?

No, no – they knew what they were doing. They knew what they, you know that –

15:30 they didn’t really, when it comes to your head, I don’t think they really bashed your head around much, it was more body. I mean, it hurt like hell, but it was more on your torso rather than your head, you know? So PT training during the day with your class, was a – I reckon – oh the way I saw it was about seventy-five percent discipline and twenty-five percent jumping over

16:00 the horses etc you know? It was...and in the navy well they – particularly when you were, you – they didn’t call them ‘recruits’ in the Second World War, you were called ‘new entries’, and you were in a new entry school, and in the navy they have kit inspections – I don’t know about the army and the air force but the navy – you have a hammock – you don’t have then in the – a hammock in the,

16:30 you’re carting your bed with you all the time in the navy, you have your hammock. So you have two hammocks and you’ve gotta scrub one every pay day – every fortnight, or you’ve gotta have one clean and lace it all up and each pay day, each fortnight you would have a clean hammock on. Just if I could just digress slightly on that point, when we went to Hobart from Melbourne, and it was really rough – Bass Straight was –

17:00 we were really tossing around and I wasn’t feeling like scrubbing my hammock, so un – the deck below me was the hatch to the deck below me was the fridge – refrigeration compartment where we used to keep the carcasses of meat and so forth, so I lifted it up the hatch cover and dropped me hammock down there so that when P officer wouldn’t see it in the bin dirty. But he discovered mine was missing and he just so happened to lift up the hatch and there was my hammock mixed up with all the meat –

17:30 frozen meat carcasses, so I got fourteen, the – I go the – the leanest punishment you could get for the smallest little thing you could do in the navy was called number eleven’s, and number eleven’s was four hours extra work a day – four hours extra work, and no leave – if you happened to be in port you didn’t get leave. Well four hours extra a day takes a lot of doing

18:00 particularly at sea when you’re on, you’re called watches, which is shift work, and you work – you’re doing about sixteen hours a day sometimes on board ship – sixteen hours a day, and you’re doing four hours extra work, what’s that make it? Twenty hours out of twenty-four in one day – that leaves you four hours left; and so I was given number eleven’s for not scrubbing my hammock to – and I put it, and

18:30 that four hours extra work, well they’d get you up at five o’clock in the morning if you happened to be not on watch, and you’d have to work till breakfast time. Your lunchtime – you’d have to work half your lunchtime. After tea of a night, you’d have to work again and make up four hours extra work – as I say, and if you were in Harvey, Port, then you’d get no leave. Well we went to Hobart and I was on that number eleven

- 19:00 for a fortnight and that's about as long as we were in Hobart. I didn't get leave. All the ship's company were invited over to the Cascade brewery, and all they did in the Cascade brewery was put you in the lounge and bring the barrels in and fill you full of beer and that was called a tour of the brewery, and I'm there - I am on board ship and couldn't get off and all the blokes are getting rotten on Cascade beer, and I was - and you could get -
- 19:30 you could get crayfish and all that - you could go up to the boats, the crayfish boat and get yourself a crayfish - I couldn't do that, I was, you know, in the slammer if you want to put it that way. So yes - that's number eleven - that's called number elevens, and that's the most lenient punishment of all - four hours extra work and no leave. So...

What did you enjoy most about basic training at Flinders?

- 20:00 Ah, I think it, I think you're only, like really when you look back at - I know now an eighteen year old now is, well, a forty year old. But going back in my day you were a kid. You were - the education - you weren't educated like they were and you weren't seen, you weren't treated as an adult. An eighteen year old was still treated, I mean,
- 20:30 we couldn't go to - we had a red card as a new entry, and that would not allow you to go into the canteen and have a beer down there. You had to have a beer card, which was ship's company, and you were only a new entry. But you were all young kids learning something and making mistakes and roughing it, and I think because it's so tough - the training down at Flinders was so tough that you
- 21:00 sort of - you bond together to survive. You bond, you know? But, you know the fellas, too, they would make, you would treat, although you'd bonded, you would get up to pranks against your fellow new entries. Like they would go down the drill hall, which was used for movies, the drill - they'd put a screen up in the drill hall
- 21:30 and you'd come back and leap into your hammock, and I say 'leap' because you hold onto the bar the hammock is slung on - the steel bar, and you would have to swing your, lift and swing yourself and drop into your hammock, and you'd drop in and they'd undo the - they'd put a slip know on the foot end of the hammock, and you'd go on - you'd hit the deck, bang, you know, this hammock would give way on the foot end of the hammock. Mind you, if, they know which end of the hammock
- 22:00 to use because you always have a little calico pillow in your hammock and that's naturally for your head, your pillow, so if you were to undo - put a slip know on the head end, you'd kill him - they'd land on the head. So there were pranks used by new entries to stir you up, so - but that is still bonding through - that is still bonding, you've gotta put up with it, you know, and bond -
- 22:30 but the training down there was full-on discipline. You had to play sport every night and they would put you maybe in a soccer team - you may never have seen a soccer ball in all your life, but you were there and you will play soccer. You didn't say, "Oh, but I can play Australian rules, put me in that," no, they'd put you in hockey, Australian rules, soccer, rugby and so it goes and you just...

23:00 **What was the idea behind that?**

Well the idea was twofold, to - sport is very - to get you - give fitness, that's number one, is fitness. Number two, discipline. When you were told to do something, don't argue.

What about teamwork?

What about?

Teamwork - would it...

Oh yes, it did, yeah definitely the teamwork. Same with

- 23:30 gunnery, when you did your training there in gunnery, that was perhaps the most severest of all discipline. You would have to - we had a six inch gun down there, which is a sizeable sort of gun, and it might be six of you on a gun crew, and you would have to take it in turns to be captain of the gun, and the captain of the gun actually fires the - you know actually fires the gun and
- 24:00 makes sure that everyone's doing what they should do - you've gotta have someone in charge of a gun, you know and so you're cap - and you would have to take your turn when you're doing this new entry training, of being captain of the gun, and you would scream out at the - you've gotta do it with everything you've got, "Guns crew, number," and so first fella - he'd be number one on the gun, "One," "Two," "Three," "Four," "Five," see, and you know and none of this pussy footing around saying, "Number
- 24:30 one," you really had to give it everything you - savage, you know? But when I - we went, particularly in the Korean War, when I went back in the navy the second time to the Korean War, and we were only up in Korea a couple of days and we were hit - the captain's cabin received a direct hit from the shore batteries, the Communist shore batteries on shore - it was a direct
- 25:00 hit to the captain's cabin, and well it looked like the end of - we were caught unawares. We weren't at action stations, and I was on ex gun, which is near the stern of the ship - end of the ship if you're not up

with naval - I was on ex gun and I had to run the full length of the ship to my gun with all the Communist guns belting away at us, and

- 25:30 you - I knew then that if you hadn't had that strict gunnery training, believe you me it was strict, you wouldn't be able to handle the real situation - with all these shells exploding, although it was only one shell that hit the ship, they're exploding over the ship and ahead of the ship and behind the ship, you know, they, when they hit they sent up water spouts when they blow up in the sea
- 26:00 and so, and I'm not trying to boast, I'm not trying to, all I'm saying is that the training they gave you down at Flinders Naval Depot - you certainly - you wouldn't be able to cope with the situation if you'd never had that discipline. We were, the guns were just a gun shoe. They weren't - in today's warships now they don't - in fact today's warships there's no-one in the guns now, they're down below and it's all done by computers,
- 26:30 pushing buttons, and the guns will move around without anybody on 'em. But in our day they weren't even - you were out running around in the open with the shells to put in, and with all this pow, pow, the whistle of the shells, you'd swear they're coming straight for you - they might be about fifty foot in the air, but when you hear that...you really reckon, "This is the one with my number on it,"
- 27:00 you know. I'm not trying to make a big deal - I'm just purely saying you can see the reason for - mind you, there are disciplines and I don't see the reasons for such a thing, copping it for not scrubbing my hammock or looking at the PT instructor with the, I mean, I don't go on with that discipline, but I'm talking about when it comes to gunnery etc, you need every bit of that tough...

What did you dislike about

- 27:30 **training?**

I'm sorry?

What did you dislike about training?

Ah what did I dislike about it? Oh getting up very early in the mornings, and you - they had you on the move - you were sort of running all the time. If we went from say gunnery training to seamanship, they had a seamanship school, you had to double. Everything was - you never, your body never relaxed. You never had time

- 28:00 to recover, it was go-go-go at all times, you know? It's surprising at my age now, or even going back - when I go back forty years ago now, I would not cope with it. You're so - you don't realise when you're around about eighteen how resilient your body is to take punishment, and mental-wise and physical - you just don't know at that time
- 28:30 I mean, I, a couple of years ago I was up in Cairns and I was very fortunate to get a tour of one of our new Collins Class submarines - very, very fortunate. I contact different people and so forth, and I was in the Naval Association - well up in it and one thing and another, I was able to wangle, and the second in command took me through the submarine and the - when you go
- 29:00 through the bulk - when you go through the bulk heads - one compartment to another on any warship, you've always got to step over, you know - the doors aren't right down to the deck because if you want to close a compartment off when they get flooded, you don't want a door that's, you know, you've gotta be able to seal the doors; and when I went on the submarine a couple of years ago, the Collins Class submarine, I couldn't believe it but I had to actually get my leg and my hand
- 29:30 and lift my leg over the bulk, over the door into the next - I didn't have the energy there, and yet when I was eighteen you could step on the deck and jump, leap, and it's surprising how your body slows down. I mean, we all know our bodies slow down, but believe you me, I found that I, and I - when I went from the submarine you've got the hatch on the upper deck on the sub - and you've gotta
- 30:00 swing down onto a ladder to get down - the ladder doesn't go straight to the hold, the hatch, it sort of stops before, and you've gotta swing, and I certainly found I wasn't full of beans. Ah, so this all harks back to your training. It's full-on at, all day and you know, even, see even of a night,
- 30:30 whether you're in a naval establishment or ship, they had what they called rounds. Now the duty officer had to go right round the living quarters on board, or the mess decks of the ship, and everyone's gotta stand up while the officer goes into the bathrooms, the heads - which is the toilets, the duty officer had to go right through the ships quarters, living quarters, which I say included toilets
- 31:00 etc - they'd all have to be cleaned for the rounds. If you - and the mess decks had to be cleaned and everything like that. You'd have your hammocks maybe slung for those that needed to try and sleep, which was really impossible, or I mean at that time - the rounds was about eight o'clock at night with the noise of the fellas and, you know, but you would be in your hammock trying to sleep. But the rounds - I'm saying that even
- 31:30 though you were there in your time in your mess, every night they would have rounds and you would have to stand up, you know, to attention. So you know it was really full-on.

You were mentioning pranks before - did you get any pranks pulled on you?

Oh yes - I - my - this might sound ludicrous - might sound ridiculous, but I was just eighteen and

32:00 really my beard was - looking at yours, my beard was really just bum-fluff, and I was in a lower mess deck right down, you know, and so we used to shave and do those sort of things in the mess rather than climb all the way up and go to the bathroom, and I'm shaving away with this shave - safety razor - remember no electric razors in those days, and there I am with a safety razor shaving

32:30 away with this soap and all that, and they'd taken the blade out of the razor, ha-ha-ha, and I thought, "I'm doing a fantastic job," you know, cause it was only bum-fluff, I mean - ha-ha-ha, I mean you - and today, gosh, I'd soon find out whether I'd missed a bit now, wouldn't I? Even if I'd missed a bit, I'm going to find out aren't I? But going back then I spent about five minutes shaving myself without a blade. So I've never forgotten that, and the ship - we meet each other

33:00 every year and have a reunion and these fellas, they get stuck into you about the different things that they'd do to you. They'll do anything they can, you know? They might put a brick in your kit bag or something - not that there's bricks on ships, but they'll do anything back then to stir you up, you know?

Through training did you see people that couldn't cope with it and dropped out, or...?

Ah yes. I

33:30 I never saw, myself, I never saw anyone drop out. It does make or break you, but somehow or other - I think though really though it could near break you because life in those days was tough for everybody. Living was pretty tough and you were used to handling

34:00 a little bit of - yeah, oh not - I said to you it was tough in the navy and it was, but I'm purely saying there are some things where your body, because of the way of your life, you could handle better than they could today. I never saw anyone actually break down and become a nervous, I mean, they'd be on the verge of it, yeah - on the verge, but they went all the way, you know, and well because

34:30 you wouldn't want to - you wouldn't - it'd be the same in the army, air force, you wouldn't want to see your mates see you as a weakling, you know? You had to keep up with it - it was swim or sink. Swim or sink. But there's a bit of a difference, like on board ship if you're on watch on the bridge, which is the command - naturally of the command station of a ship on the bridge, and the officer - the watch, the duty officer -

35:00 you might be there three or four hours with him and he won't say - if he hasn't - doesn't want you to do anything, but they generally want you to do a couple of things, but if they don't want you to do anything they won't say a word to you because you're right down there and they're right up there. We call them pigs - actually they had a fund down at Flinders - they had - the officers in the wardroom had a pigs fund, and they used to put money in that, and that built the

35:30 Southern Cross picture theatre, which is down at Flinders Naval depot, and that was built from the pigs fund, so even they knew that they were called by the crew - they knew that they were called pigs. It's not a very - you know it was a real derogatory name, wasn't it? Pigs. I mean, perhaps pigs aren't so - a pig is not so bad today as what we thought of a pig in the old days, you know? I mean, since they had that movie - what was the name of that movie on a pig - the Australian movie they made?

36:00 **Babe?**

Yeah, Babe, so since the movie Babe's come around, maybe a pig's not such a ghastly animal at all any more. But going back then, you know to be a pig was, but you know you wouldn't - the officers would not talk because, that now I've been down to Flinders Naval - down to HMAS Cerberus, which is FND - Flinders Naval Depot - I've been down - I'm always down - it's only twenty minutes from here and I'm often down there one way or another, and the new

36:30 entries, the recruits as they're called now - recruits - they talk to the officers like Jack, Tom, Dick and Harry - their first names and they don't have a canteen down there, they have a mini supermarket, and you see the officers lined up with the sailors to pay the checkout, you know, and they're just - well no way when I was a sailor would there, would you ever seen an officer do - they would get the steward or someone to

37:00 do their shopping for them. They would not be seen dead mixing, involved with a lower, we were called the low, lower deck - ordinary sailors were called 'lower deck'. I think it was because going back to Nelson's day, the sailors were in the - folks were in the - down, you know, because the gun decks were - in the main were - you're really in, you know, the

37:30 messes were mainly below the gun deck, so you were in the lower deck, and that's how it got its name, lower deck.

So when you finished training, was there a graduation ceremony or something?

No, nup, you were just draft - they'd just say, "Oh there's a there's a draft due down at the police station, go down and get your draft," and they'd say, you know, "You've gotta get a train or something to Sydney or something on such and such day and you're going on the HMAS blah," - whatever

- 38:00 there was no - and you're just - left that behind you. There were no - now they have a ceremony. They get a - I think they get a diploma or something and they all throw their hats up in the air, and it's quite like a university - getting a uni degree now when they get their graduation certificate. But no, you just - but there is a sudden change in - when it comes to discipline, and it
- 38:30 is there - discipline, I've tried to say, it permeates right through the navy, but it's a complete change for you because when you're no longer a new entry, recruit, there's a bit more respect - a little bit, I don't mean navy talk - you're no longer to be kicked around. You've gotta be too, you've gotta be now because you're now a trained
- 39:00 person, you must measure up. But if you measured up, well, that was good. You didn't have that discipline over your - as a new entry, it never left you for a second, never left you. But once you finished that you, and you're out given recognition that you're skilled, you know, up to a
- 39:30 point you're an ordinary seaman, you're not an able seaman. You leave as an ordinary seaman, we - but the respect that you've been through the rough, you've earned your, you don't get stripes, but you know you've earned your stripes as a seaman, as a sailor, you're trained and there's respect, you're treated - you know the way I must admit up to a point - ODs [Ordinary Seaman] we called
- 40:00 ordinary seaman, they were - you would, sometimes if you were an able seaman, they'd say, "Oh, what do you think you are, an OD or something?" Which is a bit of , you know a - there is a slight, I will say there - when you're an ordinary seaman there is a, it's when you get to an able seaman, which is not a promotion in the real sense, but you are a -
- 40:30 you've gone all the way. There's a - you know you've gone all the way.

After training, where were you posted to?

Oh I was posted to HMAS Penguin, which is a shore establishment at Balmoral in Middle Harbour, Sydney.

All right we'll stop there.

Tape 4

- 00:33 Right, ah yes whilst I was stationed at HMAS Penguin at Balmoral in Middle Harbour, Sydney, I was on loan drafts to other ships. I was on loan drafts to the Stewart. Now the Stewart was a World War I destroyer - one of those that Goebels coined the name
- 01:00 'scrap iron flotilla' to the Australian because they were World War I, you know, working in World War II, and the Stewart was always the flotilla leader, and when I was loan, put on in Sydney Harbour put onto it from Penguin, it was really near the end of its time as a fighting ship, so when I was put on loan draft to it, it was being
- 01:30 trans - it was being turned into a transport ship to transport supplies to New Guinea because it'd run its race as a the war ship. So I was on it for a month or two whilst it was being turned into a stores transport ship, and it was something different. I was also put on loan draft as a Quick Match, which is a
- 02:00 Q-class British design destroyer, the Quick Match, and I was on that for a month or two just around Sydney Harbour, and the Quick Match had come back from the eastern fleet - that's around Durban and Ceylon and so forth because the war in Africa coming to a close - as I mentioned earlier that all the warships would come out to the Pacific War. So I was
- 02:30 on a Quick Match for a little while. Destroyers, by sailors in the navy, are called the boats. They call it boats because, I mean, you're not - they're a ship but they're vernacular - navy vernacular they're called boats - destroyers, because they're not a large ship, but they do all sorts of,
- 03:00 they do the work of a small ship and the work of a large ship. They're work, like a work horse, they do everything. So they're called boats, and so I was shunted around whilst I was at Balmoral at HMAS Penguin at Balmoral - I was shunted around in all sorts of situations waiting for the Bataan to be finished being filled, and
- 03:30 when it was just about completed - just about ready for launching, it was to be called the Kurnei, after the...
- OK, yes, go on.**
- The Kurnei, the Bataan was initially to be called the Kurnei after the Australian Aboriginal tribe called the Kurnei. I think their area was around Wilson's Promontory in Victoria, and
- 04:00 the Canberra, our Australian navy heavy cruiser, the Canberra was sunk in Guadalcanal along with

American ships - a lot of American cruisers - they were caught napping by the Japanese navy and the Japanese just pounded them, and sunk just about all of 'em including our HMAS Canberra, and the Americans

- 04:30 at that time that the Canberra was sunk, christened one of their new cruisers the Canberra, so the Australian government saw fit that instead of calling our third tribal-class destroyer the Kurnei, they called it HMAS Bataan, because General MacArthur of the United States Army - supreme commander of the United States army, had been pushed into the water by the Japanese
- 05:00 on the Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines - actually one of the big disasters of the war for the Americans was their Japanese, the American marines were on the - cornered by the Japanese on the Bataan Peninsula, couldn't get away, couldn't be rescued, so the Japanese had what they called the Bataan Death March, and I can't remember how many of the US marines went on the death march,
- 05:30 but very few of them survived it, and so our ship was then, because of the Americans calling their new, one of their new cruisers Canberra, we were called the Bataan because General MacArthur had - when he was pushed into the water at Bataan Peninsula, Melbourne was made his headquarters, and he had his wife with him - I think her name was Eleanor
- 06:00 McArthur, and she christened the ship HMAS Bataan, and sailors are very superstitious people. There's a lot of superstition in seamen. They don't like to go - they don't like a ship to leave port on Fridays cause I think not only sailors, but I think Friday is a bit of a,
- 06:30 sort of an evil sort of a day, Friday - well maybe not in today's world, but Friday was always a bit, but the sailors always saw Friday as a superstitious day. So I was discussing the commission of the Bataan, well sailors always also as well as not leaving port preferably on a Friday,
- 07:00 they believed you should never change the name of a ship. Well the name Kurnei was changed to Bataan and the destroyer had that many things happen to it over its lifetime, it was com - I commissioned it - I was fortunate to be on a commission crew in the - on the 25th of May, 1945 just before the close of World War II, and ah,
- 07:30 everything seemed to happen to it that could happen to a ship. So it was commissioned on the 25th of May, 1945 and it only lasted nine years. Now for a ship to last only nine years is a very short span of time. But because it had so many, some say that a lot of the faults were because the dockyard finished it
- 08:00 very quickly so it could get into World War II, but whatever the reason it was the show pony in the latter part of World War II - the Bataan was the show pony of the royal Australian navy because it had many modern innovations and it was, I s'pose being called the Bataan after the American marines fiasco
- 08:30 it was something special. But they had a special name and it was always kept beautifully - the sailors always worked hard on the Bataan to keep it in mint condition. It was a beautiful ship to look at and it was kept up and the crew was always happy on it - all the crews were happy. But nevertheless all sorts of things - the boiler tubes kept on blowing out on it and
- 09:00 they had to be - had new tube or work done on the boilers. Once on its return trip from Japan after the war the condensers always packed up. Now the condensers on a ship - they condense sea water into fresh water, and you could say that - I dunno, you could say that perhaps ninety percent of the water condenses sea water to fresh
- 09:30 is used in the boilers because you can't use seawater to - on boilers on the ships. It would corrode everything and it just wouldn't work. So a lot of - about ninety percent of the water condensed into fresh would be used for the boilers and then the rest for living - food and bathing and so forth. But nevertheless the condensers kept packing up and once on its return
- 10:00 trip from Japan after the occupation of Japan, it - the ship couldn't get - the condensers completely packed up, so you can't run the boilers, you can't get any steam so the ship stops, so they went ashore by boat - I'm not quite sure, off the Queensland coast, and they got coconut husks and they jammed that into the intake on the ship's side for the condensers and it did an enormously good job of sieving the salt
- 10:30 out of the seawater and the ship got going again, so you wouldn't find so many ships would end up having coconut husks to get it on the go again - I think that's quite unique. But there were so many things happen to it, but it's not the fault of the crew - the crew always loved the ship. It was a very well loved destroyer, and it was always so beautiful to look at, but
- 11:00 mechanically wise, and then, so it - on the nine years of its life, that was from 1945 to 1954 when it was decommissioned, that nine years - in its last year, which is 1954, it was escorting the Gothic when Queen Elizabeth came out to Australia for the first time, and
- 11:30 it was an escort ship for a little bit of a - for the Gothic and it, it got collected by ah, what was it? It got - it hit the Vengeance, the HMAS Vengeance, which is a British - it was a British aircraft carrier but the Australian navy took it over
- 12:00 and renamed it - no they didn't rename it, it was kept - the name was kept as Vengeance, and during

the - during its time the Vengeance, it hit the Vengeance and it got fairly badly damaged. The bull ring, that's the big steel ring on the very bough of the ship that you - rope goes through to tie the ship up, that was ripped right off, and part,

12:30 the gun shields were ripped off and it got into a bit of a mess. So that didn't help the life of the ship, having it knocked around like that, and that was in 1954, and also in its last year, 1954, it was used as a life boat on an air race from New Zealand to Australia. It was mid-Tasman Sea -

13:00 midway in the Tasman Sea, so if any planes had to ditch themselves in the sea, it could save the crew, the air crew, and whilst it was the rescue boat for that air race in 1954, this great storm came from nowhere and it took sea, went down the funnel - nearly put the boilers out; bulkheads

13:30 of the superstructure - now bulkheads, they're the wall, if you like, the structures above the deck, deck houses, bulk heads are walls, and they got stove in here and there. The whaler, it's like the ships life boat, wooden life boat, that got badly, you know, it was knocked around

14:00 so it was no longer seaworthy - the waves smashed the wooden boat. So it, and they say it, I think, that the Bataan's keel, which is the backbone of any ship, was bent over this storm that hit. So that really spelt the doom for the ship's life. They felt - the Australian navy and Australian government felt that the ship was, well,

14:30 everything had happened to it and this was the - this final storm that hit it was the end - they thought that was the end of the ship. So in 1954 - that's nine years of life it had - very short by destroyer's... Now one of our destroyers, I think it was HMAS Perth, it was actually an American destroyer commissioned into our navy,

15:00 and it's just a couple of years ago that it was decommissioned- that had thirty years I think - thirty years. So nine years is a very short span of time. But however none in the collision with the Vengeance - no sailors were hurt or injured or wounded or whatever, but the ship certainly - everyone was holding onto something because

15:30 it was a hell of a thump. A destroyer compared to an aircraft carrier is just like a rowing boat against a liner - a destroyer is so small. So, but I wasn't - I was out of the navy at that time. As I mentioned earlier on the tape, I left the navy and I did a course in carpentry and joinery and moved around the building trade,

16:00 the Korean War came on so I rejoined the navy again holding onto my rank as an able seaman and I commissioned HMAS Anzac at Williamstown dockyard in Victoria - I commissioned that. That was a British-designed destroyer, battle class...

We're probably just going a bit too far at the moment.

Yes.

I want to ask you a few questions about that whole period

16:30 **with you on the HMAS Bataan.**

Yes.

Were you involved in personally any operations with the Bataan that you could tell us about?

Well we joined the - when we commissioned and we sailed up to the Philippines and joined the American 7th fleet, and the war was only approximately two months before the surrender, and we went chasing Japanese ships and

17:00 submarines that were suspected of being around the Philippines, but we never came across them. So we never actually fired a shot in anger at the Japanese in the Second World War. We, we were based at Subic Bay, which is a bay adjacent to Manila Bay - American naval base, and that was our base to

17:30 operate from. Sometimes we'd go into Manila Bay. When we arrived in Manila on the Bataan, it was only a month or so that the Japanese had been - the Americans had pushed the Japanese off the Philippines, and it was, so it was just a very short span of time. But when we went ashore

18:00 that we were the first - amongst the first to be around on the Philippines after the Japanese had left. There were - when you get countries, in the Second World War anyway in the Pacific or anywhere, often it was not unusual for the country that it's losing to put typhoid into the

18:30 water supply. So when we used to go ashore in Manila, we always had to carry an army water bottle to drink from because they weren't one hundred percent sure whether the Japanese had put the typhoid infection into the water system.

When you were - you said you were - you went onshore to Manila,

Yes...

can you tell us what Manila was like at that point?

Well it was - I never got to London -

- 19:00 seen London after the blitz, but yeah, from the photographs I've seen of London from the blitz it was much the same - massive big concrete buildings - some of 'em bombed to rubble; some were leaning right over, there was one side might be bombed right out - it was rather chaotic. The bridges were all bombed
- 19:30 and the army had replaced the - say one bridge might have half of it blown away, well the army had put these bridges that they put, portable bridges across the Filipino bridges. So the Manila did certainly cop a lot of it, because remember the Americans really
- 20:00 was - the Philippines was under the control of the United States until the Japanese arrived, so the Japanese had to fight their way into the Philippines, then the Americans then had to fight their way back in again, so Manila really got a pasting - really got a pasting. But the architecture of Manila was different from what we normally see because the
- 20:30 Spanish had the Philippines for, I think it was something like three hundred years, so the population has the blood of many, many - I don't mean all Filipinos, but the blood of many Filipinos - not all, was comprised of the local native blood plus Chinese, because the Chinese always get right through
- 21:00 Asia, and English or American, and Spanish. So you had a real mix of blood if you like - you know. The Spanish was - their money, even though the Americans - I forget which year the Americans took over the Philippines, but the currency never changed from the Spanish occupation of three hundred years, and is still the same
- 21:30 today - they have pesos. We have dollars, they have pesos, and so much of the Japanese influence is still relevant today, and much of the architecture is of Spanish - with arches and you get - it's like South America when a Spanish in South America - you get a lot of their cantinas and so forth with the influence of
- 22:00 Spanish architecture. So it was, for a sailor to go ashore, it was a change to see. But we weren't, but the Filipinos in Manila were pleased to see the Japanese leave. See you get places like Timor and there were a lot of Timorese actually
- 22:30 that were patriotic to the Japanese, and often some of our armed forces were handed over to the Japanese - I'm not saying that all Timorese were bad at all. I'm saying there were pockets of Timorese that favoured Japanese, and so but when it comes to the Philippine and Philippines, the Philippines wore -
- 23:00 there wasn't any influence of the locals not hating the Americans coming back. They weren't, they were not pro-Japanese, the Filipinos. I think the Japanese occupation during the war of the Philippines, was fairly harsh on the Filipino people, so we weren't in any situation of having people, say, spit at you or -
- 23:30 it would happen during the war. So we didn't have any problems at all in that way, and then the atomic bomb was dropped on - bombs, I should say, was dropped on Hiroshima - they like to say, they seem to pronounce it Hiroshima, or Hiroshima now, and also Nagasaki, and when those two bombs were dropped, we happened to be
- 24:00 in Manila Bay when the Japanese envoys flew to Manila to find out exactly what the surrender terms would be. They hadn't surrendered formally, but virtually the war was over because once the atomic bombs were dropped there were - in some of the Pacific Islands - Japanese soldiers not knowing what happened on their homeland - they were still fighting with, but theoretically
- 24:30 the war was over on the homeland of Japan once the bombs were dropped.

Was there any sort of resistance in the Philippines to your knowledge at that time?

No.

There still were pockets of Japanese on the Philippines?

No not - well there may have been right up in, I mean the Philippines it's, I think there's something like three thousand islands and all jungle and that, and

- 25:00 I'm not qualified to answer that, but I'm only qualified to say that around Manila and the suburbs of Manila, once the Japanese were pushed out that was it - no animosity by the locals or, and that. So we were, happened to be very historic to be in Manila bay when the Jap - I have a photograph of the envoys getting off their plane - the Japanese
- 25:30 envoys to see what their surrender terms would be. So naturally they had to accept the terms, but they had to know what they were - we sailed for Tokyo Bay, and oh well, the only thing that ever happened on that trip was we came across a Japanese mine and we shot that and exploded that. Otherwise it was uneventful - we arrived in Tokyo Bay a few days
- 26:00 before surrender, and the Japanese - when the - Tokyo Bay in some ways is like Port Phillip Bay in

Victoria, it's a wide bay, very shallow bay - a lot of it's not navigational, but around the bay you would see white flags flying, there were flags were usually sheets or something on poles

26:30 or something, 'surrender', like the Japanese people were showing you they were surrendering by having these white flags around, and we were sent as a destroyer, we could get in everywhere, we were sent to all the various ports in Japan looking for prisoners of war.

Which ports were these?

Ah Sendai, Shiragama,

27:00 I can't think of the others, but Sendai and Shiogama was where, and that was where the most prisoners of war - one of the largest amounts of prisoners of war were in that area, and we had to stay there, and because we were there for, oh, towards six months, the captain of our ship, the Bataan,

27:30 said, "We've gotta stay in the area for a while, we're going to have a vote - you can go around Japan for a week, on the ship, or you can go to Hong Kong, or you can stay alongside here at Tokyo and go away for a week's holiday." Well, we voted to have our weeks holiday. But Japan had no food at all...

This is immediately after the war?

Yeah, oh a couple of months - maybe three months, and

28:00 we chose to go to Nikko, the Japanese pronounced it Nikkor, but in the - it's pronounce - it's spelt N, I, double-K, O, so we say Nikko, but the...

The Japanese tend to speak it very strong.

They do - very deep, growl, growl, you know - and that's their, but we went to Nikko, which was a hundred miles inland from Tokyo, and we

28:30 took hessian sugar bags of bread that our cook had baked for us and bully beef in cans because they had no food, they had no soap, no sugar or anything, and we took that food in these sugar bags - the hessian sugar bags, to last for the week, and we had to - of course the bread's stale and all that, but it was either that or not eat. But Nikko was a - there's no doubt about it -

29:00 Japan must be one of the most beautiful countries in the world. I'm not suggesting it is the most, but it's certainly right on - somewhere on the top - if not the top of the list, not far off the top, because it's a volcanic island - it's all volcanic, and lava is so profuse in nutrients that plants love, the weeds - anything grows there, you know - it's just a very rich soil. A very - naturally a very pretty country, and Tokyo, when

29:30 we arrived, we were there - a lot of people don't understand or - it's not their fault, but history doesn't even mention it, but there wasn't one enemy soldier set foot on the Japanese homeland at the end of the Second World War. Not a single enemy soldier, even sailor, that the surrender was signed on the USS battleship Missouri, and nobody, and

30:00 you take all other wars - you take World War II with Germany - the Russians came in from the East and the Americans and English came in from the West, and of course the Russians got into Berlin before - unfortunately for the Americans and English - the Russians got into Berlin before they, the English and Americans, and that was - politically that was bad news for the West - for the Russians to get to Berlin first, but

30:30 what I'm saying is when you conquer a country, you invade it and you march in, you know, tanks and whatever you've got, and you go in. But most unusual for such a large war was, our war with Japan and that's with the Americans, the British, I'm going in, I'm using numbers now, cause Australia's troops were not like the large American

31:00 where the millions in uniform, and the English - they've got millions too in uniform, and then along the line you've got Australia - in numbers I'm talking about, in numbers, when you think of all the nations that were at war, including Russia too, which had only got into the war unfortunately again for the West again they got into the war for the last week or two of it,

31:30 but for all those nations fighting Japan, not one enemy soldier in - as I said, we're not just talking about Americans, we're talking about a world of army - not one enemy soldier - most unusual - a lot of people don't know that about the Second World War. They think that - the usual thing when you invade a country is to march in, you know, tanks and soldiers marching in and rifles and all that, I mean you've only got to

32:00 look at Iraq and you see the soldiers with their guns at the ready - that's the everyday invasion of a country. But not with Japan. I'm not praising Japan at all - it's not my, I'm just saying a most unusual surrender, finish of a very big war.

Now having said that, which is a very interesting point,

Mmm...

your first leave was in Tokyo?

Yes, definitely.

What was the disposition of the people?

32:30 **I mean, you're walking round on leave in a town that's half destroyed.**

Well I, they were bewildered, didn't know what hit them, right - and that's not meant to be a pun when I said didn't know what hit them - you know the expression I'm trying to use...

Sure, of course, yes.

But bewildered. I mean they never thought they'd lose the war. Well I'm talking about the ordinary people of Japan,

33:00 the community, were brainwashed that we are invincible and that was it, and the people were - it was something as, the community were not forewarned, you know that - I'm not sure how the Japanese government managed to hold it back from the population because the big disasters happened, which their troops and

33:30 sailors and soldiers and airmen were getting killed, and you would think the Japanese population would've been a little bit more - I'm not saying none were aware, but generally speaking the Japanese population were not aware that they were going to lose the war right up until the bombs dropped.

I'm just going to have to get you to sit back a bit - you've gone outside the lens.

Yeah.

OK, so the people were bewildered...

Bewildered - they were

34:00 walking - we were in Tokyo for - we were the first enemy ashore, the first enemy ashore. It was really hardly any virtually - you could say literally speaking there weren't any army or air force personnel walking around Tokyo. It was sailors because it was a naval surrender on Tokyo Bay, and so we were - we sailors were privileged to be the first enemy ashore in Tokyo -

34:30 sailors, and the - it was amazing how Japan could still be at war. It was as though the atomic bombs were never dropped - it was amazing that they could still be at war, because I was walking round the very heart of Tokyo - it was flattened to the ground, absolutely flattened, and

35:00 not only was it flattened but the Americans dropped incendiary bombs and burned it to the ground - after they bombed it to the ground, they burnt it, and I must say their, their bombing was very accurate because Japanese house - we call it house of parliament here, our parliament house- in Tokyo they call it the diet, the Japanese diet - D-I-E-T - that's their house of parliament, and

35:30 the Americans bombed it right to the ground - right up to the steps you could say of this - it looked a bit in, in it's design - it wasn't unlike the shrine in Melbourne - the Melbourne shrine of remembrance, I should say, shrine of remembrance - it wasn't unlike that architecture, and the Americans bombed it right up to the doors of it, you know - real accurate bomb - because when you conquer a country it's still gotta be governed by you and the Japanese - it's

36:00 still gotta be governed - you've gotta have a government house to do it, so they kept it absolutely in tact. I have a photograph showing the diet standing out like a sore thumb with everything flattened and burnt around it. But there was no antagonism by the Japanese public whatsoever at all. Bewildered, yes bewildered, but no awful looks, no - you know how you can give someone you

36:30 hate a terrible look - there was none of that. All the population, including the women, had firewood - all the bits of broken wood from the air raids laying around, they had tied to their backs to light fires for their cooking. I mean they were - they were living under bits of galvanised iron or whatever and when I see

37:00 photographs of the Ginza, which is one of the - in the world of shopping centres, the Ginza is right up there with Paris or London - is their main shopping, the Ginza, and when I see it just burnt to the ground and nothing, and today with the, it's like Las Vegas today in the photographs with neon lights everywhere, and it's

37:30 a - it's amazing.

Now what about the Japanese troop presence in Japan, I mean in Tokyo that is.

Yes.

Were there many Japanese soldiers around?

Yes. They - they were bewildered like the - they couldn't understand why they were in the situation. They were all in the army uniforms because they had nothing else to put on themselves. They were army fellows and they had their houses burnt - nothing left

- 38:00 so they were in army, Japanese army uniforms, and they showed no, you would think being a soldier and losing the war that they would be quite nasty. Never occurred. Never occurred. There was no skirmishes, there were no-one retaliating in pockets like you have in Iraq now - they
- 38:30 just stopped dead, came to an absolute sudden stop. But it was - it gave one a - I don't know - I wouldn't say it gave one a proud feeling to be there and it was more awesome. It was almost on the verge of being bewildered by us in a different
- 39:00 light to the Japanese. But it was a sense of - you can't believe that you're shooting and running around having a war and then you switch - like switching a light off, it's like pow - it's the end of it. It's just - it shocks the system. You - everything you've been trained to do, the way we, I mean on a war ship going back then you always
- 39:30 had to be at dawn action stations because we didn't have the electronics surveillance so sophisticated then, we had radar, which wasn't always that reliable, so you always had lookouts on ships by the bridge - you always had lookout and you had to rely a lot on humans, so we always had to
- 40:00 be in action stations for dawn. You might've come off at four o'clock - off watch at four o'clock in the morning - you might've come off watch at four o'clock in the morning and at dawn - it's dawn early in the tropics, and it might be dawn at five o'clock - you've had your head down for an hour - that's it, you're up at action stations, and by the time action is over, that's when day - full daylight appears....

Was there any scare about Japanese submarines - midget submarines or anything like that?

No, no, no - they just stopped instantaneously, and I'm saying that when we were so used to getting on a ship, you getting up for dawn action stations - anything like five o'clock or half past four in the morning and you're doing it every day of your life sort of thing, and all of a sudden it stops, you almost feel out of whack. I mean it's a stress, and it's funny because you're under stress, you're under strain, but when it stops

- 40:30 you're - instead of being relieved, it's not - you're not really, it's just - your body's gotta re-educate itself to a different way of life.

I'll have to stop you there cause we've run out of...

Tape 5

- 00:45 **Look firstly while you were in Tokyo did you get leave and what did you do on leave?**

Yes we had leave - ah we got up to a lot of pranks. We discovered this shoe factory so we knocked off all the shoes from the shoe factory

- 01:00 and we sold some to the Japanese themselves that we'd pinched - we'd sell 'em for peanuts but give us a few pennies, you know for a bottle of beer or something. You'd generally - you're young, and when I look back now I think it was disgraceful the things we did, but maybe when you're young and not so educated as what

- 01:30 young people are today - you don't fully realise what is wrong and what is right in those days. So we were never harsh to the Japanese, we just knocked stuff off, so to speak, and not only knock 'em off the Japanese but knock - we got to know what was in the warehouses on the wharf that the American army had hundreds of stretchers in a warehouse so we all knocked off a stretcher each, an American army

- 02:00 stretcher. You were always, and we'd get Japanese beer, which is not unlike Australian beer; whilst you go to a lot of countries and the beer's nothing like ours, but their Japanese beer was not unlike ours in the same colour bottle and all that, so we'd knock off beer from the Japanese brewery and that type of thing. I suppose the war was over, the surrender and

- 02:30 so you were able to say, "To hell," you know, "We're going to - we're going to have a good time," cause you'd been under so many restrictions, so we utilised any avenue we could, you know, to enjoy ourselves.

How difficult was it to knock off this stuff?

Oh generally the Japanese were so meek and mild you'd just walk past 'em - into the door and past 'em and take what you want really.

- 03:00 I don't mean it was - I'm not for one minute saying that we just rifled every factory in Tokyo or that we just, but it was done a few times. Not a lot of times, but a few times, but those times you don't forget what mischief you got up to, you know?

And how did you end up selling them in the end?

Oh you'd just go up to Japanese in the street, you know, you just -

- 03:30 that sort of thing. Of course the Japanese brothels - they started up, I s'pose you could say they started up the day of the surrender and yes, they were well patronised by all occupation troops. Makes you wonder just how many had been there before - I mean now looking back how many - was it a thousand, was it five thousand,
- 04:00 ah, but I know one girl that had no home, no family and the Americans found her and bedded - gave her a bed in a warehouse and they had their fun with her, and when she'd conk out to it and sort of go unconscious, I s'pose you could say, they'd shove a whiskey bottle in her mouth and the moment she
- 04:30 showed signs of life they'd be at it again. I mean the poor girl was, you know, having to take everything that was given to her. So that's what young people - young fellows anyway - that's what happens in a war. It's not always nice, but you don't see it at the time, you see it as fun, and I think that'll go on to the year dot
- 05:00 when it comes to wars. I mean you've gotta remember, it's a strange thing, but when you're away from a white woman, if you like - that's not a good, politically correct to say white women any more, but when they're not of your - when you're away from your own kind it's amazing how the - when they set up a brothel or something
- 05:30 where young fellas - some of 'em need these things to get rid of the - what they've been missing out on. I'm not being - I'm just being logical you know that's all, but yeah so...

With the incident of the girl, how did you know about that?

How I know about?

The girl that was taken off the street.

Oh well, we were tied up at a

- 06:00 warehouse almost opposite where the girl was being kept, so, and servicemen always carry on about what they've achieved or all that sort, or what a good time they've had, you know, it's, but when we had the holiday for one week at Nikko and we stayed at this Japanese inn, well there weren't too many spending the night
- 06:30 in the inn - not in that, their own particular inn, I would say. No, it's a - of course the Japanese girls - in, as a whole they have very nice complexion - very clear complexion. You don't really see - virtually literally speaking you would never see
- 07:00 too many Japanese with freckles. I mean all right they're not a sunburnt country like Australia, but you get even English people in - living in a relatively cool climate and there's freckled English people, isn't there? But when I say Japanese, you could say Asians across the board - Asians do tend to get - Asian, particularly
- 07:30 men - more men really, they do tend to have a pock-marked face, you know, like as if they've had acne or something. But when it comes to someone that hasn't got a pock-marked face, particularly the women, the females - they have this beautiful complexion and it's so clear and with their pitch black hair, it comes up well, you know, it comes up well. There's no, there's
- 08:00 really not really in a sense one ugly looking Japanese women. I mean we've got all sorts in our Corsican, course - what do you say, how do you pronounce the Corsican? We're of course - you're Corsican....

Caucasian.

Caucasian's the word I'm trying to look at. You know you've got all sorts of people - you've got real glamorous people and some in the middle and some right down the bottom - some are down the bottom of the barrel; generally speaking with the Japanese they're pretty much all up the -

- 08:30 pretty well up the top. I'm not saying there's not one or two, but as a whole they've got, the Japanese girls are very lovely, yeah.

Can you describe the brothel environment over there and how they were run?

Oh yes, well we know of course they - Japanese don't have beds themselves - they have - they, I think they might have - they sleep on

- 09:00 their floors ah, sort of matting - not straw matting, cane matting I s'pose is the word. I think they put a calico type of mattress down - just a couple of inches thick, and they just put a calico-filled bag and that's sort of a pillow, and they sleep on the floor. So - and furniture in Japanese homes is very light on...
- 09:30 don't ask me where they put all their clothes because the walls of inside Japanese homes are pat - like a lattice wall with one side as rice paper - white rice paper. So it's very sparse is the word - very sparse, sparsely furnished, so when you get a brothel, well it's just a bit of a thin calico mattress on the floor and

- 10:00 maybe a pillow of - you know a calico bag of straw or hay or whatever you want to call it inside the calico bag and that's your - so the brothels are not like your - in the European way of being very ostentatious with curtains and - you know how they - satins and laces and all that's - not, no. They, they're there for one purpose and
- 10:30 not to feel - not to have a glamorous surrounding around you - no interior decorating if you like. But when you would have, well you could say in a sense, a 'quickie' with - they always - for you to clean yourself up afterwards they always gave you a hand towel - a narrow hand towel you know about so, and we had these hammock rails on the
- 11:00 ship - all ships then we slept in hammocks and we'd have these rails up the top and they were absolutely loaded with these brothel towels, you know, and all ships, all - they were hanging by the thousands, you know? Because you don't have to give 'em back and I s'pose even if you did have to give 'em back, they don't give 'em back anyway. So they, they had a name - 'short-time towel', I mean for - amongst the sailors, their - sailors language
- 11:30 they had all the short time towels hanging up there, you know? But yes, but unfortunately, unfortunately VD [Venereal Disease] over the years of occupation became bad news. I mean there was not the amount of - when the surrender was signed and they started off having brothels, you might've had a ninety-nine percent chance of not getting
- 12:00 VD, but after two or three years it was more a ninety-nine percent that you would get VD. It was a - it swung around the opposite. Don't ask me where the VD comes from, but it came from somewhere, but it wasn't there in the beginning, you know? Yeah - if I can just touch upon - at the moment you're talking about that area of life in the navy, well in this instance, where
- 12:30 we were getting towards the end of our time in the Korean War up in Korea - see we used to go back to Japan for shells - for ammunition and food - you know - all the things that you need to run the ship - we'd go back to Japan after a patrol and store up again and so admiral - Vice Admiral Collins, who was a quite - one of our -
- 13:00 in fact he was chief of navy in the end - he came on board the ship up there and they cleared lower deck as you call when you get all the crew together out in the open deck - seventy percent of the ships company had VD - seventy percent. Some of the married fellows used to say they're going to the sick bay with blood poisoning, actually they were going there because they had VD, but they didn't want to spread it around. So seventy percent of the ship's
- 13:30 company is pretty heavy going, isn't it?

When you were in the brothels in Tokyo, were there military, like military guards on pickets...

No, no....

controlling things at all, or?

No I know what you mean - not in my time, not in my time, no. Well generally they weren't brothels, they weren't big businesses, they were two,

- 14:00 they were everywhere - not everywhere, no I wouldn't say everywhere, but you might have one or two in a village or something, a small little - might be only one or two women or something. It's not run as a big time business, you know? I'm not suggesting they ran their own - each woman, but they were just little outfits. You couldn't control that sit - you wouldn't know, you know, you wouldn't know exactly what
- 14:30 was going on publicly. I mean they weren't publicly they were - I mean you take brothels in the Western world and they have a red light outside 'em. Well there was no such thing in - well there might be in Japan now cause they've Westernised now. They're - things are different, but going back then, I mean we had red lights I think outside ours for the last hundred years or something or more, but no - not the Japanese they were not that Westernised in
- 15:00 their culture. It certainly was a different culture to us you know. The Japanese even to a certain extent now, frown on stealing. It's something in their culture, they just don't steal you know. It's their, which is a good part of their - they have certain aspects of their culture that are much more - you know that they bow to each other
- 15:30 instead - it's a bow - they don't shake, well they may shake hands now, but they never shook hands - they bowed, never shook. But bowing takes more energy in a way, doesn't it, to bend your back. I think there are some aspects of the Japanese culture that leaves our culture to be desired.

On the brothels, was there a military,

- 16:00 **like the military would say, "This brothel's clean, it's good to go"?**

No, no - pot luck.

It was pot luck?

Pot luck, yep pot luck. Pot luck, yes no there wasn't no control in any - no inclination given to you by the - they really in the navy anyway - see it might be different in the army where they're - we called the, during the war we always called the army and in the Korean War

16:30 we called the army fellas Swatties, because they'd swat in one spot in a camp, swat - so they were Swatties. Well you know their way of life is a lot different to a sailor's way of life, yeah a lot different. It's all a mentality that they don't operate in the same way, you know, big difference, big difference. Maybe in the army,

17:00 too, you're just one of, like one of a thousand or something, but on a - I've never been on a big ship, but you get a small ship and you're a little family, you know, and so your way of life is a family of - you know, a small group. A bill - what I s'pose I'm trying to say is the culture of the navy often being the bulk of 'em are smaller ships and therefore it breeds -

17:30 a small group breeds a certain culture that you wouldn't get openly. Yeah. I believe it's the same you know with schools because I became a teacher in the secondary schools. If you get a very small school the culture is much different to a very large school with twice the number of students in it. They're two different cultures, you know it's - it would take a bit of getting used to for someone to go to a small school or a

18:00 large - it would alter the, you know yeah.

So the navy in your time, they wouldn't organise a brothel or so on.....

No.

But did that come later, or...

Oh...

or did it come at all?

Oh the navy have never, like the navy have never been involved in any form of really brothels in Sydney or anything, but in Sydney there was one woman and she was known by the whole of the Royal Australian Navy

18:30 as Old Ma King. Old Ma King - now she ran a brothel and she was known, and if you were short of, say five pound, five, say a five dollar note or something, you were right out of luck - you had no money. You'd go up to - you saw Old Ma King in the street, ask her for five pound, five dollars or something - she'd give it to you. I tell you what,

19:00 lo and behold if anyone in the navy - your sailor mates ever learnt that you got that money off her and you never ever - when you come back to port it might be in six months time or whatever, if those sailors knew you never went up and found her and paid her back, they'd get stuck into you. She was respected as a brothel keeper of high esteem. The how - the navy when she died - I heard about her dying quite a number of years after the second world

19:30 war, and just about the whole of the Royal Australian Navy was at her graveside - Old Ma King. She was very fair and always looked after - she was a hundred-percent navy, you know - nobody existed in the world bar the navy, you know? Soldiers, air force or the general community - she wasn't int...just sailors, you know, and she ran a clean - in our

20:00 sailor terminology, she ran a good clean ship - if that answers the question you asked me a moment ago? You weren't in trouble, were you, you know? You knew you were on a - you were going to go in the same way as you came out, you know?

It's what you want.

Yeah.

In Tokyo...

Yeah

and firstly, was there a criminal element in the brothel system there or ..?

No, no, no, no. Tell me - am I the first person you've come across that has talked...?

20:30 **No - about brothels? No.**

Well in - have you heard about Old Ma King before?

Well vaguely, but not in...

Detail...

Everyone turning up at the funeral - I'd heard before...

Yeah, yeah they did - everyone that just about - she was respected.

No, brothels are part of army life, and what you were saying about there was no controls -

Yeah

if you talk to army guys and they were basically organised by the military,

Yeah.

and they had stations - they were just...

I understand they had...

We're getting the navy side here, which is great.

Yeah no it never happened by the navy

21:00 They never got involved in that way at all. You were on your own. If you were stupid enough to get yourself into a certain spot, that was your - but they never helped you to keep yourself, yeah.

And if someone did get VD, what would happen to them?

Well on board ship they used to have - by the bathroom and toilet they had a, I think there was maybe one toilet pan or

21:30 one washbasin and that's for the - those with VD to use. I mean, in theory that's right, but you get these fellows that go ashore and go to a brothel and they come back to the ship and they hang the old fella in the washbasin to wash anything off that might be on it, you know, and pull the plug out and walk out and you walk in and shove the plug in and

22:00 you wash your...I'm not joking about this. I mean, although they did have a ablution for them, you've gotta remember these fellas - they might've been absolutely clean as a whistle, but if they weren't, I mean, no-one spent five minutes washing it after they had to pull the plug and walk out, you know - cause they're pissed anyway remember - they'd usually come back rotten, so and they don't know

22:30 what they're doing, and you don't go in there for some reason or other and spend five minutes washing the basin, you'd put the plug in and put your mouth - or put your face, I should say in, you know? I mean, but mind you, no I will say that I'm wrong in that - not all the time but everyone did have a bottle of Dettol or can maybe - I think they were cans of Dettol, and quite often you would put a bit in the washbasin before you -

23:00 but I'm not saying it happened, I'm just saying you didn't - religiously if you want to wash your face, you wouldn't always go to your locker and get the bottle of Dettol out - sometimes you'd just put the plug in and you know? So and some of 'em - they get these VD, I mean you - well, you know, you got gonorrhoea, we know you got syphilis - but in the - Asian countries and all that, there's VD of many varieties of VD that are not here. I mean in some fellas,

23:30 they get, like, a bunch of grapes growing off their knackers - VD and it's blue, oh, you know and they'll put them in the washbasin and then wash 'em and then pull the plug on out. Oh yeah, I'm not suggesting - don't get me wrong, Myles [interviewer] - I'm not suggesting every sailor wants to have a naughty all the time or have sex, if you like, all the time, though it is a - it was a pretty - I think yes

24:00 I would say that not every sailor wanted to have sex all the time, but because you're at sea away from females, absolutely - no nurse, or going then there were no females on board. Now they're on ships everywhere now, but so when you saw a female you - you know - I will say yes, sex was certainly common but not rife.

24:30 Not rife. Not every sailor would want to play around in that direction, but there was plenty of it. As I said all these short time towels hanging up on the - they were there by the thousands, you know? I mean, you get one fellow, he might go ashore tonight and then he might go ashore in another couple of nights and another couple of nights - it doesn't take long to build up a, I mean you can end up one - one sailor could end up with fifty short-time towels and you take a couple of hundred fellas

25:00 with a couple of hundred - you've got thousands of them, you know? Yeah. You got that way - you would wash 'em when you got 'em dirty - you would always pick another one up next time, you know, next time around, yeah.

On the VD, just to - when someone - did they go to a hospital or something or what...

No, the sick bay attendant would give you a douche or something to wash your - some Condy's crystals [Potassium Permanganate - antiseptic/antifungal agent] or something like that - I think Condy's crystals was used

25:30 you know Condy's crystals? A real deep blue dye, real strong and that was often - I don't know whether it was successful or not, but all sailors, when I say all sailors - the majority of sailors all know where pox doctors are - they are doctors that virtually spent, well they may be ex-navy or something, but they certainly

26:00 seem to spend all their time trying to cure sailors with the pox, you know? So everyone knew that if you

got the pox, you'd know where to go to. But the navy would not tell you, they weren't interested. That's your - not like the army, nah, but they would treat you on board ship with Condy's crystals and all that. I'm not saying they would ignore your problem, but they wouldn't purposely

26:30 have a program or an organised type of situation - no, didn't exist.

Cause again with the army they actually had what you would call VD hospitals where they would send everyone there. The navy had nothing like that?

Nah - nothing. Absolutely nothing. Oh I'm - I will say that there is - in the hospitals, in the navy hospitals, not, you've only got a couple of them sort of, two or three, they no doubt had

27:00 an ablution like on board ship where you'd have a basin and toilet build for those with VD, but that's not really organised is it? If you know what I mean. If you had VD, there's no-one saying, "You go in that door there," if you didn't feel like, you bloody wouldn't use it, you'd go in with the other fellas. So that's certainly not, not

27:30 there was no system to protect the ordinary sailor from maybe contracting it, you know? Yeah.

Also in the army, if you get VD it's counted as a self-inflicted wound. Is that...

Is it?

Do - what's it counted as - is it counted in the navy?

I have no knowledge one way or the other. I mean I, everything

28:00 to do with sex is pretty well full on with your language and what you talk about, but I've never heard of a sailor being reprimanded by - I think maybe in the army they might fine you or something if you get VD, you get, you know, docked in your pay or something, I think, in the army, but none of that occurred to my knowledge in the navy.

28:30 Everything went on the same, yeah.

Just to finish up on the girl in the warehouse, was that a one-off incident or was...

Yeah...

...that common

No that was a one-off - I'll just straighten myself up a bit.

Yeah, yeah -

That's better. I can't sit in one spot...

No, no you can do that, that's all right. Don't worry I'll keep - when you move I'll keep an eye on it.

Right. Oh no, sorry

29:00 what were we on about?

The girl in the warehouse.

Oh yes, oh no that was really - in our immediate area that was a one-off, but I don't know what happened a hundred yards up where another ship was tied up or whatever they got involved in - I'm not sure. Each ship runs its own way of life. They don't seem to - a ship, navy ships are

29:30 very parochial. It's a little town, village or whatever you want to call it, a little - and it operates its, in its own cultural way and they're not a hundred percent conducive with each other, you know - maybe partly because some commanding officers - captains, commanding officers are a bit lenient in those

30:00 areas to others, and not only in a sexual way but a general community living situation - your officers make or break a ship. They really can make your life very difficult, and some of them can make it - not too many - but some of them can make it easy. But there are not many of 'em, yeah. I mean can

30:30 I - we haven't really moved onto the Korean War yet.

No, we won't move on for a bit now.

Later on, or what?

Yeah later on, definitely, a couple of that, but just sort of on a side issue to the brothels and so on, can you talk about what it actually is like to be on a ship for so long - a ship of men, basically and the frustrations or what do you go through?

Well it's - well

31:00 it's not strange as you say that - it's a point that you raised that does often have an effect in that if your

ship is, say been in an Australian port, which is quite often, well in the Second World War it was almost a hundred percent Sydney, cause ninety-nine times out of a hundred your ship was in dock in Sydney, you know and your - you haven't been to sea for, your ship hasn't been to sea for

- 31:30 a month or two - we won't go into many months, a month or two, you start to get your land legs and you start to get into a way where there are other influences on you besides ship influences, and then all of a sudden you go to sea, and there is a sudden change in everything. The ship's operating, the engines
- 32:00 are purring away and people are doing their jobs - it's a real crew situation, you know? Because once a ship is underway everyone's gotta pull their weight or otherwise the ship will stop. Everything goes wrong - the other - if you can understand what I mean that, so what I'm really getting at here Myles, is that
- 32:30 if you've been on - if you've been tied up for a month or so and you start to get your land legs and you suddenly go to sea, it takes two - a couple of weeks - it might only take a couple of weeks for the crew to settle down. You're not used to, you've broken your shackles of, I mean, I think we had around, yeah, on the Bataan for a small destroyer then, we had about three hundred and twenty-five
- 33:00 fellows in a very small, tight situation. You would never want to be, you would, I mean I know aeroplanes are smaller if you're in the air force and you're in a bomber or something, the space is much tighter than being on a ship. I respect that. But there's not a lot of people that really got around in the air force out of the thousands in the air force - there weren't a lot
- 33:30 in the air crews, well not when you put the air crews against the rest of the air force, and what I'm saying here is that with, but with the navy ninety-nine times out of a hundred - almost a hundred percent you will end up on a ship if you're in the navy, and therefore you are in confined spaces. If you suffered with claustrophobia it would be disastrous, and you asked me a question which is leading me to
- 34:00 this; you asked me, well, I'm saying here that when you - once the ship goes to sea and you don't get ashore, you can't walk down George Street or hop on the train at Wynyard Station. You got back into the cocoon and see some fellows, characters - characters isn't the word, their mental -
- 34:30 their mental faculties - they can be aggressive until they settle down, and so it's not unusual on board ship for a couple of weeks for there to be quite a few brawls on the ship. You are - you're living on top of each other. You're virtually in almost - I'm going back to the Second World War - if you go now
- 35:00 onto a naval ship now, we have copied the American naval ships - we have sleeping messes on them and we have eating messes or cafeterias - call them what you may, but now on a navy ship you don't eat where you sleep. There's messes for sleeping and there's messes for eating. Going then back in my time, there was no warships built for - they weren't
- 35:30 built for sleeping or eating or anything. They were built for war and you slept the net around the machinery - they had mess tables amongst everything else - you know what, I'm trying to say that all of a sudden you got a bit used to having a bit of space around you and you're not - you get away from your mates and walk up the street and then all of a sudden you get back into this,
- 36:00 and once you settle back after a week or two, everything's fine. But there are brawls, fights or at the least nasty words, "Get stuffed." I mean it - depending on the personality.

Would those brawls and fights be a bit of a result of being in, say a sexual cocoon once you're on board?

Yeah, it just shows you - it really

- 36:30 highlights people's - how different each person is. We all act the same. We do our jobs. I might be a seaman, you're a seaman, and we're both doing it and we sleep together, but we've still got a different brain. What I'm really trying to say is that you know - a lot of people - society now there's more depressed people than there ever were, but there's always in history, there's been people with
- 37:00 depression, and well that can react on you physically and mentally and everything else. So, but remember that the ships today - the warships that copied the Americans - I don't think they've ever slept in the net in the one spot amongst shell hoists and all this - they've always had - they've never had hammocks in - they did have 'em going back a hundred or two hundred years - but they had hammocks
- 37:30 too, but they've been gone since steel, iron ships are coming, you know the Americans have had bunks, and we've copied them. So what I'm really saying here is the American sailors would not go through the stresses of feeling so tight as what we did in our time. It certainly put pressure on relationships between each other. Not with every,
- 38:00 I'm not suggesting that every sailor had a shitty with the next sailor, but there are those on board that take a bit of settling down.

So when you get on leave and you can go to a brothel, it's a way of releasing all this energy and...

Yep - you do, well that's another thing - it annoyed me a bit when people - this sailor that disappeared off the Darwin, I think, the destroyer, the frigate, the Darwin - off Christmas Island, he disappeared.

38:30 He'd been on a bit of drinking binge while they were at sea and everything else, and he disappeared. Well whether he was pushed off or whether he committed suicide is immaterial. The point is that they were discussing getting - people were getting stuck into sailors in the navy about grog. They don't understand, and I was going to bring his name up earlier in this interview - they don't understand going back

39:00 to Nelson's day and beyond that the British navy, which we'd copied so closely - our uniform and every word that the British navy - we're a replica of the British navy. Now I'm talking - I was talking about - I've lost my train of...

Confinement on...

Confinement...

And the release you get in places like Tokyo.

Yes, that's right.

39:30 The grog - there was a guy...

Yes. I was talking about - the confinement, well - gee I - this is the first time I've been caught.

There was a guy on a boat and he...

Oh that's right, yes the Darwin, yeah the Darwin. That's right. Now we go back to around Nelson's day and beyond his and

40:00 after Nelson - must have been around two hundred years. Now the only way the, and that's where the British navy comes in now - the only way they could get a crew on a British warship was to take 'em out of jails - that include everything from murderers to whatever, you know - take 'em out of jails and shove 'em on a warship, and also Andrew Miller. Now Andrew Miller - Andrew Miller was the

40:30 boss cockey - he had a press gang - have you heard of the press gang? The press gangs. Now in the British navy you had convicts put on, convicts, is that the word for people in jail? And you had, Andrew Miller would go into all the war, to the dockyard, dockside inn, that's

41:00 the word, dockside inn, wharf, inn by the wharf, and Andrew Miller would grab someone that was really drunk and there was - particular in those days, there was a lot of drunk fellas around then, and his gang would grab that drunk fellow and put him in a rowing boat like Nelson's ship or whatever, and he'd be really,

41:30 really drunk, and when he, and then once the ship gets out of the harbour...

We'll just stop there.

Tape 6

00:33 On the last tape I started to speak about the destroyer, the frigate Darwin, which about twelve months ago this - a seaman, leading seaman went missing and remains - he's - whether he was committing suicide and jumped off the ship or whether he was pushed, anyway we don't care, but the point about all this was that he had been drinking

01:00 with his - onboard ship, and the media played it up and people were writing in and saying, "Sailors in the navy, what's wrong with them?" Booze and this and that and getting stuck into sailors and the navy generally about booze, and this was prompted by this sailor that's gone missing off the Darwin, we'll he's gone, he's drowned because he's - and the point I'm trying to make now is

01:30 from my naval days is, that the people that criticise sailors for being drunk and so forth, don't understand that going back around Nelson's time, swinging around two hundred years before and since, that the British navy, which the Australian navy follows to a tee, the British navy got their crews by getting people from

02:00 jails, fellows from jails, putting them on their naval ships, and also Andrew, Andrew Miller - Andrew Miller had a press gang. He wasn't the only one, but he was one of the biggest. Now what Andrew Miller did, he went around to the quayside inns and got all these fellows that were absolutely paralytic-drunk, and got his gang with him to cart

02:30 these paralytic-drunk fellas - boozed, in the bar, in the inns, and throw 'em into a row boat and they'd row the fellow out to the sailing ship - and I'm talking about Nelson's day - before and after, and all right the, they'd do this when the ships about to - only when the ship's about to sail, and all right the ship goes to sea and the sailor's

- 03:00 laying in there - he doesn't even know where he is, he's drunk and all that - doesn't even know he's in a, but once the ship's out of that harbour, which might be Plymouth or whatever - we're talking in England once the ship is, say out of sight of land, they'd throw buckets of water over these fellows and they'd wake 'em up in their drunken stupor, and there they are way out off the coast, you know and these fellas -
- 03:30 a lot of them are married with families, you know, gone and got 'emselves, you know, shickered, and they're on these war - British warships, and they might be away for two years - sometimes three years away from England, and sometimes when they - the ship did get back to England, say into the harbour, on of the harbours, they'll put the sailor on - in a boat and take him to another ship, and
- 04:00 that ship leaves, and he virtually hardly ever gets back to his homeland, England, again. And you remember a lot of these fellows were just drunk in a hotel, and they've been - and they left their families for good or at the minimum two or three years. Now you - what brings me to this point of discussing this is that when a sailor on the Sydney, ah on the Darwin,
- 04:30 frigate Darwin the year or so back, and people were writing how shocking it is that sailors to get drunk and this and that - they don't understand that the British navy was made up of drunkards and criminals - that was the way they - the only way the British navy could get their crews on ships, plus the press gangs that we get, well, same back to drunkenness. The sailors and
- 05:00 sailors with the British navy have always had until the last twenty or thirty years, have always had an issue of rum. So beer, alcohol has always been a sailor's lot. It's in the culture. It's in the tradition of sailors - everyone, they talk about sailors having a girl in every port and sailors go to the first pub down at Circular Quay in Sydney -
- 05:30 the hotel at the Quay is called The First and The Last - the first pub for sailors to - when they come off ship, and the last pub before they go back on. Beer and alcohol has always been a part of a naval tradition and people today - don't understand that, the - you know the navy - that's their way of life, and to say they've all gotta go to church on
- 06:00 Sunday type - using that as an analogy that they all must be pure, goes against the grain of what a sailor's life is. I mean you've got a song, What will we do with a drunken sailor, you know - it's, I'm not suggesting it's good, I'm not saying it's bad, I'm not saying anything. I'm just purely saying that people do not understand the culture of the navy, or merchantman for that - a sailor's life -
- 06:30 that's his way. So I just get disappointed people don't understand - perhaps they shouldn't have to understand because those things aren't really written about much you know, Hmmm. Now I think I've pretty near covered the Second World War and all the things that go with it, whether it be brothels or whatever it be, I think I've pretty near covered that.
- 07:00 I've, well I had five years out of the navy at the end of the war. I got out of the navy in December 1946 and did a course in carpentry and joinery, with rehabilitation...

Actually before you go on past that...

Yeah

There's a few more questions I've got about the Second World War - that's OK, no, that's no problem. Which ports did you visit during the Second World War?

- 07:30 Oh, well I've discussed Tokyo bay in length and Manila, or well the Australian ports: Cairns, Townsville, Thursday Island, Thursday Island, Singapore and different ports in Japan
- 08:00 were the only couple I can really remember besides Tokyo bay - there's Yokohama and Sendai and Shioyama. I can't remember the other - I can remember others from the Korean War when I went back for the Korean War, but during the Second World War, yeah Australian ports - Melbourne, Hobart, Portland in Victoria
- 08:30 Victor Harbor, South Australia, Port Adelaide, Newcastle; I mentioned Townsville and Cairns, it's just - and Tarakan in Borneo, Tarakan, Madang in New Guinea, Madang in New Guinea.

Can you tell us - this is during the war?

Yeah.

Tarakan and Madang. Tell us about what Tarakan was like.

Well

- 09:00 Tarakan was, Tarakan is on the east coast of Borneo, which is now, that part of Borneo now is part of Indonesia, whilst right up north you've got Malaysia with the sultan in power. But Tarakan is an oil - has oil wells,
- 09:30 Tarakan, and really that's one thing with the Japanese by capturing a lot of these south, tropical islands is, well Singapore - around there and Malaysia had the rubber trees, and Borneo had oil; Java - as we

knew, Java now is,

10:00 is, well the capital of Java now is Jakarta, which is - there are a lot of oil in Indonesia, and the same applies with the Second World War, why they fought in North Africa - that's the same reason: a lot of oil wells in North Africa. Not down in South Africa, North Africa in the deserts and that - lot of oil. So oil is certainly needed for a war

10:30 so Tarakan was an oil port, and I wasn't there for the invasion of Borneo, I was there straight after, or just calling in to get oil for the ship.

And did you go to Balikpapan as well?

I'm sorry?

Balikpapan?

Balikpapan, yes I went to Balikpapan just a bit after the war finished -

11:00 well actually I didn't mention, or did I, in the tape that just after the war - a bit after the war finished, yes, I took this corvette called the Lismore up to Trincomalee, Ceylon, or Sri Lanka as we now call it, and the Dutch navy bought it, our corvette, the Lismore, and we bought back and LST - the crew - they're tank landing ships where the -

11:30 you beach them and all the tanks and ducks and things go up the ramp and the bough doors opened, and that's how - the LST that bought about all these ships like the Tasmanian ferries and so forth when they, the - and the ferry that goes across to Queenscliff from here, they've all got bough doors that open - they've all evolved from the war - the Second World War LSTs. Only the ones that don't beach themselves

12:00 now - they're not flat bottomed. But I, we did call - we went to Trincomalee in Ceylon and we got off the ship and gave our - HMAS Lismore - we gave it to the Dutch navy, and we took the LST off the British navy, and we beached our LST at Balikpapan, we beached it at Balikpapan and brought back all the invasion troops and their tanks and ducks from Balikpapan -

12:30 we brought them back to Australia home.

What was the scene of Balikpapan like?

Oh really all these places like that, they're not - they're villages, they're, even though - they're towns which are really villages, so you don't see a lot of, I mean things are flattened, you see palms - coconut palms flattened,

13:00 the jungle's all sort of mucked up with bombs and things, but you - because they're only sort of humpies and huts - even though they're towns they're still third world, third world - no such thing as a two-story, three-story building or something, they're just humpies. So you're not looking at complete devastation in - other than the fact that the jungle itself -

13:30 been flattened a bit. But as far as similar - as far as urbanising goes, there's not much- they were really third world places.

Did you get a chance to meet the locals?

Not - only from speaking to them from the ships side onto the wharf. Not - they are Indonesians now,

14:00 well they were from thirty years ago to become Indonesians, but they're not particularly conducive to Westerners. I'm not saying they're necessary - they're not that friendly there in - they're not that friendly. Like you can talk to a Chinese person in China, Hong Kong or Sri

14:30 Lanka or go wherever you like, and you can, but they're not really conducive to our way of life. They're very parochial about their own self. They don't want to know about you and they don't want you to know about them either. Not - you don't gain much from communicating with them cause they don't want to communicate.

What

15:00 **about Tarakan? Did you find...?**

No just the same as Balikpapan - same. The - no township then other than the village type life, and as I say you see flattened palm trees and that - you don't see, you don't see the population walking around because they lived in such a jungley sort of - you don't see anything that's harmed their life of any consequence,

15:30 you know, yeah. We remember that some of 'em were very pro-Japanese. They were - now when I say they're not conducive to our Westerners, a lot of 'em, if you - a lot of 'em were given, a lot of our prisoners of war were given away by them. The same as Timorese, there were quite a number of people that gave our troops and sailors over to the

16:00 Japanese. I'm not suggesting the Timorese as a whole weren't nice people, I'm saying some of 'em were

pro-Japanese, and you wouldn't want to get too - they'd do you, they'd hand you over, and when they generally handed them over they were mostly executed by the Japanese straight away.

What about Madang? Can you tell us about your experience there?

Oh just no - never

16:30 got ashore - only oiled the ship, and you might speak to one or two natives trying to flog a hand of bananas to you, cause bananas grow too, the bananas the natives have, which are wild bananas, they're not - well they're all pretty rotten looking bananas. You've gotta farm bananas to - you've really gotta farm 'em to have a nice banana. Wild bananas are, you

17:00 know - all right for monkeys to eat, but yeah.

And what were the natives like in Madang?

I never - as I said I only talked to one or two on the wharf. I never got ashore. I never got ashore in Madang. Never got ashore in New Guinea - only oiling, when you tie the ship up, get your, fill your oil up and away, you know, yeah.

So you

17:30 **went to Balikpapan, Tarakan, Madang**

Madang...

And where else? You said Trincomalee

That's all I can think of. If you're talking about the south sea, South Pacific I should say, that's it for the South Pacific. I mean oh Thursday Island, which is a - Thursday Island is part of our Queensland territory. It's sort of very, it's very - I

18:00 went ashore there and there were certainly different to our - those Torres Strait Islanders on Thursday Island are certainly a different bunch of people to Aborigines. They're not so nomadic. They're not nomadic at all. Oh sorry, the south sea, the Torres Strait Islands are not - they don't wander round in the bush living under a bit of bark. They're more like New Guinea -

18:30 they're not - pretty close to New Guineans after all, they're only a couple of Ks [kilometres] away from New Guinea.

That's right.

But them, they're more New Guinean than that, yeah.

Well can you tell about your experience at Trincomalee? How long did you stay there for?

Oh we were there for three months. When we got the corvette Lismore into Trincomalee and the Dutch sailors came on board it was most unusual - there's been nothing else, I don't think in the navy

19:00 like it before where we, the Dutch sailors come on board our HMAS Lismore corvette and dropped their sea bags in our messes, and we picked up our sea bags and went by work boat to the British LSTs to bring back. What I mean a real swap over. We brought - we sold our corvettes to the Dutch government and we bought the LSTs from the British government. But we had

19:30 three months in Trincomalee and I spent as much time as I could, which was - I made, I was a seaman but I got myself in a situation where I could go ashore every afternoon in our boat to the beach - I forget the name of the beach in Trincomalee, and we swam every afternoon - beautiful golden sand, coconut palms hanging over the water and the weather was first

20:00 class and, and of course Trincomalee, I s'pose India's much the same, deals in a lot of gemstones, sapphires and so forth, so there was certainly a lot of stores flogging anything - they'd tell you that their gems were real blue sapphires when they might've been off a bottle of something, whilst if

20:30 you know what you were doing you could pick up a real beautiful gemstone at a very reasonable, you know, price. But you really needed, but their way of doing business is very congenial. You - they invite you in and make a cup of tea or that sort of thing, well you go into a shop in Australia and the shopkeeper's not going to make you a cup of tea when you walk in, so it was a different experience, different experience.

21:00 But going to the villages out of Trincomalee - very antiquated with donkeys and, and the agricultural were bullocked - a lot of bullocks the agriculture. I mean tractors and all that were non-existent, but I found the, I found the Ceylonese, as they were

21:30 called - I found them very friendly people, very friendly. Most probably I would say the friendliest people in Asia that I've come across - that's the Sri Lankans. I never got further than into Ceylon than Trincomalee. I never got to Colombo or other places.

What was the town Trincomalee, what did it look like?

- 22:00 **Oh just thatched hut, thatched buildings and bamboo and - not much in the way of brick and mortar - virtually non-existent brick and mortar. Mind you the navy - the British navy that built Trincomalee into a major dockyard situation had concrete all over the place for their dockyard repairs. I mean**
- 22:30 **they - for their, for the Royal Navy, the British navy, they urbanised what they wanted to urbanise in dock, in ship repairs, etc, dry docking, but once you moved away the Western influence ceased instantly. There were no, the, the Ceylonese never worried**
- 23:00 **about trying to move into Western type culture. They, like most of Asia - most of - really all of Asia, except Hong Kong of course - Hong Kong embraced the western culture very smartly a couple of hundred years or so back - Hong Kong, and so did Shanghai, which has always been - Shanghai in China has always been a - one place in - the only place in China that Westernised itself**
- 23:30 **fairly well because all foreign investment people did their business in Shanghai. But in Trincomalee once you moved away from the British navy, a very, very village-like. Not - oh the shops I said to you - if you go into Trincomalee into the shops and buy gemstones they were very nice - cups of**
- 24:00 **tea and all that, but that's their culture. I don't think they did it just for British sailors. I think that's the way they do business - whoever wants to buy a gemstone. But there weren't, I mean the other shops just sold souvenir things like elephants made out of - what's the name of the wood now, the black wood, it's very hard wood...**
- Ebony?**
- Ebony, yeah ebony, and
- 24:30 then they used porcupine - there must have been a lot of porcupines in Sri Lanka or something because they'd make a lot of things out of porcupine quills, you know? Ebony, yeah, but they - you couldn't really go into Sri Lanka and buy something commercial - all handcrafts made by the natives, yeah.
- You said they were friendliest people in Asia.**
- 25:00 That's the way I found them, yeah, yeah. I mean if you go to, if you go to Hong Kong, even going back you know after - just after the Second World War, they're very friendly in they want your business. The Chinese are cunning. They have a, what's the word now - savvy - business savvy. The Chinese have business savvy and know how to make a
- 25:30 dollar. But they're friendly because they want to get money out of your pocket, but that's not the same with Sri Lanka that it doesn't - they're not, they're you know other than trying to flog an ebony elephant to you they're not - they were not business people, other than selling their crafts, you know? So their friendliness was more genuine than someone from Hong Kong.
- 26:00 **So obviously Trincomalee was very much different and a lot bigger and more urbanised city than Balikpapan and Tarakan and Madang?**
- Yeah, definitely, definitely. Only by - only for the British navy with their dry docks and repair buildings, warehouses, but once you moved away from the enclosure of the British navy you were back into a jungle-like
- 26:30 situation. The, really the roads weren't bitumen really I don't think if I remember rightly, they were a real village, earth roads.
- Now you were there for three months, weren't you?**
- Yes, in Trincomalee, yes.
- What did you do for entertainment when you were there.**
- I'm sorry?
- What was the entertainment there for you?**
- Oh no just
- 27:00 swimming. I mean there was always the - there was always the odd brothel, yes there was always the odd brothel - very, very - you'd go in a grass hut somewhere. Not so much an organised brothel but somewhere where you could have a bit of sex. If you know what I'm trying to say not - not a full time - there might be a woman that occasionally
- 27:30 you have a bit of sex with, but not an organised brothel as a business brothel goes, you know? Yeah - there weren't a lot of those in - very few actually, in Trincomalee. If you - you'd know where to find one if you wanted to find one, but they certainly weren't around like other places, you know?
- Were they expensive?**

No, no. I think they -

28:00 you get all these foreign ports in that era, sailors never had much money. Your pay was pretty - well the army and the air force - your pay was pretty menial sort of amount of money - if they wanted business it had to be what you - the money, the sort of money you'd have in your pocket, which, well you wouldn't be walking around with a hundred dollars in - or what was in their currency what would be a hundred dollars, you wouldn't have - you

28:30 would have - you would most probably what would be in our currency now about five or ten dollars in your pocket.

Were the local women attractive?

Ah...

Were they considered attractive?

Not, not as attractive as Filipino. Very - I don't know. I never got to Colombo, but in Trincomalee they were very native,

29:00 very native. I would suggest that in, in Sri Lanka you have people are darker in some areas and not, and some with very little colour. But they had quite a lot of colour. They were, yes they were coloured in the full sense.

29:30 **So lighter shades?**

Right across the board you wouldn't find, so I presumed that there are pockets in Sri Lanka where you have people that've got almost a Western complexion and those that are very dark, yes that's the way I found it, yeah.

Was there a heavy military presence or heavy naval presence in Trincomalee?

Only navy - hundred percent navy - no army, no air force..

30:00 **What year was this by the way?**

1946.

Was there evidence of...

The war finished in '45, September,

Were you aware that the Vampire was sunk outside Trincomalee?

Oh I did, yes I...

HMAS Vampire.

Yes that was one of our scrap iron flotillas, yes that's right.

Was there, was there much evidence of sunken ships or anything

No, no - not like Manila harbour, Manila Bay where you had sunken ships by the

30:30 hundreds. But no, no sunken ships at all, none. Must - I think it must have been a pretty safe haven for them or something - yet it's not a long way from, from Malaysia and Singapore. You've only got the Bay of Bengal separating Ceylon from Malaysia and Singapore - you've only got the Bay of Bengal, which the Japanese had well and truly, and yet they didn't seem to -

31:00 didn't - I don't think they worried about Sri Lanka at all. I don't think they really worried the Japanese which...

There were major air strikes, they sunk an aircraft carrier, yes?

Really? Oh well I'm unaware of that, yeah.

Yeah, July '42.

What in Colombo or...?

Colombo and Trincomalee.

Trincomalee was there?

Yes.

Well by the time I got there in '46 it'd all been cleaned up then because you would never know there'd been a war on then in 194...

31:30 at twelve - less than twelve months after the war. It is amazing how quick some countries recover. It's amazing.

What about Madang, Balikpapan and Tarakan? Did you see...

All villages, just villages.

evidence of sunken ships and things like that in the harbour?

No, not really no, no - yet they were, I know, but whether they were - they might've been too far, maybe the depth of the

32:00 water may have a bit to do with it, whilst Manila has a very shallow - very shallow bay, Manila Bay.

On a bit of a different note here, the Bataan, did it ever engage in any combat at all while you were on board the ship throughout the Second World War?

Not in the Second World War. If you, but if ain't going to talk about me going back in the navy after being out of the navy

32:30 five years - I left the navy December 1946, and I went back in the navy January '51, approximately five years out when I went back in, and went to the Korean War, and that's when we were in combat.

In the Korean War?

Yeah. If you want me now to move onto the Korean War?

33:00 **Yes, just a few more questions though on the Second World War, but this tape's almost finished. So we'll finish this tape and then we can move onto the Korean War.**

Right.

What was your view of the Japanese before you actually joined up the navy?

Well I would say

33:30 that I feel that there were more news of the war coming - more media coverage of the European war than there was the Japanese war. I mean naturally when Germany capitulated and surrendered, well then everything was, but if

34:00 you're discussing when both Germany and Japan were at war with us, the media seemed to touch on the European war much more than the Japanese. So one would hate the Germans more than - because you read more about them.

But surely at that stage the Japanese took precedence for Australia?

I know but you've gotta go on the fact of what the media feeds you,

34:30 and the media feeds us about Iraq, which is not all is proved now that what we read, and I mean my sister was engaged to a stoker on the Sydney that would - went down off Western Australia - sunk by the German raider, the Cormorant, and therefore things like that where she lost her fiancé had an

35:00 impact on me about Germans, while the Japanese never had any part of - in my family's life did they? You understand? I didn't lose, I mean if I had've lost a brother or cousin or someone by the Japanese, I'm not suggesting I like them, I'm purely saying there was more media coming when the two countries

35:30 German and Japan, they seemed to favour the European war more than they did the Japanese.

So you didn't feel any sense of hatred towards the Japanese?

Ah not obsessively, not obsessively. They were the baddies. They were the, but I didn't - they didn't effect me that I wanted to kill them or - they didn't -

36:00 I've never wanted to kill anybody anyway for that matter. I mean it's against - against my nature, I mean, I was in the navy killing people. I killed people in Korea. I did, but it's - just because I did it I don't dwell on it and say - I don't dwell on it - before I fired the guns and helped to fire the guns, I never said to myself, "I'm going to kill you bastards," it was

36:30 my duty to do it and that's it. I didn't, you know, I don't hold to the adage that they are that bad that you've - that you've gotta annihilate the whole lot of 'em, no - it doesn't enter my....

You saw Nagasaki and Hiroshima?

37:00 Yeah.

Do you think that these acts were justifiable in hindsight?

I'm sorry, are you talking about the brothels or...?

No, no, Nagasaki and Hiroshima, the atomic bombs.

Oh.

Not the brothels.

Well, personally my thoughts are leaning slightly towards the Americans were criminal in dropping those bombs.

At the time?

At that time.

Really?

Yeah. I

- 37:30 have, saw photographs, I saw photographs that were never published in the Western media, where - to well I know at least by the Australian media they were never published - shocking photographs. Hiroshima, Hiroshima whichever way you want to put it, was not a military
- 38:00 target. It was not a large military, it was a commercial, you know it wasn't building planes by the thousands and all this sort of thing, it was not a military target. Now I saw photographs of Japanese women laying down with great hole, with all their clothes burnt off 'em, nude, with great big holes burnt right
- 38:30 into their bodies by the radiation, with the baby on the breast fused to the mother - breast and body, the baby's skin is fused onto the mother while the baby was feeding off the mother's breast, and the women, the Japanese women had no - they didn't go killing you, me or your father or mother,
- 39:00 these Japanese women were just ordinary peaceful women, and over - in Naga, in Hiroshima over one hundred thousand people were killed, forgetting Nagasaki, which was a slightly smaller bomb, and I think if, I saw - I was one of the first to shore in Tokyo, and Tokyo was flattened to a tack. It was finished. Abs -
- 39:30 the capital of Japan was finished before the bomb was dropped. Now if you bombed the capital city of a country, particular Japan like that, and you flatten it, how can you go on and fight the war, like the Yamimoto, the battleship there, the only surviving battleship they had, they had no oil left, they put vegetable oil into the
- 40:00 boilers to burn with just enough oil to meet the American fleet which never - of course they thought the whole American fleet were going to come on mass before the bomb was dropped, and they put that Yamimoto battleship with just enough fuel to get out cause they didn't have any more fuel for it to get back. The country was finished. It could've only lasted one or two weeks more. Now the American's argument is
- 40:30 to save one American soldier's life it's worth dropping the bomb to save - you know one or two, and that's a fact - they said that. To save one American soldier's life they have the right, they had the right to drop the bomb, and I'm saying to you if you had seen the photographs of what that bomb did to the Japanese population, let's say I've got doubts, and I'm not saying -
- 41:00 I'm not going to be outright and say outright I lean to the fact that that was a criminal act, and you have, you have one of the pilots that dropped the bomb in a mental asylum, American - from the Atola Gay or whatever it's called.....

Enola Gay.

It might've been more than one but at least one went into a mental asylum, and the other scientist - it was called The Manhattan

- 41:30 Project in, and they, there has, and if you read a book Brighter Than a Thousand Suns by a fellow I think called Hudson, scientist, and it does appear that the Americans were worried before they could drop the bomb. They wanted to drop the bomb to see what it really would do and they were worried that the war would finish beforehand. I do feel that...

Tape 7

- 00:33 **All right, so now we'll move onto Korea.**

Yeah.

And the Korean War starts, why did you want to rejoin up?

Ah once again I've always wanted to be, go to sea. I always wanted to go to sea, and I hadn't - when I left the navy from the Second World War, I hadn't got

- 01:00 rid of that salt out of my blood, and I - although the sea is number one to me and the fighting side is number two, they do intertwine a bit and I think it's the way of life that I was missing the

01:30 camaraderie that you get from - a sailor gets. I believe it's in some ways it's much stronger than the other services because they can get mixed up with a lot more people - get away from - we're locked in. We're - too bad if you don't like me you've gotta put up with me, but in the army you can go down the canteen or somewhere - get into a

02:00 different scene. But on a ship you can't and I liked - I like that. I like that family belonging, you know? Yes.

The closeness of the relationships?

The closeness of the relationships, yes, and it's a strange thing that - it's a tough life. It was a tough life, but that's what you seem to, seem to get

02:30 into you and you like that - having to rough it. It becomes contagious, you know? Yeah, and yet whilst you're doing it, I mean you get up at four o'clock in the morning and that's called the middle watch - four till, eight, oh, sorry twelve till four in the morning I should say, and it'd takes a lot to get out of your cot at midnight and be there till four o'clock in the morning, and this goes on day after day, month

03:00 after month, whatever, and at the time you say, "Cor," you know, "I can't wait to get back into civvies [civilian life]," and all that. But once you get back in you realise you were wrong, it's what you want, you know - it's what I wanted anyway.

You joined up but what did you know about the Korean War at the time?

Well I knew it was a

03:30 peninsula hanging off China and the, well the Australian troops were there before I got up there and they were having a pretty tough time - they were having a pretty tough time, and I felt as if I should be there with them, helping them out. I'll be quite honest there I felt as if they were having - it was not easy. They had a tough

04:00 time up there and I felt as if I should be part of 'em, you know - do what I could, that's all, you know.

Were you married at the time?

No, I was engaged.

And what did your fiancé....?

I didn't tell her. I went and joined up, told her that - I told her that I'd joined up. All the time it was in me head beforehand, and oh well - I did what I wanted to

04:30 do.

What did she think about that?

Oh well, I think she knew that it was in me blood and I had to do it. I think she, you know she knew that I had to do it, I had to, yeah.

Was this your fiancé who became your wife?

Yes. But I'm separated now.

When you go to - back to re-enlist,

05:00 **what was that process having already been in the navy, and what did you have to go through?**

There was very little change in that time in the navy - very, very little, very little, whereas shortly afterwards it changed dramatically - really dramatically. But in that five years almost no, you know, very little change. But it was still acting in Nelson's time -

05:30 in it's culture and the way it ran. Whilst as I mentioned earlier on one of the earlier tapes where now officers talk to the ordinary seamen with their first name, and the seamen call them by their first name, well then - you wouldn't dare, you wouldn't, you know, behave like that in my day.

06:00 **But the actual - because you'd already been in the navy, did you have to go through basic training again?**

No, no. I was only down at HMS Cerberus or Flinders Naval Depot a few days, and I commissioned the Anzac - the new, a new battle class destroyer built at Williamstown - that's where we commissioned it, at Victoria, and a British designed destroyer

06:30 and so I was immediately back to my original rank. I didn't have to go backwards.

What rank was that?

Well I won't say rank, I was an able seaman, which is - you go into the navy as a new entry, then when you leave Flinders, your training, you become an ordinary seaman and you've gotta do two years and

then qualify to be an able seaman, qualify in

- 07:00 seamanship etc. It's not what you call a rank, it's called a rate, and I was a torpedo man, I was in the torpedo party, because when you join the navy as a seaman you're always, you're ninety percent of you are on a gun of some description, then there's some on radar, which - and there's some on anti, asdic, which is the anti-
- 07:30 submarine detection. So your - all seaman are involved in the fighting of the ship, whilst then - me, in my time anyone in the engine room and boiler room, during action if you weren't on a specific job in the boiler room or, or engine room you would be what they'd call damage control,
- 08:00 so that if some bulkhead was stove in or ships side was stove in, you've got timber beams and that to - and boards to patch up the - or fire fight if the shells give you fire on board, the damage control, so seaman wouldn't be in damage control, they would be doing the actual fighting. The boat stokers might resent me saying they didn't fight. We
- 08:30 couldn't fight if they didn't keep the ship going, could we? But even though they kept the steam going into the boilers and the engine ticking over, they weren't responsible for shooting. But nowadays it's a bit different. I think now everybody's gotta be multi-trained in the - partly because it saves manpower by having people
- 09:00 multi-trained, and that's very big on the agenda now to save manpower. Less fellows on the ship, less food, less everything. Less money for the navy to pay out.

When you rejoined, did the navy welcome you back with open arms?

Yes. I was treated as if, I, not - welcome

- 09:30 back with open arms, but treated as if I'd never left the navy and I was that much more senior. So you could - in one sense you could say, "Yes," I was seen in a different light, but in a light of seniority of age and seniority as a sailor. I was a step above. Not seen
- 10:00 as someone who's returned to the fold, but as if I'd never left the fold, right? Yeah.

How old were you when you returned?

I returned, I was nearly twenty-five. Nearly twenty-five and that is another reason why I was treated with a little bit more respect because a lot of sailors are

- 10:30 young, so some of them have just left the training and they were not much over eighteen years of age - or it might be nineteen. Well that might be only five or six years less than me, but five or six years is a long while when you're on a ship, you know? You were a bit more of a grandfather in - five or six years could make you quite senior, quite senior.

11:00 What was it like putting on that uniform again?

Ah, well really I think it's so - such a strange uniform and it takes a certain mentality to wear - put it on and wear it and so forth, that I was indoctrinated with it so much from the first time, that I felt as if I'd never been out of it, because there's so much

- 11:30 tradition in a sailor's uniform. I mean they always say that the silk, the black scarf they wear is a mourning for Nelson, and the three stripes on the collar - something to do with Trafal...the war of Trafalgar and the war of - oh I forget now. I think they were three wars of Nelson's days, each
- 12:00 stripe is a - I'm not sure, but there's seven - we all had seven, ironed seven creases in the trousers, bell bottomed trousers, and they always said seven creases - one for each sea, there's seven seas on the planet and that's one - well now they don't press creases in sailor's trousers any more and they don't turn 'em inside out when they iron 'em. Even the Americans turned their trousers
- 12:30 and jackets like we did, inside out and iron them. A lot of the creases were going inwards rather than outwards, you know? Yes I felt quite comfortable putting the uniform on. The lanyard, the white chord,

We'll just stop...

and you know - the...

The lanyard?

You know the lanyard was - you, you'd have a lanyard so you could put a, your pussers dirk, as we called it,

- 13:00 a knife - a seaman's always gotta have a knife to cut ropes and cordage, and a lanyard was there for you to - if you initially to put your knife onto, the pussers dirk, which you'd splice, also splice rope - you had a spike on it which would open up the strands or the wire, to splice. So you had a knife with a spike and that was called commonly a pussers, called in the

- 13:30 navy you never referred to each other that you were in the navy, you never hardly used the word navy - almost never existed in your language, you were in pussers, derived from the royal navy. I'm not quite sure where the word puss - P, U, double-S, E, R, S or pussers, pussers, and everything supplied by the navy is pussers.
- 14:00 It's the government, the pussers, and so the language is certainly, and well they always used to say the bell bottoms were to get out of 'em quickly if the ship was sinking. Well there, well there could be merit in that, I don't know, but that's what the argument was - to get out of your daks quickly. Now they have narrow bottoms now. They - their argument now is sailors now
- 14:30 wouldn't joint the navy with bell bottom trousers, but actually when you look at fashions, men sometimes have gone back a bit, and my argument is they could've made 'em like the American navy, and the American navy has bell bottoms, but they're very narrow bell bottoms, very narrow. But they are bell bottoms. So they needn't have cut the bell bottoms right out at all. They could've cut 'em down by half or three quarters, if you know what I mean. We used to have bell bottoms where
- 15:00 the trousers were twenty-six inches, you know - a twenty-six, I mean twenty-six inches which is just over six hundred mill, I don't mean six hundred from there to there, but one seam to the other, you know? Yeah. So I joined the Anzac and commissioned that at Williamstown...

Just before that you said you went back to Flinders for a couple of days or so.

Yeah that's right.

What did

15:30 **you do there?**

I was - had a job of looking after the boats in the - Flinders is on the water of Western Port River wharf, and I was helping to look after the boats, and that was my job.

That was your initiation back was it?

Back yes, yes as an able seaman.

How do you get a commission and how did you get commission on Anzac?

Oh well you have a

- 16:00 ceremony where - you have a ceremony where you have the dockyard that builds the ship or repaired the ship, whichever the case, they have the boss cockey of the dockyard there, and that ship is not in the hands of the navy when it's out of commission or being built - it's not in the navy. The dockyard own it, so the managing
- 16:30 director of the shipbuilding yard or dockyard is at the ceremony and there's a big form thing, well diploma thing that he signs and, it over to the navy, and the government - you know, get the prime minister or his - whatever, from prime minister down will represent the government, and sign -
- 17:00 and they go on with a lot of naval drool, you know presenting arms because you've go the prime minister or whoever there, and you do a lot of mucking around with your rifles - rifle drill, and they proclaim that the ship is now commissioned into the Royal Australian Navy. It's a bit of a ritual and
- 17:30 every navy in the world that followed the British navy - basically all the navies in the world have followed the British navy - in particular the Japanese. The Japanese before the World War II, went to England and copied everything about the British navy - you know their ship building and the way they ran, organised the British - they really did copy, and their uniform's not
- 18:00 unlike - their hats are soft at the top, but their uniform's very similar to a British uniform.

A lot of them were trained by British?

Mmm that's right. They really did train them well to kill us, ha-ha, they really did.

Do you get a chance to choose to be on the Anzac or do they just put you there...

Yeah, yeah,

And when you rejoined did they - you say, "I want to go to Korea," and, "Get me on the first boat out," or...?

No you didn't have any choice to

- 18:30 where, what happened to you - no choice at all. The - each naval establishment has a - what they call a police office, and aghast of all things, down at HMAS Cerberus down at Flinders now, they have a private security firm running the place now, where that was the - what really ran the navy was their police office, and
- 19:00 they would - the navy office would send down the Gerry Shepherd, well I call myself Gerry rather than Gerald, that Gerry Shepherd will be - is to be drafted onto HMAS whatever, and that would - navy office

would send that to the police office, and the police office would inform me that I am going to be send to the HMAS

19:30 blah blah, and I must report to the police office where a bus will take me to Tullamarine or, or a bus might take me to Williamstown, but the police office organises all that, plus the discipline of the establishment. The police officers knows you've handed your leave card into them and if

20:00 you're not, or if when you get back to the depot and you haven't picked up your card, well they know you're a drifter - with navy people use the word adrift - AWL [Absent Without Leave], and, but we used to say adrift - and they would know because they, you, they've got your card in the police office, your leave card.

Did a lot of guys go adrift?

Oh yes, it was - but usually they didn't go adrift generally for long term -

20:30 they would just get drunk and one thing or another or having a good time with their mates and - two or three days and they'd generally come back, of course they're in trouble I mean they - ha - it doesn't come easy for them, but that's a sailor's life. You're always getting into trouble, you're never out of trouble. I did mention earlier in the piece you don't have to look for trouble, you'd be in trouble without looking for it.

21:00 What discipline would they face if you went adrift?

Oh they'd give - the generally, I've never been in that situation myself. It'd be heavier than the - it was heavier than the leanest, and the leanest was the number elevens, with the four hours extra work a day and no leave. I can't say what the other ones up were, but going back then unlike the air force and army, you never had your pay docked

21:30 for crimes. Whatever you committed, you never - I'm not sure about court marshal type - when you go into cells, but for all these others the army and air force docked your pay for punishment. But the navy never did. They kept the payment going, but you would have to work and all that sort of thing. Yes - the army and air force wouldn't make you work an extra four hours a day - they just docked your pay - you know - that was it.

22:00 So I don't know - I think docking the pay would be better than doing four hours extra a day. I think we had the rough end of the stick. As I mentioned earlier in the piece, in my opinion navy discipline was much tougher than - because of the tradition of the royal navy having jailbirds and drunkards and all that - they disciplined them hard to keep them in - their thumb down on them, and that just went on

22:30 over the hundreds of years, it never changed, yeah.

To a point you must have enjoyed that in order to want to get back to it.

Yes. Strange isn't it, strange. It'd be different if, now, I'd be different now. I wouldn't have the same mentality now. I'd have to just walk away from it now, I wouldn't be able to handle it, you know. But it's amazing how resilient you are when

23:00 you're young - what your body will put up with and that, yeah, I think it's the - somehow the severity of your life - you get addicted to it. Sounds strange, but you can get addicted to being under the hammer, you know? I believe that some people when they leave jail they can't wait to get back in again - they get used to the system, they like,

23:30 they don't, well they don't think they like it, but in fact they do, you know? They get fed and clothed and they play table tennis and swimming pool and, ha-ha, yeah - you get addicted. That's what I would call it - I was addicted to the navy, yeah.

Were you addicted to the navy or addicted to the sea?

Both, both, both.

24:00 I would say the sea number one and the navy number two, cause I would've still like to have been on merchant ships - that was my - always my first choice, a merchant ship. A merchant ship as a seaman - you're just a seaman, full stop. You don't worry about guns. You don't worry about presenting arms. You don't salute anybody

24:30 you - it's a, you're a seaman, full stop, no more, no less, and that's what I would've preferred my life to have been, yeah. I'm very proud that when I became a careers advisor after - and I was in the education department as a teacher and my last thirteen years I was a full time careers advisor - I'm always proud of one boy

25:00 that wanted to be a merchant seaman, and I got him in and he come back and saw me a couple of times when he come - his ship come got, came back in - he'd come and see me. I was proud that I - I couldn't get that what I wanted but I made damn sure and I did me best that I got someone where I wanted to be, you know?

Bit of vicarious living there?

Beg your pardon?

Vicarious living through him, a bit?

Sorry?

Vicarious, you live through his

25:30 **experiences?**

Yes, yes. Mind you I was devastated when I said to him when he came back once and I said about the horse pipe, and he didn't know what I was talking about, and he was a seaman - do you know what the horse pipe is? It's the hole in the deck the anchor chain and the anchor - you have a hole and the anchor chain goes down it, you know, and he didn't know that, and I thought,

26:00 "My god, things have changed in my day," you know, and he had a beautiful cabin - we don't, no such things as cabins - only officers had cabins in the navy, and he had a cabin with all these modern facilities and a bar on board the ship and you know

Speaking of that, what was life like on the Anzac?

It was more modern than my tribal class destroyer, because

26:30 years had gone by - our tribal class destroyer, the Bataan - initially that was designed in the early 30s - 1930s with changes on the way, but the basic ship was designed in the early 30s, while the Anzac was post war - post, they didn't have battle class destroyers weren't designed in the Second World War, they were designed after the war and so there were a lot more modern

27:00 facilities on board. There were a lot more modern facilities, yeah.

Can you describe those, or the living conditions?

Oh well some people might think it's crazy, but little things that do make a - the mess tables were aluminium, aluminium - see aluminium a) doesn't burn, it's lighter, the ship's got less weight, the officers had their

27:30 cabins situated right round the whole ship closest to wherever their responsibility was instead of all being down the stern which goes back since the royal navy - the year dot of the royal navy - officer always lived on the quarter deck, but - and that's the way it always was. But when the battle class destroyers came they gave the officers their cabins right next to their duties. If you're a fo'c's'le officer on

28:00 the bow, well that's where your cabin was, you know. Yes - the facilities like say a refrigerator water or something like that, you know push a button like you do and have a drink of cold water, they had all these things that made life a little bit easier.

Was it a huge change from the Bataan?

I'm sorry?

Was it a huge change from the Bataan?

Ah

28:30 not huge because destroyers in that day were - the shape is almost a hundred percent identical - the whole shape almost identical, but the facilities within the hull are dramatically changed. It's like having the same hull but ripping the whole inside and completely

29:00 altering the inside, yeah. But if you're on deck there wasn't a great deal of change. The Australian, the British way of building destroyers - they've always been the same where you have a break where the ship, the deck cuts down to - not so high, but the Americans have never favoured that - they've always had a one -

29:30 the deck's been - you don't climb up steps to the fo'c's'le, you - the American warships they are - they're high at the front and they curve down to the stern, but you never - there's no break in them. There's no climbing steps on American, yeah.

Were you happy to be aboard the Anzac?

Yes but I was only on it for about three months until they decided that the

30:00 Bataan had been on its first tour of duty in the Korean War and I, well for whatever reason maybe because I was on the Bataan in the Second World War, they - I wasn't back in the navy for the first tour of duty with the Bataan, I wasn't, so I couldn't be on the first tour, but having joined up I s'pose they thought, "Well here's an old Bataan fellow, we'll put him back where he belongs." So they took me

30:30 off the Anzac and put me back on the Bataan.

Before you get to the Bataan,

Yeah

What were your duties on the Anzac? Torpedoes was it?

No it was - I was - don't ask me why, I was captain of B-gun, five inch guns and I was, I never had a gunnery rate. They, but I was captain of the gun for some unknown reason and

31:00 I was responsible for, you know, getting everyone to do what they had to do on the gun, yet and I had fellows just passing the shells along that were qualified, you know? Maybe I think it was because I was an older person on the ship and they saw me as a senior person when I wasn't really senior in, in gunnery, you know, yeah.

Was that your first leadership position?

Yeah,

31:30 yeah.

And how did you find the role of leadership?

Oh in the first instant it was a real shock to my system. It was a, "God, I'll never be able to do this," but and you go through it a couple of times - excuse my language, but shit-frightened. But then you settle down and you understand it - it didn't worry me any more after I'd had a shot

32:00 fired a few shots and settled down to it. But I was only on it for about three months and I recommissioned the - I'm the only person in the Royal Australian Navy to commission the Bataan twice cause it only went out of commission once.

One more question about the Anzac and the role of leadership. How was it telling other sailors what to do and gaining their

32:30 **respect and making them listen to you - that aspect of it?**

I think naval training, I think that your naval training when you join the navy and the gunnery - particularly the gunnery lectures and drilling and so forth, is so highly powered that there's no room for personal

33:00 dislikes and so forth. You're there, you know you gotta do that job or you're in - you know all the strife in the world. You dare not deviate or think you can do better. You're trained to do what you're told - I really mean that. It's instilled upon you, yeah.

So it was really by naval training that the guys respected you automatically?

33:30 Yep, yes, but they don't know they're respecting you. It's, they don't - most probably would not like to say it in words or think, but they act in the right manner.

It's their job to do it that way?

Yeah - they may - they don't, but you never dwell, you would never dwell about it all -

34:00 everyone's got a job to do and whatever job you're given on board ship, you do it without question and nobody questions - no-one would even think about saying, "I could do it better than you." It wouldn't come - doesn't come into the equation at all, that sailors think they're better than you. They accept the discipline of doing what they're told. You were really drilled into doing what you're told, yeah.

All right.

34:30 **So now we'll leave the Anzac. Were you sad to leave and what was it like going back to the Bataan?**

Like going back home, like going back home. The Anzac was interesting, but home's home. Home is home. The - I'm, I was used to the Bataan, the workings of it. The Anzac was

35:00 a bit modified in so many ways that I had to learn my way around it, while I could walk around the Bataan blindfolded and know exactly - I was more comfortable there, yeah.

Had it changed at all since you last saw it?

No, just the same, just the same, absolutely the same. The officers are -

35:30 all officers, the captain, etc - they dictate how the ships will run itself and there's always that change of - up top. It does change, but the workings - doesn't matter how much they change it as a character, the ship is the ship and it does what it's gotta do

36:00 and that doesn't change - you understand what I'm trying to say, the ship'll only do what it can do and that doesn't - that never alters from the day it's built, yeah, and so can we discuss the fact that...

What about the crew and blending into this new crew that you found

36:30 **aboard?**

It's strange but I just felt as if I'd left - never left the navy, though there was a difference - one difference actually going back into the navy and going particularly on - both ships the Anzac and Bataan - there was a difference where fellas would be swatting for examinations to get on. They were permanent,

37:00 they weren't wartime sailors, they were there for, you know, maybe in their eyes, maybe for the rest of their working life, although they generally after - most of them were in for twelve years and some would go on after that, but the majority would leave after twelve years. But they were career sailors and to get promotion you had to study and pass, and that didn't certainly never apply

37:30 during World War II. During World War II you weren't able to join the permanent navy. It's different to the air force and army, you were either in - as one in the air force, army, but in the navy during World War II you had permanent sailors that joined up before the war started for twelve years, and when you joined, and then during the war you had to join what they call the Royal

38:00 Australian Navy Reserve, and cause our slang name for us that were wartime sailors were Rockeys - we were Rockeys. Don't ask me why, but we were Rockeys, and but even a permanent sailor never got a book and studied it. I found that rather a dramatic change - sailors to me were - just got drunk and played around with women and

38:30 steered the ship, they didn't go to school. So it was a change in that respect, yes it was, cause the navy had brought more academic studies into their qualifications rather than on - just on hands, you know - on hand, judging you on hand work. It changed in that light.

When you returned, were there any sailors at all that you had

39:00 **served with before on the Bataan?**

No I was the only one, therefore I was the only one in the Australian navy to commission it twice.

No-one had stayed on or...

Nope, no, no - you don't get - very seldom you get sailors that last many years on a ship. Usually it's a year, eighteen months, two and a half years, an odd one might hit three years, but after three years - I tell you what also

39:30 makes sailors move around from ship to ship is you go back to Flinders and you do courses in radar, gunnery and anti-submarine, and when you finish the course, well, you're re-allocated back to sea, but you generally won't go back to the same ship. You'll go to a ship that, where you're needed. They need someone with your qualification that you've studied for - your original ship may have enough of those

40:00 qualified people on it, you know? But they may need more - they train you because they need more qualified people for other ships or new ships.

Right - that's another take, we'll stop.

Tape 8

00:31 **OK, so you're on the Bataan going back to Korea.**

Back going to Korea, and one crossed, we - when you're on any ship at all, you always have a crossing of the line - the equator - ceremony, whether it's a liner or, you know, whatever, you always have a ceremony, and the navy always has it, but when you go to war you generally have your crossing of the line ceremony on the way home because you're going to war

01:00 and you're not in that mood to be having a lot of fun, and I bring that up because I recall coming back from the Second World War having the crossing of the line ceremony, and I did, and then we had the same on the way back Korean War, where the captain he - captain's generally King Neptune and all the officers take

01:30 part and carry on with a lot of frivolity and - yeah, so it crossed me mind that the navy always has - you don't have people involved in the ceremony that have crossed the line before. It's always - you only have it for those crossing the line for the first time. But it is a part of the navy rituals, you know? So anyway we got on the

02:00 Bataan and we oiled the ship at Cairns, Tarakan in Borneo, Hong Kong and then Subic Bay in the inland sea of Japan - very, very pretty place, the inland sea of Japan - islands in it and very pretty - as I mentioned it

02:30 before, Japan is a very pretty, beautiful country and some of their culture is quite better than ours in the

way we behave with each other. However we had only been up in Korea off the enemy coast for our first few days where we were received a direct hit on the captain's

- 03:00 cabin - we say the captain's day cabin because on warships, captains have what they call a day cabin for mainly harbour use when they're in harbour; they usually have a bath in the bathroom and it's quite, you know befitting for a captain of a ship. But they also have a sea cabin usually directly under the bridge where they can get to running the
- 03:30 ship in quickly - it may not be just in warfare, it may be the, a storm has hit the ship and they need to be on the bridge instantaneously. So generally, as I said before, officers lived - used to always live on the quarter deck - that's the stern of the ship, and they're running from the day cabin right down the stern of the ship all the way up the ladders to the bridge, can be disastrous when the ship's in trouble of some
- 04:00 sort. So they have a sea cabin under the bridge, and so when I said to you that we were hit with a direct hit at the captain's day cabin, well he wasn't there because we were at sea. He would be usually in his sea cabin, and the only damage inside his cabin, he had what they called his frock uniform which sort of goes back to Nelson's day with the style of
- 04:30 naval officer's dress, and that was, but I - like most of us, I was in the mess decks forehead and I was on ex-gun then as a loader on ex-gun - a four point, four inch quick firing gun, a twin four inch quick firing gun near the stern and they were shooting at us,

05:00 the Communists, on the North Korean coast.

Whereabouts on the coast are we talking?

It was...

Past Seoul?

Yes, past, yes - I can't remember exactly, past Seoul on the west coast, on the west coast, which is - if you like to put it it'd be on the African side of - if you

- 05:30 could go all the way across, you know - you've got the Yellow Sea - we were in the Yellow Sea. Very shallow the Yellow - I think there maybe the Yellow Sea may have got it's name because it's shallow and when ships stir up the mud, the yellow sort of a mud - that may give its name, the Yellow Sea, and well we all went to our guns when we were hit. I thought for a moment the ship was done for because there
- 06:00 seemed to be flames everywhere down on the stern of the ship, but all it was really was that when the shot went through the captain's cabin it set fire to a carley float, which caught fire - they're rafts, and it's blazing away and it looked like - a lot worse than it was. The hit was with a three inch, yeah seventy-five mill as they're called now - a three inch shell.
- 06:30 That's not big in, yeah three, just diameter, but of course when they explode it didn't leave a three inch hole - it exploded when it hit the captain's cabin superstructure and blows a hole like that, you know? But well you hear the whistle of the shells that are going over the ship and it's
- 07:00 quite, well it's quite scary, quite scary. Some of the shells lob over the ship, ahead of the ship, some of them fall short of the ship and they leave water spouts - when they explode it leaves a water spout going up in the air. I say a water spout, you know a shoot of water going up, and it's quite scary, and anyway we
- 07:30 demolished the battery that got to us, and - or batteries, whatever - we got rid them.

Were they within a visible range?

No.

So you had to estimate where they were shooting from?

Well when I say visible, the coast is visible. They might be visible if you followed their, their gunshots.

The flash?

Yeah, the flack, the flash, but you wouldn't know other - you'd have to have

- 08:00 the flash to guide you. But anyway we demolished them and we were shot at, and I can't say exactly how many other times from the enemy batteries, but we were shot at a few other times, but never got another hit; but we really should've been at action stations. It was a bad move really that we
- 08:30 were not at action stations when we were hit, you know, but that's the way it was. We did a lot of shooting at trains and transport, moving transport. You'd have the spotters - you'd have spotters that - like these South Korean guerrillas and
- 09:00 so forth that were in - infiltrated the North Korean - where the North Koreans were - they would get back to the ship on their, signal the ship about where, and if you were firing a bit off target they would get you back - hopefully get you back on target. So a lot of our targets were given to us, or they were

given to us by the army or whatever

09:30 that knew what was going on. They would guide our, our guns to the fire in the right direction, etc. But a lot of trains were shot at by us and other warships. A lot - I would say that maybe, maybe around fifty percent of our time was escorting aircraft carriers

10:00 such as the USS Bataan, our namesake, and that's very boring, very boring.

Escort duties?

Escorting an aircraft carrier. I mean generally you know you sometimes - we picked up a pilot once that crashed into the sea, but you're there in case they get to the aircraft carrier - whether it be from

10:30 the air or from the shore batteries were there to protect the aircraft carrier, but they didn't give themselves, the aircraft carriers to my knowledge never suffered damage. So it was war - we were on a war footing with the ship at action stations, etc, etc, but very boring and the sea, which you've most probably heard from

11:00 other fellows in the Korean War - I'm talking about sailors now - the living conditions was hell in that the average temperature was seventeen degrees below freezing, Fahrenheit - not quite sure what that is in Celsius, seventeen degrees below - thirty-two degrees is freezing in Fahrenheit, and we were seventy-two - seventeen degrees below thirty

11:30 two, seventeen below freezing, and the whole sea was white with ice. You could - in some places you might be five miles off the coast and you could almost step off the ship and walk ashore on the ice. It was thick and white. It was, you know you couldn't see water. I mean sometimes there were places where there was just ice pads

12:00 floating on the sea. I'm not saying every bit of the Korean water was iced up, but in some areas it was ice - nothing but ice. The water that would splash onto the guard rails, which are wire cables around the side of the ship to stop you falling off the ship, the guard rails, the water that splashed on them

12:30 from waves etc would turn to ice instantaneously, would turn to ice, and so you'd have like icicles hanging off the guardrails, and the ship would - you'd have to scrape the ice off the deck, you'd have to scrape it off the superstructure and the gun turrets - the gun shields would be all like inside a freezer of a refrigerator - icicles hanging down, and

13:00 they actually took a photograph once in our boiler room of icicles hanging from the boiler room. Now the boiler room's a hot place, but it was that cold that icicles formed in the boiler room. The - we, our Australian warships, they've never really been designed, they never ever designed 'em for the tropics and they never designed 'em for

13:30 cold. They weren't designed in any direction to cope with the two extremities. So when you went inside to your mess there wasn't a big change of temperature - not a big change because we actually had ice hanging from the bulkheads of our messes, that's the ship's side - like ice like in looking like the side of a freezer in a

14:00 refrigerator, so you couldn't get away from ice. We had one little radiator on a stanchion in our mess. It was about a foot long, two bars on it, about a - it'd be lucky if it was a foot long even. That was the only heating in our mess, you could almost touch the radiant, you know - that made almost no impact upon, in fact

14:30 it really didn't make any impact at all upon the temperature of the mess. You were - we were well clothed. We had tarpaulin-type overcoats with very big high collars on them, and they were lined inside with sheepskin, and like army great coat down the sleeves, cause you couldn't have sheepskin down the sleeves - you'd never get 'em on, and we had

15:00 metal-like toggles - metal toggles to clip 'em together on the front. We were, we had a navy blue balaclavas, like the bandits used robbing banks, we had navy blue balaclavas; we had, we had woollen navy gloves and woollen mittens as well. Our underpants

15:30 we were given were double worsted woollen, like socks, like woollen socks - double worsted, double thickness with a manila rope to tie them together to keep them, and the nickname we had for them was the passion-spoilers or dung ampers was they call 'em - either dung ampers or passion spoilers, and the time you took if you wanted to go to

16:00 the toilet, to sit down, move your bowels if you like - the time you took your tarpaulin-type over coat off - I had a leather jacket I took with me cause we were told we could take civilian stuff because, and so I took a long leather jacket that came down to my waist, below my waist, and that was wonderful, and you'd take that off -

16:30 you had two jumpers on, sailors jumpers were crew neck, you left your singlets and that - by the time you got yourself so you could use the toilet - the moment, the very second you felt as if you'd finished, you'd - up she'd come - now some people going to the toilet and they sit down for ages, they read books or think about life or whatever, but believe you me,

- 17:00 you didn't leave your backside bare for one second longer than you could afford, you know? It was almost to the stage that when you had a pee it would freeze on you, you know? It was really, well I put it to you like this without any exaggeration - the cook always had a big stock pot there about a metre or so high - a, like a, what do they use in the old days for washing, a trough, what do you call
- 17:30 them - a copper, they used to call them coppers to wash, boil your clothes in, and they had these stock pots and they'd make soup and you could go in any time with your mug and dip it in and have some hot soup, and if you spilt it on the deck it virtually turned to ice the moment it hit the deck, it was so cold, and yet a very strange thing: you're freezing cold all the time but no-one
- 18:00 ever go the flu or colds. I think it may be that, and the same I think in the Antarctic or Arctic, that germs don't live in that situation. I believe germs can - you can put things in your refrigerator and you can have these virus - cold viruses, but they remain - they don't, they're not active until they're defrosted,
- 18:30 and so you were absolutely frozen stiff all day, all night, all the time, but no-one ever got the flu, and I think that's what it was - the viruses couldn't live in that - they were there, if you know what I mean, but they were frozen to not be active. You didn't shave too often because usually you only shaved when you got back to Japan, because to use a razor
- 19:00 on your face, your skin was that tight from being so cold, you would just gash your face, and so you didn't really shave much at all until you got back to Japan, and Japan would be cold too at that time, but not as cold as what Korea was. So you were a pretty scraggy looking mob and we used - electric
- 19:30 blankets had not come into - there are no such things in those days for beds - electric blankets for beds, but we had like tarpaulins with the same thing - we had electric wires going through the tarpaulins and we'd strap them around the barrels of the gun - it wouldn't make the barrels of the gun warm even, but it would stop them from freezing up, because if you had a frozen gun barrel and fired a shell, the whole gun would split in two and you'd all be dead
- 20:00 from the disintegrating gun barrel. So they would be covered up with something like a prehistoric electric blanket.

What was your position on the Bataan?

I was in a torpedo party when I was an able seaman torpedo man, but because maybe because I signed up just for the two years of Korean War, they didn't see fit for me to

- 20:30 carry on in that, so I was a loading hand on this four inch gun - a loading hand, and the four inch gun that, and they call - it's, it's a heavy gun but it's the only heavy gun on the ship, then go to about forty degrees up and you can, so you can fire at aeroplanes with it - go to about forty degrees. The others, I forget now, the
- 21:00 main armament guns would not go too high. So we could if we needed to, and we also were the only twin gun that fired star shells that would light up the sea so you could see if you had the enemy close at hand you would - the shell would explode and send like a star of light and light the sea up
- 21:30 in that, well because we had a high angle gun, we were the only guns on the ship that fired star shells to light up the enemy if needed. But we had - on guns we had two turrets on the fo'c's'le - A and B guns - they were four point seven's, which is nearly five inch
- 22:00 in the old language, and we had a four point seven again on the stern, on the quarterdeck, on the stern, four point seven. So there were - they're triple. I mean they were twin barrels on each gun, so there were two gun, two four point seven's on the fo'c's'le - that gives you four guns, plus two on the quarterdeck, which is the stern - that gives you six
- 22:30 four point seven barrels, six four, and we were four inch with twin barrels. We were up on X deck, which is on the deckhouse on the - near the stern - not down on the main deck, and we had Bofors guns, we
- 23:00 had, we had a single Bofors each side but down a bit from the bridge, just in line with the bridge a bit lower, we had single Bofors each side and then we had single Bofors mid ships in the centre of the ship, one each side, single Bofors, and then they took off the pompoms which were twenty millimetres, they're like machine guns
- 23:30 and there's four bowls going like that sending off twenty mill shells. Before we went to Korea they were taken off - the pompoms were taken off and we had a twin Bofors put on in its place, cause the twin Bofors are forth millimetres - your Bofors are for anti-aircraft in ninety-nine percent, anti-aircraft - if you wanted to shell something on the land and you didn't need a big explosion, you'd use a Bofors.
- 24:00 But our twin Bofors, forty mill was twice the size of the pompoms, which would - had more get up higher to a plane, and they were, the old Bofors from the Second World War were taken off. For the Korean War we had radar-controlled Bofors, which the radar would hone in on the plane
- 24:30 and you would fire it when you knew that your radar was on track. Well they weren't radar controlled Bofors in the Second World War. They were in it five years or so, they advanced the Bofors gun. They

were a Swedish gun, I think Bofors is a Swedish name I think, and they're still used on warships today and that makes it, or getting on for sixty years,

25:00 and the patrol boats we have are still use a Bofors gun - that's their main armament. So that's a credit to the Bofors gun, isn't it? To still be in use today.

So what sort of activities did the crew, did the Bataan get up to?

Well as I said we were....

Was it just mainly shore bombardment?

Shore bombardments, which was - they always seemed to have 'em two or three o'clock in the morning or some disastrous hour, because when you finished firing guns, you've

25:30 gotta clean the barrels out, and you have this brush that goes down and it has a rope at one end - it's a round brush to go down the barrel with a long rope off one end of it and one rope the other, and you have someone will be up at the end of the barrel pulling it out and you'd have another lot pulling it the other way, you know and you'd go backwards and

26:00 forwards, and that cleans the car - gun barrels get a lot of carbon from the cordite - when the cordite explodes it leaves the carbon behind and that mucks up the, the gun barrels have gotta be kept oily and clean you know, otherwise the shell won't fire - the shell won't go as far as it should because it's coked up with carbon. So what I'm saying here with, when you fire your guns you can't just say, "Oh well it's the last shot -

26:30 let's go home," or, "Let's go back to the mess," you've gotta clean the barrel of the gun and that takes time to do. So firing guns is a laborious job, and on our four inch quick firing, high angle four inch gun, we had the cordite charge - we had that sort of fixed to the shell itself so that when you put the shell into the breach of the gun, you - it was,

27:00 about how long would it be? It would be about a metre long, the shell, with the cordite charge fixed to it, whereas the 4.7s - that little bit bigger, you would drop the cordite charge on and then you would put the shell on. They're in two pieces, but we had it all in one so it was much heavier lifting up. You know it was quite a heavy task and

27:30 you had to pull your hand back pretty quick before the breach closed or you'd chop your fingers off when the breach closed. You had to push it in, you had to - you couldn't not push it in all the way, but you certainly had to pull your hand back very quick smart or you wouldn't have a hand. So it was all - that becomes all very stressful if you like, but you know you don't relax for a moment and

28:00 you're running around the deck with these shells out in the open with the whistling of the enemy having pot shots at you - it, I don't care what anyone says, it's quite, you know - it's quite dramatic if you like to put it that way, and the captain - he was a commander, but he captained the ship, he had - when the plate was taken

28:30 off where the shell went through his captain's cabin, he had that mounted onto a board and a plaque saying how it occurred, and I think he might've hung it up at home or something, you know? But he really, yeah. So we only hit the one time, but as I say we were fired at quite a few, numerous times afterwards but never got a hit. But you just don't

29:00 know, do you, when you - the shell's exploding around you, you just don't know where you're going to cop it.

It must have been nerve wracking?

Beg your pardon?

It must have been nerve wracking.

It is, and we had a wooden sliding door on the heads - that's your toilet, the crew's toilet called the heads - it was a wooden sliding door and it jammed and the fellows had to kick it down to get it - when we were being shot at like that, they had to kick it down to get out, you know? They couldn't get out of the toilet, out of the

29:30 heads, yeah. So what else is there about up there? Well we sent these Korean guerrillas ashore on this North Korean peninsula, and the idea was to capture as many North Koreans as they could. But war is so filthy they found that there was a minefield there, and they made all the villagers

30:00 walk into their own minefield and blow themselves up, and all they brought back to the ship was a calf to give to an island that - it was an orphanage of kids on an island, and they wanted to give - so that the calf would be a cow eventually and give milk, and that's all that they come out with - they killed the rest of them, and you're there supporting them, murdering women, children and - war is filthy. It is

30:30 filthy, yeah.

So what did you think about them prior to this?

Ah well I think that when you're being shot at, I don't, I s'pose it's the same if you're in the army, air force - when you're shot at, you've just gotta shoot back. I mean you don't worry about what's right, what's wrong, because the next shell they fire might be for you, so

31:00 it's not a matter of morality at all, it's a matter of saving your skin. I think a lot of the war is like that - people aren't really trying to murder the enemy, they're trying to save their skin.

So is this what they told you or is this is what you or this is what you've seen?

No, it's my interpretation of having...

No, no - that's not what I mean. What I mean that is you said you saw, or you told us that these South Korean guerrillas went in...

Yes.

31:30 **and made villagers walk over a minefield?**

Well when they come back and you know and you say, "Oh shit," you know, "What are we doing here?" But now too late. It's past, it's over, you've gotta get on with - life goes on, the war goes on.

So they told you this though?

Oh yeah, yeah, they told us how they sent all the villagers into this minefield and blew them - got 'em to blow themselves up.

32:00 When their main object of the exercise was to bring back as many North Korean prisoners as they could - they come back with a calf and a boat. So it sort of makes you feel as if, "What the hell are you doing up here supporting this situation?"

Did you feel as if they were slime?

Feel as if?

They were slime?

32:30 Lying do you say?

Slime.

Framed?

No, no, no - did you feel like they were slime, like as in dirt - they were terrible people?

No - they, I found the Koreans soldiers - didn't matter whether they were north or south, they are - they're not like us Westerners. They don't seem to value life a lot.

33:00 Yeah, and I s'pose when I say Asians you could go right across the Middle East. You've got the, well you've got the war with the Israelis and Iraq - I think there's that Asians and the Middle East - life is cheap. They don't seem to worry that they might get killed. It doesn't seem to enter their, I mean they know that they could but it doesn't seem to -

33:30 we would be very scared, but they don't seem to be scared about being shot at and all that sort of thing, you know - doesn't seem to - if you're dead or you're dead, they don't seem to worry like we would, you know? Yeah. But it's a strange thing for - when you see North

34:00 Korea fighting South Korea, it's like New South Wales fighting Victoria - you're all one - you're the same breed, you know the language is almost a hundred percent identical, you're all one. But then again you look at the American civil war - they were all one, weren't they? All one, one side fighting the other, and they had the same - they were brothers in effect. I bet there were some people in

34:30 in the union army that had relatives in the confederate army and they're shooting at each other. I mean, ha, crazy, wars are crazy, yeah. So what else was there up in Korea? Well, you're hearing about how the war progresses

35:00 differently to what people here back home hear. When we were hit with that shell I don't think it was actually in the media back in Australia, so the government suppress what they want to suppress. I'm not taking sides in what I'm saying here now, I'm just purely saying that the government dictates to the media what

35:30 people will hear, and I know from being away like this that all what they heard or didn't hear - there's a lot they didn't hear of, a lot, you know. I mean...

Like what? Anything exemplary?

I mean I have been told, for instance, if I can go back to the Second World War, and I've been told by army fellows that there were some

36:00 Japanese shockingly treated - I'm not suggesting that we were as bad as the Japanese...

Sure, sure...

but they did some shocking things, some of 'em, to these Japanese soldiers, shocking things, and they also - where our soldiers - we read about our soldiers all being led and the Japanese were pretty good at it, by executing our soldiers - they were pretty good at it, but we - our soldiers also executed the Japanese - not to the extent that they did,

36:30 but we were not necessarily all angels at all. We had some rotten eggs or people in our army killing people that'd put their hands up, surrendering, and they were shot dead, and I've got, heard from people that were in those instances that that happened. So when you think about it, we are not, we Australians as a whole, we are not all angels.

37:00 There's some people that will do things that you wouldn't think an Australian would do, but they have done it. They have done it. So it just brings to the fact that war is so filthy, you know? I mean, in New Guinea some of the things of sometimes of not giving the

37:30 Japanese a chance to come out of a fox hole - throw their hand grenade in and to hell with the fact - not try to, you know, get 'em to come out with their hands up, just blow 'em up, to hell with trying to get 'em out, you know? I know I've - I think when you get older you see things in a different light to - you are not gung-ho any more, you're not, you know...

So that brings us to a point before

38:00 **I wanted to ask you on, is that the World War II question about the dropping of the atomic bombs.**

Yes.

I know we're backing a little but I wanted to finish that.

Yeah that's all right.

That the argument was that they had to use the atomic bomb to save, yeah, to finish the war one thing, and also to save, they say, millions of allied soldiers would've died...

Yes

taking homeland Japan.

Mmm.

What is your view on that - now and at the time?

Well because they never used a military

38:30 target for the atomic bombs - both of them were not military targets, they had no - Hiroshima and Nagasaki had no influence on the war. They were commercial cities. Nagasaki was rather small. Hiroshima was quite a large commercial city, but had no real influence on the war. It never, to my, I'm pretty sure to my knowledge,

39:00 it never housed large aircraft factories or the likes, it was, they were ordinary Japanese, most probably doing war work of some sort, but not major, and I don't equate with, I always think that when you have a war you fight the enemy is always only soldiers and sailors and airmen. That

39:30 you don't go over - I don't see that you go over to Iraq or to Japan or Germany and go into houses and shoot ordinary people that are not - they're just ordinary people. That to me is not war, and by the way, too, you talk about that and there is the - or is it not Long Tan, but the Australian soldiers in Vietnam did something shocking in that way. They blew up

40:00 a lot of Japanese civilians - women and so forth in one little battle.

Do you mean Vietnamese women?

Beg your pardon?

Vietnamese women you mean?

Yeah, Vietnam women.

Yep.

They weren't, they didn't - our Australian soldiers killed people that were not involved in the war.

How do you know that?

Ah, because it was publicised in our media. It

40:30 was publicised and I don't know what the outcome was for commanding officers of that situation - I can't remember, but it was definitely publicised. I am talking fact that it did occur, you know, it did

occur.

Now you were in Japan so you have, you obviously have a fair idea of Japanese culture and...

Yes.

even with the benefit of hindsight now - do you think that the allies would've lost millions of men attacking mainland

41:00 **Japan, and do you think the Japanese would've resisted as they had before, or had the means to?**

I don't, I - there would've been allied troops killed if they hadn't dropped the bomb, but I'm not in the position to say how many. But the war had gone so far against the Japanese, Okinawa's lost, and that was a big loss to the Japanese - a very big loss

41:30 Okinawa. I don't believe the Japanese had the wise and wherefores to fight a battle that would kill a lot. I don't...

Tape 9

00:33 **Got a frog in the throat...can you talk about the time you stepped onto the islands in Korea?**

Well when you're on board ship - on a warship in such a tight situation, if the captain can see a way clear for the crew just to be able to get off and walk on ordinary soil and,

01:00 which doesn't occur very often at all, but if an occasion arises they will get the crew off the ship to, for recreation just to stretch their legs, and this island that was - had been under the North Korean Communist control but was no longer in that situation, we went by boat - our ship's boat and waded in the

01:30 shallows, and well we went and the Korean people welcomed - they welcomed us. I don't mean they went hysterical and all that, but they were very pleased to see us. They'd take you into their home, which was just an earthenware floor, and like all Asian, like Japanese, Chinese

02:00 they belong - they all have their noodles and scarcity of furniture - all those, no, no furniture - they all - doesn't matter what you're Korean or Japanese - they all have it, their noodle bowl, shallow, and their tea cup, which is very shallow, and they all much do have the same culture in many ways, and they - a bit like

02:30 - the Koreans were a bit like the Japanese in that giving you a cup of tea was quite a ceremony. Not a tea ceremony as such, but we'd give someone a cup of tea, and say, "Well 'ere it is, you've got your cup and drink if it you want..." you know, but over there they will serve it to you and makes a ceremony of, and giving it to you and, you know, it becomes a real -

03:00 having the cup of tea is a real social situation and well it's - you go on living very rough there on a warship in a very rough situation where you don't use China and all this much, and a Korean family welcomes you into their home and gives you a cup of tea etc in a very friendly manner, it warms the heart for -

03:30 it brings you back into the reality of being the smell of gunfire and, you know, and a very strict way of life and you feel very relaxed sitting with people that want to welcome you and it was good for the heart, and so that sojourn onto the Korean

04:00 land, but I wasn't there like our soldiers in a trench or something like that, no, no, but it was - it made one feel really good, yeah.

How long were you at sea before this break?

We generally spent around - we generally spent about three weeks on a patrol, and then we would go back to Japan.

04:30 I must admit, like the soldiers, they just don't get any break at all when they're in trenches etc, but at the same time when you're under stress like twenty-four hours a day more or less, cause you don't - when you sleep you're not sleeping like you do in your home. It's a, somehow you're still, you're, I can't explain it, but you're still under stress when you're asleep, and you just

05:00 can't get away from it, and three weeks seemed like a lifetime, believe you me, it seems like a lifetime, so most of our patrols lasted an average of three weeks - but heavy going, you know, heavy, but when we went to Japan, we would only be two or three days and we'd be back again. It wasn't as if we went back for a week or two. It happened once or

05:30 twice, we had - go into dry dock at Kure, which in the inland sea, and get the ship's bottom scraped,

and the dockyard, Japanese dockyard workers, they're certainly different to the Australian dockyard workers - they'd come on board before they, and start work before their whistle blew to start. Ours you'd be battling to get 'em to start on the whistle you know? No, they worked hard and they worked longer than they should've and

06:00 did thorough work on the ship. But other than having the bottom of the ship scraped, you've gotta keep - all ship's have gotta be scrubbed, or at least a couple of times a year. The amount of drag barnacles put on a ship is enormous drag on the speed side of the ship, you know, and also if you let the barnacles go too long, the barnacles eat into the steel on the ship's

06:30 side - they really do - when I say eat into it, whether they've got some form of acid or whatever, it eats into the ship's side. So getting a scrape is - that's the only thing that sailors don't do to their ship. The - unlike going back then, the American sailors didn't do so much of that was left to their dock

07:00 workers back in America or wherever there, like in the Philippines and so forth. They did not do...the Australian government do well out of sailors in that we do tasks of keeping the ship ship-shape. At - we would have to go up the funnel and say paint the funnel or chip it or something, and you would have your feet just on rivets or something,

07:30 whereas if when you go into dock in Sydney or wherever, well fair, enough their union won't allow their men to go up unless they've got about a three metre wide platform to stand on. Well, we're trying to hold onto a tin of paint and paint the funnel or mast with one hand and hold on with the other, it's, and you're, and the ship's rolling around at sea when you're doing

08:00 this - it's quite - you're climbing up the ship's mast and that, you feel as if you're ten times higher up than what you actually are. Or it's the same when you've only gotta get up the ladder to paint your house, and you're not really a long way up, but by god it looks a long way when you look down doesn't it? It does look a long way down, because if you do fall and you fall on a steel deck, well

08:30 finito - that's the finish of you.

Can you tell us the differences - you said they were very similar, but what are the differences between Japanese and Korean culture?

Ah, what is? Ah I'm trying to think - there's a difference, but I can't tell you. I think they are so close,

09:00 I mean everyone gets a cultures - little townships there get a culture, different, but the subtle difference between the Korean culture and the Japanese are too subtle, I believe, for people like me to discover the differences. They, I mean the Chinese and Koreans -

09:30 there's not a big difference between - the Korean peninsula is really a peninsula off China. The Korean peninsula is a peninsula off China mainland and therefore the Koreans are more Chinese in their culture than they are Japanese, but not us westerners.

10:00 The Japanese - they invaded Korea - I'm not quite sure when they invaded Korea, but they invaded Korea and held Korea for some length of time - some number of years, and the Japanese have always treated the Koreans as low, very low, the bottom of the barrel people. But to you and me, we can't

10:30 discover the difference, but to the Japanese they're scum you know - they are really, really different.

They see the differences....

But the Korea War was the greatest thing that ever happened to Japan because all the foodstuffs there were grown in Japan, well they weren't grown in Australia or America - too far away to, you know - oh some were shipped, but the majority of food was

11:00 grown in Japan and the Japan geared itself up to store, to - not just the navy, it'd be the army - to keep the fighting forces of American, well, Canadians were there and everybody else, but the Japanese supplied just about everything there was to supply, and that happened - what was it, about four years after the war ended when

11:30 Japan hadn't got itself properly back on its feet, but the Korean War was the turning point for Japan to get its act together and become a nation again, you know? So I s'pose there's one good thing came out of that war was for Japan to get back on its feet, yeah. Not that I'm saying killing people's a good idea to get back on your feet, but I'm talking about economics of a country

12:00 now. Yes, a lot of people don't realise that who you were fighting with a couple of years or so later, you're depending on them to feed you and give you all what you need. It's a strange world, really. It's like Iraq, Saddam Hussein - I'm right...

Saddam.

Saddam Hussein of Iraq was given all this stuff

12:30 and I think some things of mass destruction by the Americans to fight, to get onto the Iranians, the, Iran, and they supported Saddam. They supported him and gave him armament and I think it - some say mass destruction, you know, and so yes, it's a strange thing isn't it when you think about it. And then

the

13:00 Russians were the German allies in the beginning of the Second World War - they were allies. I forget how many months it lasted but they were, you know partners.

It was for about twelve months or so.

Yeah, something like that.

When you landed on Korea, how did the locals welcome you?

How can you explain? Not exuberant, friendly smiles - they - none of this rushing up in the street and putting their arms around you and which you

13:30 see in some situations you know - the Americans are pretty good at publishing photographs of wherever they invade the people throwing their arms around them and throwing bunches of flowers - there was none of that type of exuberance, but I don't think also - I don't think the culture of Asians are like that full stop - even so, even if they loved you to death. It's not their culture to throw flowers at

14:00 you. It's not their - they don't throw their arms around each other publicly in their culture, they don't, and I mean the Japanese - up until a bit after the Second World War, a Japanese wife would never walk alongside the husband - always about ten paces behind, and I think some places in India are much the same as the Japanese, that the wife will - is,

14:30 the wife is inferior, and so the Japanese, so what I'm trying to say is from Asians, you can't expect them to do what they'd do in Europe or some other countries where you see them just falling all over the, you know, or waving from the balconies or waving the American flag, because the Americans had saved them. Well Asian culture doesn't equate to that.

15:00 They're - they don't show emotion. They've very cordial people to themselves, to their friends, very cordial, which we are not. We are not real cordial very often - not as across the board we're not cordial, and, but emotionally, we show our emotions, they don't.

Did you get to communicate with them at

15:30 **that level where they told you how they felt about you being there?**

No.

What were your dealings with them personally?

You've gotta remember, you've gotta remember Myles, that when I - and I say no, but you've gotta remember that Asians particularly even then, I mean their Korea War was '50 to '53 I think, '50, '53 - now that is fifty years ago, or fifty one years if you

16:00 want to be - fifty one years, and a whole gamut of world social behaviour has changed dramatically. I mean I believe the Japanese young people of today are not like their grandfathers that fought in the Second World War, that they are - I've mixed with Japanese tourists, I've backpacked and all of that - slept with them and all of that and they

16:30 are certainly - they are certainly a different race to the race that I got involved in when I went ashore in Tokyo. They could've been another nationality. They - the way they think and you would never - you would never be able to recruit Japanese now to commit hara-kiri with a sword and cut their bowels open. You would never get a Japanese young fella as a pilot

17:00 commit kamikaze and crash their plane on an aircraft carrier - they just wouldn't - they're not the same - there is certain cultural things that will always hang in, but they are so Westernised that the emperor is not God almighty to the extent that he was. He's revered, but not revered as - not really, he's not

17:30 God any more to the Japanese. No, they're a different stock. So what I'm trying to say here is really that I don't know whether the Asians will ever get really Westernised. They're proud of themselves. They'll Westernise themselves to what suits them, but their culture - like any country, they're proud of it and

18:00 I don't think they'd ever get to the stage where they'd throw their arms around, you know, soldiers coming into their country, yeah.

How would you compare your service in World War II to your service in Korea?

Ah that little difference is really minute. The war in Korea was

18:30 fought virtually that close to the war in the Second World War. There wasn't a big change in - helicopters were not in the Second World War but they developed straight after the Second World War, so you had helicopters and fighter planes that were superior, but there still wasn't a bit technological change in

19:00 warfare in the Korean War. The soldiers were much the same, carrying much the same as what they did in the Second World War. Yes - there were too infinitesimal to - wherever you mentioned, you know.

But did you - in the Second World War you weren't as - under as much stress as in Korea, is that correct?

Correct. Oh because of the, because

- 19:30 I'm seventy eight in June and I came into the Second World War on the closing of the war and I was not under the stress - there was stress there, there was stress on a warship - it's stress being at action stations every day at dawn getting up and there is stress there, but
- 20:00 not really worrying about you being sunk by the enemy and with the real - when you see what other ships have done and so forth, I mean Teddy Shean, you've heard of him, have you? He should've got the VC [Victoria Cross] ten times over, and he gets Mentioned in Despatches, and that's not a medal even - it's just like an oak leaf on your
- 20:30 ribbons or something - mentioned in dispatches. Now those fellas on that Armidale corvette that went to Timor that he was on, and what they suffered, well they were all heroes - dead ones and live ones, they're all heroes. I tried - I rang up Warner Brothers at the Gold Coast many years ago - I reckon - I read the book The Heroes by -
- 21:00 I'll think of his name shortly - he was a war correspondent and he wrote this book The Heroes. Oh no that was about, sorry - The Heroes that was about - another wonderful story about the Krait - you know the Krait? K-R-A-I-T - it was a Japanese fishing boat that our commando's took from Western Australia to Singapore - as a, as - and went through past all these Japanese destroyers cause all these islands are held by the Japanese and they got their
- 21:30 off Singapore of a night and went in these fold up canoes and put limpet mines on the Japanese cargo ships and blew 'em all up, and then they went back the second time - not all of 'em but some of 'em, the ones from the first trip and they went by submarine and captured a Malaysian junk. But when they were stopped at this Malayan Island this Malaysian policeman, gave them up to the Japanese and they were
- 22:00 all beheaded in Singapore, you know, and they all dug holes and had their heads lopped off and executed. But the Japanese saw them as warriors, and the only way for a warrior to die is to have your head chopped off and be executed, otherwise it's not right as a warrior to be - that's their philosophy. But what I am saying is when I think of other sailors and what they have been
- 22:30 through - I was thinking of - when I said that The Heroes, that was about the Krait, but these fellows on The Armidale - they went through hell and Teddy Shean got - he gave his life up for his shipmates. They were all being machine gunned by the Japanese sailors, Japanese planes - fighter planes - they were being machine gunned, and he stayed on the ship as it -
- 23:00 went down, and he went down, and when the ship was going under the water he still at the (UNCLEAR) gun - he brought down one Japanese dive bomber and badly damaged another, and they concentrated then on killing him - stopped machine gunning his mates in the water, and when I think of some of my fellow sailors, I feel very humble as my naval career. I know so many stories
- 23:30 of sailors that've done some marvellous things, yeah.

Just quickly to wrap up a point, when you landed at Korea and you had leave, was it similar to your leave in Japan and what was that like there?

Oh no, oh no, we were, oh no, we were only ashore for two or three hours, two or three hours. We weren't - it wasn't a full day's leave it was just two or three

24:00 hours.

You didn't have time to do much?

No - by the time you went by boat and then paddled yourself in the shallows and then got ashore, you know, it was a very brief moment.

So where did you experience leave then? Back in Tokyo, in Japan?

No, we always went to the island sea, which is closest to Korea, and there were two places we always went: one was Kure, which is run by the British Commonwealth

24:30 Occupation Forces, and the other was American naval base called Sasebo - both in the Inland Sea. Kure is the - fairly close to Hiroshima, so I went there - to Hiroshima one day and checked out the - you would never know that - the modern buildings that, although they had the, the dome of this international exhibition

25:00 centre was just the steel where they kept that as a memorial to the atomic bomb, but the rest of it was so modern you can't believe that the whole city was finished. You can't believe it, it's.

And that was just five years later or...?

Yeah - what amazed me though is the Japanese culture then - and that was during my Korean time

when I went back - when we were, went to

25:30 Hiroshima on the bus, I think we stopped and we all had a piddle in the gutter, and Japanese men - when they feel like - I don't know about now it might be different fifty years on, but when Korea - going back then when a man wanted to have a piddle, he just has a piddle, he - not a female, she just had to - wait till she found a toilet somewhere, but men would just piddle - they wouldn't sort of look to see whether anyone was looking at 'em, they want to piddle, they have a piddle,

26:00 you know? So that's - I think that culture might be changed now. I think they might've Westernised, you know? Yeah.

I hope so anyway.

You're not interested in looking at men piddling in gutters - doesn't grab you?

And the after effects too.

Yeah it could be worse. They could be relieving their bowels, couldn't they, in the gutter. They didn't do that. No. So there we go.

So at these places you would be able to visit a

26:30 **brothel and get a good drink of alcohol and relax after your long journey?**

Yeah it was. It was a release, and we got the presidential, oh no, that was in the Philippines, we got a presidential citation for helping to get rid of the Japanese out of the Philippines, and

27:00 a Philippine medal with it.

What action did you undertake for that in the Philippines?

All we did was chasing Japanese submarines and destroyers without finding them - that was our effort, ha-ha. But we were on a war footing and the war was still on and we were buzzing around the coast of the Philippines, so that qualified to get the citation from their

27:30 Filipino President.

How did your service in Korea wrap up and....

Well we came back - we went up, left in January, the beginning of January in '52, and got back at the end of September - about the 30th or something of September - was it nine or ten months, and the Korean War finished -

28:00 must be probably about six months after we got back or something like that in '53 - would've been roughly no six or seven months after we got back. Yeah, so...

What experiences did you have with Americans during the Korean War?

Funny, the Americans, they so - we in our services, we didn't worry about

28:30 our - what we were paid, which was a measly, I mean, they always said American soldiers are oversexed, overpaid and over something else - overpaid, oversexed and over something else, and when you mixed with the American servicemen, I bet you the first thing they'll say to you is, "How much pay do you get?" They are so obsessed - well, we would be now, we too, we would be in the same,

29:00 now we've Americanised ourselves. But going back then, your money, didn't need your pay, you needed money to buy our beer and whatever went with it, but you know, it wasn't - the main thing was to be in the navy and fight a war and all that. The money angle was of absolutely no consequence to the Australian servicemen, no - but to them, what they get is number one, you

29:30 know? So it looks like the more money you get, the more you want, doesn't it? Cause they were well paid - very well paid, and very well uniformed and the best of everything, yeah.

Would that encourage fights? Would there be fights?

No, no. The only time - oh yes we had a few brawls at Sasebo was the American naval port and our sailors

30:00 would have a - the Warramunga, our sister ship was banned from going back - it had to go to Korea every time - we would alternate, Sasebo, Kure, Sasebo, Kure, but the Warramunga - they had a few brawls in the anchor club, which is the sailor's club, drinking club, and the Warramunga was banned from the - calling in - they reckoned they had to go elsewhere. They weren't allowed, the Warramunga, to pull in. So there were a few skirmishes.

30:30 I mean, you know about the, where was it, in where during the war where the soldiers - our soldiers were going off to New Guinea and the Americans were coming back for their break and the Americans - Wodonga or something.

Just stop for a...

Was it Wodonga or something where...? Anyway, the tea tree, you know about it, where the - our American, our soldiers are going off to the war at New Guinea and that,

31:00 and the Yanks are coming back for their leave and the two trains - there was one there and one there, and the yanks yelled out something to the effect that, "We'll root all your women. We'll root all your women," meaning - if it wasn't root it was meaning, a word meaning the same, you know, and so all the Australian soldiers jumped out of the train and when the yanks got out of there it was a real bust up, you know, a real big brawl, a big fight that was. I don't know what

31:30 year it was, it would've been about '42 or something.

Were you ever involved in a fight with a yank?

No. No never - friendly, friendly, yeah. Mind you, it pays to be friendly with Americans because they had ice cream on their warships, they had ice cream machines and they were - Coke machines, ice cream machines, and ice cream - we wouldn't know what ice cream looked like. But they used to send over tins of ice cream for us, and we could go on their

32:00 warships and buy their naval clothing, which was fantastic. Their - jeans like you got on there, I wear jeans - jeans and a jean shirt, and they had beautiful clothing and we - they would send all these sort of goodies across to us. So you don't get too crook on people that hand you - you know, yeah, and sometimes we would be

32:30 tied up against an American warship - fellow, another American destroyer, and we wouldn't have any hot water because our boilers'd be out of action, being cleaned or something, so the yanks would let us use their bathroom on their destroyer. So there was - they looked after us, so why pick up a - kick up a din over someone that's giving you ice cream and Coke? And you use

33:00 their bath, and we always when we - on our destroyer, like most destroyers, the one or two showers never worked and if they did mostly you weren't allowed to use them because they'd use water. You'd always put water in your, the wash basin and throw - we called 'em a bird bath and you threw handfuls of water over your back and everywhere and you'd be in the bathroom with about fifty other sailors in a bathroom that should only cope with

33:30 about ten, and there'd be fifty of you, so it was bums against bums and you'd never want to drop the soap because though the navy frowned - sailors frowned on homosexuality, for a bit of a lark if you dropped the soap, they'd be one up at the other for - not fair dinkum, not really up the bum, but one against the other, and they'd have a crocodile thing around the

34:00 bathroom because, and when you threw water over yourself with your birdbath, you'd be throwing ninety percent of it would go on the bloke that's behind you or something, you know? You just - there's no room for privacy in that situation.

When the war finished and you returned home,

Yeah,

why did you leave the navy?

I got married within a week of getting back on my leave, I got, when we got back

34:30 I got married. Remember I was - I had a fiancée when I went back in, so I was sort of a, I had a collar put around me, you know, and I could no longer have my own way, you know? She had the wedding all sorted out, you know, the church was all sorted out and all that sort of thing, but here I am now,

35:00 well, actually, I'm separated from me second wife.

Do you miss the - did you miss the sea in those few years after the....

Oh yes, yes, absolutely, but marital sort of things don't allow you to ponder - you look upon it fondly, put it that...you look upon it fondly. But marital situations alter the whole gamut of the whole

35:30 business. I mean I - there were fellows on the ship that were married, yes, they were married but they'd get up to mischief when you'd go to ports and that, and when you think about it, the wife's entitled to have her fun isn't she? If you're out with some foreign women in a - some foreign port, well she gets tired and she ends up meeting people and - I've seen so - I haven't seen too many naval marriages that were really - they

36:00 might work now, but they don't actually - I think there's still that stress there even - you see in the army and air force, if you're stationed even in Singapore or some place like that, you can take - even if you're a private, you can sometimes take your wife over there, or if you're stationed in -if you live in Melbourne and you're stationed in Townsville or something and you're in the air force/army, in most cases your wife can be up there.

36:30 They have housing. But when you're a sailor on a ship, moving around on a ship, you can't take your wife on the ship, and you're not ashore on land are you, to be with her in some foreign place - you're

not living in a house, you can't be with her if you wanted to. So what I'm saying here is, marital situations for the army and air force

37:00 is quite reasonable - you're with your wife much of your life. But navy - no, the moment you join the navy - once you're married in the navy, you might see your wife once or twice a year, and she's bringing up the kids on her own, there's stress there, stress on the kids - they haven't got a father. It's not a married man's life. It's a single man's

37:30 life.

What was your - what's your fondest memory of your times of World War II and Korea?

My fondest memories - now there's a number that you still hear on, I don't suppose you listen to Magic on Melbourne radio - Magic, but they play a lot of old tunes. Now one that's come back now is Sentimental Journey - I don't know if you know that song,

38:00 Going to take a sentimental journey, a sentimental journey back home, and that became a hit when we were in Japan for the surrender of the war and we had this weeks holiday at Nikko, a hundred miles inland from Tokyo, and volcanoes and all these mountains, and we walked through this tunnel - concrete tunnel through this mountain, and everyone was singing,

38:30 "I'm going to take a sentimental journey," and it sort of echoed through the tunnel - the acoustics of it, you know, and right to this day I can hear all the fellows singing, "I'm going to take a sentimental journey," and it's come back now, you know as a, as one of the song - favourites, after, what's it about sixty years now - the Second World War, I think around about sixty years, and it's come back

39:00 after sixty years.

I think that's what we've done today - we've taken a sentimental journey.

Yes, yes we certainly have.

Wrap it up, but we have about a minute and a half left, and in this time we give you the opportunity to say what you want and you have this floor to give a message to whoever views this tape, and really your final thoughts on whatever you, whatever you want to say.

Well,

39:30 I would just like to say that for anybody that hasn't had a, hasn't understood naval life and the way of a sailor is so different from, I believe it's vastly different from the army and air force - vastly different, and I hope that whoever watches this tape can get that feeling that

40:00 naval life is certainly a different way of life, and I would say anyone - whether you're now a male or female, if you like the sea, go for it.

On that note thank you very...

INTERVIEW ENDS