Australians at War Film Archive

Leslie Hatfield (Keith) - Transcript of interview

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Tape 1

00:30 **Okay it would be wonderful to hear that story again Keith. You may not have a recollection of it but you certainly…**

I was born very young. I was with my mother at the time too.

The story surrounding your birth is quite a saga there isn't it?

01:00 Well it's not unusual for infants to arrive before they're expected. It happens in this day and age when records are kept that would indicate pretty positively when it should happen. But back in 1919 I guess it was a case of by guess or by god. They had a rough estimate, a gestimate. And they must have been a bit out on it. Anyway I arrived before I was expected, about 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning I'm told.

01:30 As I say, the weather conditions were inclement. The country side was a bog and we didn't have the telephone on. My mother had someone assisting her and they dispatched the house girl to ride from (UNCLEAR) which was 16 or 18 miles from Logan Downs because we didn't have the phone on, and she got through to the doctor on the telephone.

02:00 Doctor Higgins was his name, and he cooperated by catching a horse and riding 26 miles out to the homestead to my mother. And as soon as the roads were passable I was evacuated, along with my mother of course, back to Claremont, and it proceeded from there. And that all happened on the 2nd of November 1919.

02:30 I remained at the property which was a sheep and cattle property of some 27,000 acres, which was not a big property for that area, a medium sized property. I remained there until 1937.

Can I ask you what your earliest memories of the property are?

My earliest memory, the most graphic memory is of a dreadful drought that occurred in 1926 which virtually

03:00 sent us broke because it was just a period of dry weather and we lost stock and the water never came back. When my father selected the property in the first instance, some of the streams there were perennial, they ran right through the year. By 1926 the seasons had changed and today

03:30 it's quite a dry area. The streams run when it rains and they don't when it stops. But that's it. In 1926 and again in 1933 we had another bad drought and that convinced me I didn't want to be on the land. I was always interested in motor cars. The opportunity came my way to take a job with Dobson Motor Engineering Company

04:00 in Claremont as a salesman. I hadn't previously had much experience needless to say in that particular sphere, but I did come back to the homestead one day, on a very very hot day at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, parched and hungry and all that sort of thing and there was a stranger in the house. He made himself known, his name was Kelly.

04:30 Not Ned [reference to Ned Kelly, 19th century bushranger]. And he impressed me by calling me Mr Hatfield. He said, 'Mr Hatfield you're shining your light under a bushel. Your real calling is out in the field of sales. I'd like to give you a job.' This was with the Colonial Mutual Life Society. And of course abstract selling is one of the most difficult forms of selling there is I would say because you're inducing someone to spend money now,

05:00 to make provision for an eventuality when he dies. And most people are not very impressed with that idea. They'd sooner buy something nice and bright and shiny. Well I got into selling motor cars and I was quite a success at that. The Dobson Motor and Engineering Company was a franchise for General Motors which came all the way from Cadillac, Vauxhall, Buick, Pontiac [types of cars].

05:30 A tremendous range. So that was General Motors and they also had the Ford agency. If my prospect was

giving me a rough time in regard to Ford I would say, 'Well what about a Chev, same price, 334 pounds, 17 and four pence?' And we'll go from there. So I was generally able to satisfy people. I was quite successful. I'm not boasting. I was quite good in that field.

06:00 **How old were you when you started work with Dobson?**

I was 18. Then the…I went from there over to Mackay and I worked at the Pioneer Motor Company there selling tractors and so on to the cane farmers. Whilst I was there my brother got into difficulty on a project he was working on up in North Queensland, and

06:30 I gave up my job to go and help him. I was only going to be up there for a short while but it transpired I was up there for about 18 months. And where I had come from a dry climate, the job that he was doing which was timber hauling out of the rain forest, and you need dry conditions for that. Well they're weren't dry.

07:00 Mount (UNCLEAR) is the second wettest place in the world and that was not too far away from Tully. They used to say, if you could see Mount Tully it was going to rain and if you couldn't it was already raining. So they were the conditions under which we tried to work. The war clouds gathered and I enlisted for overseas service in 1941. And because I had been working with tractors and heavy machinery, I was assigned

07:30 to the 1st Australian Armoured Division. That was a force of some 20,000 odd, all ranks. It was commanded by a striking gentleman called Sir Horace Robinson, Red Robbie. And Red Robbie had an extraordinary aptitude of being able to appear out of nowhere, and scare the devil out of you because he had a very harsh tongue. He was very explicit and

08:00 if he wasn't pleased with what you were doing he could tell you in a very few short sentences. Our Prime Minister [John Curtin] visited the Middle East and that was where we were destined to go, and the threat of the Japanese invasion was making itself apparent, and he prevailed on Mr Churchill [Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Britain] to withdraw our forces from the Middle East. That made the armoured division

08:30 surplus to requirements because an armoured division needs wide open spaces to operate, and the rain forest doesn't provide that. So they disbanded the armoured division and I ended up being surplus. When the Prime Minister was coming back he came through Bengal where R.G Casey was the Governor, R.G. Casey being Sir Richard Casey,

09:00 a parliamentarian here and known by everybody. And the 14th British Army was known locally in some areas as the "Forgotten 14th Army". And the Commander of the 14th Army was a gentleman called Bill, Bill Flynn, afterwards our Governor General.

09:30 He had a shortage of officers and the Prime Minister in consequence of having withdrawn our troops from the Middle East, released officers from the Australian Imperial Force [AIF], and I was one of those, to go and join the British Army in India for service in Burma.

Les can I just hold you there for a second. This is a great overview of the general sort of movement. Just to get a sense of what was going on personally, like during the late 30s and up

10:00 **to September 1939, what sense did you have up there in FNQ [far north Queensland] that war was looming and do you recall the actual declaration itself?**

No, I don't remember when war was declared. I'm more conscious of when Singapore fell. That made it imperative. But of course the Darwin Mobile Force was positioned in Darwin and that was

10:30 in anticipation of things happening. The authorities were aware of the threat but the populace generally were not. But as I say the Prime Minister took cognisance of the threat and withdrew the 7th and 9th Division from the Middle East, and disbanded the Armoured Division.

11:00 That became surplus and as I say, GRO 44 [General Routine Order] was published and was calling for volunteers from the Australian Imperial Force for services in Burma with the 14th Army. And I was one of several officers who volunteered for service.

11:30 **So you had already been commissioned early in the piece?**

I wasn't commissioned until the 7th of July 1944. I came up through the ranks and I gained my commission from the Officer Cadet Training Unit which was at Woodside in South Australia at that time. And once I was commissioned

12:00 I was then assigned to the jungle training centre at Canungra in Queensland, and that was pretty tough. The McPherson Ranges are almost as steep from a terrain aspect as the Owen Stanley's. I was put in one platoon after the other. I wasn't the only one. Others were doing it too. We went through training and it was said that

12:30 some of the fellas who came out of jungle training were more battle weary than the ones who were up in New Guinea. But I was interviewed then by the CO [commanding officer] Mick Stewart in respect of enlisting in the New Guinea Infantry Battalion, and he gave us to understand that we would probably be

out of Canungra in a month or so.

13:00 But then time dragged on and then I applied for the British Army in India. Anyway I was all set to come on leave to Melbourne and I was called on parade and I was told that I wasn't able to go on leave to see the beautiful girlfriend at Mentone, but that I was going to go to New Guinea with the native troops.

13:30 **The beautiful girlfriend being…**

Mary Margaret Meers who lived at Number 1 Catania Street Mentone. In any case I ended up with the New Guinea Infantry Battalion and I served with them for a period of time in the Markham Valley/Nadzab area, and when I came back one evening from being out on patrol, the Commanding Officer had sacked a couple of officers a few days before because he was dissatisfied with their performance.

14:00 And when he saw me he looked me in the eye and he said, 'You won't be here tomorrow Hatfield.' My chin must have struck the ground I think. He seemed to take compassion on me and he said, 'You're going off to the British Army in India and I wish I was going with you. Good luck.' And away I went.

Colonel Hatfield can I just slow things down a tad because we're crossing some very important years here.

14:30 **It would be great to get a sense of those initial days when you joined up and the training you were getting. You said it was December 1941?**

Yes December 1941.

For example were you still working with Dobson?

No I was working with my brother at that time.

15:00 **And what sort of work was he doing up there?**

He was harvesting timber from the rain forest, transporting it to the rail head or the local saw mill. There was one in Cairns. Heavy transport vehicles, heavy tractors, and heavy work.

15:30 When Singapore fell I thought, 'Well dash it'…and there was a problem with getting markets for timber too overseas. So that's when I enlisted in the AIF, and I enlisted in Cairns in December 1941.

So I can I just ask. You joined up in Cairns, how long was it before they had you out with your initial training and that kind of thing?

Oh almost immediately. Yes. I was sent down to Brisbane and they

16:00 called the show grounds there the Exhibition Grounds and I was one of many who started their training there. At a centre outside Brisbane I encountered an illness and had to be hospitalised as far as I was concerned, but I finally

16:30 got away and as I mentioned I was selected for the Australian Armoured Division, and I stayed with them until March 1944.

Sorry, you probably told us. Where was the Armoured Division located?

It was

17:00 exercising in the Gunnedah area and then it moved. It was moved from there to Western Australia, and we trained in this area between Mingenew and Moora. There's sandy open country there and it's ideal for training purposes and we did a lot of

17:30 training and we became very efficient. Very good at our job and then of course they disbanded the dash thing, and we went back into the melting pot.

And what was your role with the armoured division there?

I became a Platoon Commander with the rank of Lieutenant. Prior to that I was a private soldier, a Lance Corporal, Corporal, Sergeant and then finally Lieutenant.

18:00 **It's just great to get as much detail as possible and you're doing well. Everything is noted and it's important we get to all of that. But it would be great to get as much detail as you wanted to give us about that period. You mentioned that they were disbanded because the war had… well as far as Australia was concerned, the war had moved to the islands.**

18:30 **And obviously you had risen through the ranks quite swiftly there. So what did a platoon commander do in an armoured division?**

Well the platoon commander commands 36 men. He's got a sergeant and 3 corporals to help him, and he does what he's told by the Company Commander.

19:00 Then the next stage from there I suppose is to become the Company Commander. But I didn't reach the

exotic rank of Company Commander in the armoured division. I was a lieutenant purely and simply. And I was still a lieutenant when I was with the NGIB. I was the company 2IC [second in command]. And as I mentioned, we were stationed at Nadzab in the Markham Valley and we operated from there.

19:30 Anyway, once the CO of the NGIB had released me to go to the British Army, I returned to Melbourne and I embarked on the MV Chuberdak,[?] a motor vessel, a Dutch ship on the 26th of May 1945.

20:00 I went on my way up to Calcutta and joined the Queensland Cameron Highlanders. When I was on the way on the ship I met a young fella by the name of Paul McCullock from South Australia. Descendant from Scottish parentage. And

20:30 after a highly irrigated lunch about half way across the Indian Ocean sitting on the after deck of the Chuberdak, he turned to me and he said, 'Do you know when we get to Calcutta we should join a Scottish regiment.' And I said, "Good idea" and I didn't think anymore about it. When we arrived in Calcutta we were staying at the Grand Central Hotel on Charalingi.

21:00 We were allocated our regiments by the adjutant of Port William and he called out "McCullock for the Cameron Highlanders and Hatfield for the Cameron Highlanders", and I must have shifted in my chair or something and he turned to me and said "well that's what you wanted". And I never envisaged myself in wearing a skirt. In any case I found myself a member of the Queensland Cameron Highlanders with a kilt.

21:30 I never really reconciled with the kilt, I preferred my trues. I didn't mind wearing the tartan but I preferred trousers to having a skirt. Anyway, the CO would look at me, and I would get into my trues at every chance I got, and he'd look at me and he'd say, 'I'm going to lunch over at the Dorsetshire Regiment, I'd take you with me if you were properly dressed.' He wasn't keen on me wearing the trues on the odd occasion.

22:00 Anyhow what happened after that? We were moved…I joined the regiment down at a place called Kamareddi which was located in the independent state of Hyderabad which was presided over by the Nizam of Hyderabad said to be the richest man in the world. I

22:30 I remember his palace very clearly. The Kantoom of the town was called Sa-kun-dra-bad and that's where we were located, and we were to make up part of an invasion force which was to land at Port Swettenham on the Malay Peninsula and invade Malaya from there.

23:00 The Japanese of course were holding all that area. But the dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and that didn't make it necessary any more. The war more or less subsided. Well our next role was to …as Cameron Highlanders was to go to Japan as part of the occupation force, and I was on the advance party which

23:30 left India and went across by ship to Kure, and we went ashore at Kure and there were 6 members of the women's services and 30 members of the Cameron Highlanders in the advance party, and Major Sinclair said, 'When you go ashore you wear your kilt.' 'Yes Sir.' In any case we went ashore in our kilts and the 6 women from the women's services went ashore at the same time as us,

24:00 and the local newspaper reported that 36 members of the women's services at arrived in Kure. So I think some of the local ladies must have got a bit of a surprise when they found out that some of the fellas were a bit different from some of the other ladies they had met.

24:30 Any way the Cameron Highlanders formed part of the occupation force for a period of the occupation, and during that period of time I met Elsa Dickson, sitting outside and she had had an unfortunate experience in the fact that she had lived in Shanghai, had been born in Shanghai, and her mother fearing the worst with the Japanese approaching dispatched

25:00 her to Australia where she thought she'd be safe. But she never made it to Australia. She got as far as Manila and the Japanese bombed the harbour and the captain of the ship put to sea, and left them behind, and she was interned for 3 and a half years. And then came down to Australia and worked for a short time in the Navy Office in Sydney and then enlisted in what was called the Women's

25:30 Voluntary Service, WVS. I beg your pardon, the Women's Auxiliary Service Burma, and they formed part of the occupation force as well. So that's how I came to meet my wife. We were married in Japan at a place called Katooma Bay on the 17th of May 19…57 years ago. 1947.

26:00 **So what sort of work was Elsa doing there?**

Welfare work mostly. See the…prior to going to Japan, she and others in her organization were in Burma, and they were quite far advanced. They were well up amongst the angry men, and they did great service. Mrs Taylor who was the commandant,

26:30 was the wife of Commanding Officer of the Burmese Rifles. It was her idea to form the Women's Auxiliary Service in Burma. And they did a great job and then of course they were moved over to Japan when the Japanese capitulated. Following on that I was posted to Malaya…

27:00 **Sorry. You were in Japan for how long?**

About 18 months.

What were the Cameron Highlanders doing mainly?

Garrison duties and one of the tasks that I was involved in with others was supervision of the first democratic elections held in Japan, and that meant travelling around the various electoral areas and so on, as far as we could…supervising

27:30 and making sure they didn't falsify documents and things. We had to have an interpreter of course. I had an Australian sergeant with me and he was fluent in Japanese and that was that part of it.

How was Japan? This was a year after the surrender?

Well the people were very friendly. It's the politicians and people like that who make wars, the poor people who get clobbered

28:00 are the men and women in the streets. It was the same in Japan. I think the Emperor held tremendous sway with the populace, and the populace would have accepted whatever they were told by the officials. When we got there they were most cooperative and helpful. The were short in many respects of the necessities of life, but otherwise…

28:30 amenable. There was a non fraternisation ban on. General Macarthur [General Douglas Macarthur Commander-In-Chief of the Allied Forces] had his headquarters in Tokyo. He declared non fraternisation and we were not supposed to fraternise with the locals at all.

29:00 We had to just treat them kindly and stay clear. But of course the troops intermingled with the pretty girls and all that sort of thing.

Were friendships formed?

Oh yes, and some of them subsequently married. There was a chap over here or somewhere in Croydon I think. It was in the newspapers at the time. He married

29:30 a Japanese girl and had a bit of a tussle with our government to be able to bring her to Australia. Cherry Parker was her name. But there were a number, not a lot, but a number of Japanese girls married Australian who were members of the occupation force.

30:00 Then as I say I was posted down to Malaya because there was an Emergency going on there. The Chinese communists were active in trying to establish communism in Malaya, and what been the Malayan People's Anti Japanese army became the Malayan People's Anti British army, and

30:30 that was how we found it. I was at – I think I mentioned – I was based at headquarters in (UNCLEAR) and used to do a lot of patrolling and things of that kind. Not a great deal. And I was made Intelligence Officer of the Headquarters. And

31:00 then the Emergency was over there and the Brigadier C.I.B. Jones who was the commander of the region called me in and said 'I feel pretty badly about this Hatfield but the conditions of your employment were that when the Emergency was over we were to return you to Australia. And that's what we're going to have to do.' But he said, 'Incidentally I see

31:30 you have some sort of flying background.' I had learnt to fly in 1938 you see. He said, 'You may be interested in the RAF [Royal Air Force].' If you are I'll see if I can arrange it.' So along with other I went before a selection board for the Royal Air Force at Changi and when we got through…the Board was presided over by a Group Captain and when they satisfied themselves as far as I was concerned,

32:00 he looked me between the eyes and he said, 'Well we've asked you a lot of questions, do you want to ask us any, hey what?' And I said, 'Yes Sir I would like to ask this. If I'm not going to be successful with this interview I'll have to go back to Australia.' 'Oh, you can go back to Australia old boy.' Well I came back to Australia and I checked with the United Kingdom United Service liaison staff repeated

32:30 for a couple of months, and then in desperation I joined the Australian Regular Army. I was stationed up at Puckapunyal and I came in to lunch one day and there was an envelop there from Air Ministry in London advising me I had been accepted for six years with the rank of Flying Officer. But I had to reply to them and say I couldn't accept their offer,

33:00 'I'm not Flying Officer Hatfield, I'm Captain Hatfield of the Australian Regular Army'. So that was that. I had a number of appointments then in Victoria and roundabout and then let's see, what happened?

33:30 My wife and I returned to Australia and as I saw I joined the Regular Army and I was posted up to Puckapunyal with the 2nd Battalion there. I was supposed to go to Staff College and Brigadier Caffey called me into his office and said, 'You're not going to Staff College, you're going to Korea.' So I found myself up in Korea with the 3rd Battalion.

34:00 **You said in 1938 you learnt to fly, how far back did that passion for…**

Oh look. In my day – see I was born in 1919 and that was when Kingsford Smith [Charles Kingsford

Smith, pioneer aviator] flew out to Australia, and for then on right through the 1920s and the 1930s, people like C.W.A. Scott and Amy Johnson and Jim Mollison and Kingsford Smith

34:30 and so on were doing fantastic things flying long distances and things of that kind and pulling it off. There were some tragedies afterwards. But the aviators and their aeroplanes were treated by most youngsters in the way they idolise the musicians of today.

35:00 And I had made up my mind that I was going to make a career out of aviation, but it didn't work out that way because when I went to enlist in the Royal Australian Air Force – this was before all this started – I was found to be red/green colour blind and they wouldn't take me for air crew. That's what happened then.

So who taught you to fly and what sort of planes were you flying?

Well,

35:30 the person…I was working for Dobson's at the time, as I mentioned and I prevailed on the Royal Queensland Aeroclub to send out an instructor with an aeroplane from Rockhampton and that was duly done, and Don McMaster was the chap – the chap who I grew a moustache to look like. He came out and

36:00 we used to fly out of the race course at Claremont. And on this occasion he was overnighting there, on a beautiful moonlight night and he and I were just outside the pub and he said, 'Don't you know any good looking sorts in this place?' And I thought if I turned Don on some of the local girls the families would run me out of town because Don was a pretty fast player.

36:30 I swallowed hard and I said, 'No Don.' And so he said, 'What about if we fly back to Rockhampton?' So he went away and he rang his grease monkey and advised his expected time of arrive at Connor Park Aerodrome Rockhampton, and then we had to get out to the race course and unfold the wings on the Gypsy Moth and put my car away under the grandstand.

37:00 We were delayed in getting away and the boy waiting on Connor Park aerodrome felt we were overdue and he got excited and he rang just about all the police stations between Connor Park and Claremont asking if they had seen anything of an aeroplane. It disturbed the Queensland Police Force quite considerably, and in particular the sergeant in charge of the station at Claremont.

37:30 Anyway we duly arrived at Rockhampton, quite uneventfully, and my brother wrote a bit of a verse about this and it goes something like this:

\n[Verse follows]\n "He became interested in flying in the year of 1938\n and flew from Town to Rockie, and of this I'll now relate.\n He departed at 10.30 and in the dark at that\n in a battered old Gypsy with instructor Don F Mac.\n

38:00 Now this flight is not on record with the aviation lot\n

but it was in Claremont township with a certain local cop.\n The night rest had been shattered by the action of this pair,\n and the noisy old Gypsy as it battered through the air.\n He said the cop when next he saw him, he was still suffering from the strain.\n For your night trips down to Rockie, see you take the blanky blanky train.\n

And he added a bit more:

\n[Verse follows]\n If you insisted on flying up there amongst the clouds,\n you end up down here with me behind those iron bars.\n

38:30 So that was that part of it, and as I say, when I got knocked back from the Royal Australian Air Force I took the army and went there.

So you had done quite a bit of solo flying?

I had done solo flying yes. And then with 3RAR [3rd Battalion Royal Australian Regiment] in Korea. They were on the line in operations when I joined them. So for a time I was 2nd in command of a company and then I became the adjutant of 3RAR. And it

39:00 was then that I saw this notice come in where the Americans were asking for volunteers from the Commonwealth force as observers for this special group, the 61/47 Tactical Control Group. And the role of that group was to direct fighter bombers

39:30 on to targets that were in near proximity to our troops. When the war stabilised along the general line of the 38th parallel in certain incidences the opposing forces were only a few hundred yards apart. You could hear the others talking sometimes and moving about. And there was a lot of squirmishing going on because the north was trying to regain ground that they had lost.

40:00 The north and south were divided along the line of the 38th parallel. At the time when the war stabilised, the south had already taken a pretty substantial slice out of their territory on the eastern side of the Korean Peninsula. And any way I applied for this task and I was accepted. My CO was kind enough to let me go and I was accepted. I duly arrived at Chunchon which is on the central front. Did an

orientation course and then

40:30 went about the job directly, and on the 17th May 1953 I was briefed along with Captain Frankie Winner an at 0.600 hours we flew the first mission of the day to the remote…and we were in the course of carrying out this mission and were shot down. And things got a bit difficult from then on. We had to bail out of the aeroplane because it was a blazing inferno, and Winner was knocked about a bit. His chute was hooked up on a cliff face and they were shooting at him which made him quite uncomfortable naturally. He popped his chute, fell into some rocks and broke his arm. I exited the aircraft from the starboard side because the flames were coming right back over the tail on the port side, and I found myself sitting on a horizontal stabiliser.

Tape 2

00:35 **It's these stories that is what the archive is all about. It's the detail and your personal experiences. What you've given us is a wonderful overview. You've got us to Korea. You've got through those incredible World War II years, then Malaya, Japan. All amazing times. And we're very fortunate to be able to sit here with you and hear about those experiences. So I hope you don't mind but I'd like to delve in there and get a bit more detail.**

01:00 There's things like the Geneva Convention and things like that too.

Well it seems to be the case yes. Well look, you were in the middle of that incredible story of being shot down in Korea. Do you want to finish that off?

Well Winner and I were briefed. I hadn't flown with Winner before.

01:30 I didn't know him all that well. I knew him but not operationally. So we were strange to each other. And we flew the first mission of the day in this particular area, and inboard to the remote control we were given the target coordinates of the target that we were to put a strike on. This target was described as gun emplacements, tank emplacements, trench

02:00 system on the eastern slope of a feature. A large heavily defended feature called Pogae-San Mountain. We flew in and we were given the target coordinates by the control. We flew in and I identified the target. Winner wasn't satisfied. He was strange to me and I was strange to him and he wanted to go back and have another look.

02:30 Well you don't do that but he orbited over the think again, and then clunk. And the machine bounced in the air and the cockpit filled with acrid smelling smoke and visibility wasn't too clear and he cracked the canopy, and as soon as he did the whole caboodle blew up and was blazing. Without saying anything at all he jumped out over the port side and as I mentioned I jumped out on the starboard side because

03:00 of the flames and landed on the tail, and then I popped my shoot and came down, and as I mentioned before he was hung up on the cliff face. My descent was more or less routine. Once I had the matter of the chute under control I was conscious of a cracking sound that I had

03:30 heard on the rifle range – in the butt. I knew what was happening, someone shooting at me and there was nothing I could do about it. I was on the end of a rope with a canopy. But when I landed on the deck and put a burst into a tree about from here to the corner of the room, and I decided I had had enough of his company by that time, so I

04:00 took off for home, and I succeeded getting clear of the enemy and I escaped without further ado. A fighting patrol of the 3rd ROK [Republic of Korea; South Korean Soldiers] Division saw my predicament and they laid down covering fire and I was able to get back to their lines.

How far were you from the line?

Oh about three quarters of a mile. Up hill

04:30 too a bit. I was well and truly in their territory, no man's land. They could have easily picked me up as not. So I was fortunate. They had a fire fight over Frank Winner and we won that one. But then

05:00 when I got to the headquarters of the ROK, I asked for Winner and I was told what had happened. That he had arrived and he was in a pretty bad way. But then a helicopter to evacuate us to the MASH [Mobile Army Surgical Hospital] which was down the road several kilometres, and we left the area with me sitting alongside the pilot and Frank Winner on a litter on the side of the helicopter.

05:30 He was evacuated to the USA. I went back to our own lines. Hack Hanson, the CO of the unit which I belong, the 6147, took me back and I was hospitalised in our own lines for a while, and

06:00 whilst I was recuperating I was walking towards the officers club and I saw an officer who I knew, Orville Scott. I said 'Come and have a beer Scottie.' 'No time for that now Hatfield, there's a boy shot down in the central front. We've got to fly top cover for him. Do you want to come along?' So I said I would and we located him alright.

06:30 And we got a helicopter in to him but we also copped a burst through the starboard main frame, just outboard of the petrol tank. We very nearly joined the guy on the ground, along with Scottie. Anyway we got back from that and that's another story. Yes, I completed 78 missions.

07:00 And even today I hear from certain of the chaps with whom I flew, in Mosquitos. They were good guys, very cooperative, helpful, good company, and quite pleasant really. To begin with the enemy didn't take

07:30 much notice of the Mosquitos. That was the term that the Chinese used. The aircraft, the T6 had an extraordinary sound. It was a sound made by the tip speed of the propeller and it made a very peculiar sound and the Chinese called our aeroplanes mosquitoes. But when they found that the Mosquito was actually responsible for the accuracy of the strike going in,

08:00 they paid a great deal more attention to us. And we were supposed to fly low and slow to direct the strike and make no mistakes, so consequently we were a sitting target for them. We lost quite a few aeroplanes and crews. So things terminated and those of us who were left went home.

08:30 To home and mother. What can I tell you about that.

I'm sure there's more. A couple of times you've said there was a story there, there was a story there. So we'll remember that and we'll come back to those incidents. If you don't mind maybe it would be great to hear about…obviously you were longing to fly.

09:00 **Tell us more about…was it Don McMaster? Who he was and what you learned from him?**

Donald (UNCLEAR) McMaster. Captain D F McMaster. He was Chief Pilot for Qantas afterwards on Super Constellations. He was with the Royal Queensland Aeroclub at the time, that we had him out at Claremont, and

09:30 then he flew with the Air Ambulance. I've forgotten what it was called. The aircraft were supplied by Qantas and they were Fox Moth aircraft. He was a very good pilot. A tall chap. Very good looking fellow, and as I mentioned before, a real lady killer.

10:00 When we were leaving Mackay together to go back to Rockhampton, a beautiful girl came to see us off and she said, 'Think of me some time.' And he said, 'All the time Jess.' And when we arrived back at Connor Park there was another pretty girl waiting there. I think he had forgotten Jess by that time. He was a delightful chap.

10:30 **Did his prowess rub off on you at all?**

No, I didn't have the technique that he had. He came back from a flight to Hong Kong I think. Landed in Sydney and went out to his friend's place. I've forgotten what it's called now, just north of Albury. It was Christmas time and

11:00 he had a heart attack and died. That was a shame.

What did you learn from him about flying?

Oh how to watch your air speed. Don't do silly things. I think just general tuition and that sort of thing. But I flew with others afterwards. He was transferred as I say and went to the Flying Doctor Service.

11:30 But then to connect with that, when I was finally discharged in 1969, back here in Melbourne, I started a flying training organization out at Pirie at Lord Casey's airfield in fact. In conversation he had let me know he wasn't going to renew his lease and

12:00 he wouldn't object if my partner and I took up the lease with the owners. He said not at all so long as he could leave his aeroplanes there, which we agreed to. And on the 16th of April 1968 we were ensconced on Casey Airfield with the company we had formed called Group Air.

12:30 This company was quite successful and we stayed there until the 10th of November 1991. But on the 22nd of November 1969, he…Ron Kerasin was his name, Major R P Kerasin, he took our secretary out flying in a new aeroplane that we had had the agency for, from Helicopter Utilities, a B121.

13:00 I saw them going when they were starting off and she was saying to him, 'Oh you won't do aerobatics will you. You won't do any silly will you?' And I said, 'Now look here, in all seriousness, don't you encourage him. I don't want to be without a secretary tomorrow morning.' Well I was because he went up and he must have done some aerobatics with her, and then he came back and he came down very low

13:30 on the deck, almost zero feet. He pulled up, did a stall turn and came back and impacted with the ground with the considerable force. The propeller came off and the undercarriage folded back and the aeroplane…I was standing at the bowser at the time. I saw it all happen. The aircraft skidded to a halt about 100 yards from where I was and there were fumes coming up out of the engine compartment.

14:00 I found myself saying, 'Why doesn't he get her out of there because the aircraft could blow up at any time?' I went over and opened the door and they were both dead. The shock and impact had killed

them, broken their neck or something like that. So we lost them on the 22nd of November 1969. From then on I had the whole operation to myself whether I liked it or not. But it was by chance that I found out he had a background

14:30 in flying and he had done quite a bit. He had quite an unorthodox experience really. He never learned to fly a light aeroplane. He learned on twins which was an extravagance that you couldn't afford normally. He was with an outfit called Guinea Air Traders which was an adhoc air operation that was presided over by quite a distinguished fellow called Lionel Van Tragg

15:00 who was known all over the world. He was into motor cycle racing. And Ron was in my headquarters. He was my DA and QMG, Deputy Assistant and Quarter Master General and we had troops in camp at Puckapunyal. I was driving up there with him and he made some sort of comment about something and I said, what was the power plant, what engine was in that aircraft?

15:30 And he said, 'Pratt and Whitney Wasp 1830 1932.' I said, 'You know something about aeroplanes?' I didn't know he did. And he told me he had been with Guinea Air Traders. We talked on and I found out he had quite a lot of experience. He graduated from the right hand seat to the left hand seat in twins,

16:00 and that was one of the reasons why I suppose he had this accident. I found out afterwards that the Beagle used to lose height in the looping plane. It was very accurate in the rolling plane but it would lose height…and that's what brought him to grief. So there we were, we lost him, and we found we had the place all to ourselves.

16:30 Elsa ran the club house, and she became more famous for her hamburgers that I did for its flying training. People still say, 'when are you going to make some hamburgers?' They recognise her for her hamburgers.

Connecting it back to your first experience with flying. You talked about all those great aviators, did any of them ever land up in Queensland central?

17:00 I didn't know…when they were round about I was at a distance. But yes, let's see. Kingsford Smith he did barnstorming tours through the area.

17:30 Charles…no further south. Bert Hinkler of course was from Bundaberg. No I didn't know them personally, but I knew others like Harold Fraser, Captain Harold Fraser, MC [military cross] from World War I, and he owned Rockhampton Aerial Services.

18:00 He had a unique experience with a DH50. He took a group of people up to Claremont who were going to Logan Downs. I mentioned that Logan Downs had had the telephone on when I was born. He took this group of four people from Rockhampton up to Claremont and they waited there for a

18:30 time. There had been a shower of rain and car from Logan Downs was delayed getting to meet the passengers. And they were just about to depart for Logan Downs when the car arrived. So Harold set out then on his own, and in air time he would have just about been over head of Logan Downs, but instead he was east of Capella,

19:00 when one of the blades broke off the propeller of the aeroplane and the engine wrenched down hard and fell out. And it took the floor of the cabin with it and it left him sitting up in the back…the pilot sat well behind the passengers in a DH50. The passenger cabin was for four and the pilot sat behind, like with the Fox Moth.

19:30 Anyway the engine came out and he then found himself out of trim and falling tail first and with great skill he manoeuvred what remained of the aeroplane's control. So he struck the tail down on a tree and that pitched the aircraft forward, and the undercarriage which had been this way turned around this way and broke the aircraft fuselage in half almost right in front of his face.

20:00 That was on Tim's property called Winder. Lester Tim saw the aircraft come down and the dust fly up and thought 'God, dash'. So he cranked up his old bus and tore over there and when he got there he couldn't find the pilot. The pilot had either fallen out or done something. So Tim who was a bushman thought if he survived the crash and the impact,

20:30 and had taken off from here, he would leave tracks. So he walked around the aeroplane like that and he found the tracks alright. They were leading off to Capella. Then he found a helmet and goggles that had been jumped on like this. Absolutely…Harold Fraser had a bit of a temper and he wasn't too pleased with what had happened with the old bus.

21:00 Bill Robinson I knew. It was a weekend and he and his party were driving back from Magenta where they had been playing tennis and they picked up this chap on the road, walking along. And he obviously wasn't a swaggie [itinerant worker]. He was quite tidily dressed.

21:30 So they gave him a ride and then he said to Bill, 'Let's have a drink if the pub's open?' And Bill said, 'Well if it's not open then we'll open it.' It was a Sunday. So they went into the pub and then this person asked to use the telephone and Bill heard him say to the person he was speaking, 'Do you have my flying licence there?' And obviously the person said yes, and he said, 'Well tear the bloody thing up.'

22:00 And when he came back Bill asked him what all that was about and he said he had had an accident with the aeroplane and he said he thought he would give the game away. But he was back a few days after that flying the mail out to Mount Coolan. And he went on for a long time. I've got pictures of the aeroplane and that sort of thing if you're interested.

22:30 **So how important was the plane. You said that the phones weren't connected at your place…**

That was much much later of course. This was in 1936 that the accident happened. He had two Fairbairns and Major Russel and his wife, they were the passengers. And they were going up…the Fairbairns…G.A Fairbain was in situ at Logan Downs

23:00 at that stage. They had taken it over. My uncle had been part share holder. But they owned it. They had outright ownership of Logan Downs. And these people were going up, the Russel's and the Fairbairns, to visit, and they very nearly bought the farm. They were lucky enough not to.

23:30 **Just changing the subject slightly. Was there any military tradition in your family?**

No. They were graziers. My antecedents came out to Australia in the first fleet back in the 1700s, mid 1800s I should say. Not 1700, that was Captain Cook.

24:00 Yeah. They were quite successful. When they let him off, or let him out, my antecedent settled at Berrimah. There was a gaol at Berrimah, just out from Newcastle a bit. Just outside Sydney and another place that I've forgotten the name of for the moment.

24:30 And he owned land and he had two schooners, but his main task was carting, transporting the necessities of life from Broadtown which is St Lawrence up in Queenstown into Copperfield where there was a copper mine, and then carting copper back to the port,

25:00 and so he was getting it two ways. He had owned two grazing properties. One called Yattan which was just a short distance inland from St Lawrence. It was a fairly large properties where he raised draft horses and cattle.

25:30 Two of his sons were actually drowned there. I've been back to the area and I've seen the graves. The headstones are still there. And he owned another property called Fleurs which was named by Oscar de Satney, one of the original settlers in that area. Oscar de Satney was a Frenchman.

26:00 He called the property La Fleur, The Flowers, but the locals corrupted that by calling it Fleurs. 'I'm working out at bloody Fleurs.'

Otherwise a colourful name. So how large was the property that your father owned?

Twenty seven thousand acres.

26:30 But Logan Downs you literally could drive all day on Logan Downs. The roads were bad of course. You weren't speeding. But Logan was about…somewhere between 250 and 300,000 acres. It extended for miles and miles and miles.

27:00 **So the stock was all cattle?**

No, sheep and cattle. The back of the property we ran cattle, or my father did, and the flatter areas were for sheep. But as I tell you the 1926 and the 1933 droughts which knocked us financially.

And then

27:30 **of course there was the Depression?**

Yes, that's right.

So what do you recall of those hardships?

One of the things I suppose when you make a comparison today, there was no social service to speak of and if you didn't have a job you were pretty much on your beam end.

28:00 There were a lot of swaggies around about. You know. 'Once a jolly swagman.' Humping their bluey from point A to point B. The people would come to the homestead carrying their swag and they'd ask for work in return for a meal, and when we could, their needs were met. But it was really very tough for the average individual.

28:30 There was a thing called the Gold Grant which many unemployed availed themselves of. They worked in (UNCLEAR) and the other gold diggings around Claremont and they got paid for the gold they dug out, and they got an allowance…but it wasn't very much per week, to sustain themselves whilst they were foraging. The same thing right across the

29:00 country I would say.

How did Claremont itself fair during those years?

Oh well it was…I suppose it was the largest town in that particular area. You see in 1916 there was a tragic flood. It washed the whole damn town away. The Aborigines apparently warned the settlers not to build where they did because

29:30 the Aboriginals had seen what happened when a heavy downpour of rain and more than one of the rivers coincided with the other one simultaneously. About 8.30 in the morning there was a wall of water as high as the house came down and took people by surprise.

30:00 So Claremont was rebuilt from that disaster. It was quite prosperous. I hear now that there's a place called Murrinbah which is between Claremont and Mackay. That's a mining town and that evidently takes a lot of the sustenance away from Claremont. Blair Athol is a coal mining town which is

30:30 at the end of the line coming out from Rockhampton. The railway line came Rockhampton, Emerald, Claremont, Blair Athol. That's how it used to be. There have been many changes. When I went

31:00 back in 19…about 4 or 5 years ago. My sister-in-law asked if we could go out to Blair Athol. Her father was the Church of England parishioner there and she said she would like to go out to Blair Athol because he had quite a few of his flock there. The road system had changed and

31:30 I saw a horseman and I said, 'Can you direct us to Blair Athol?' He said there wasn't much of it there, they had taken it away years ago. Lock stock and barrel. That sort of thing happened because I got lost between here and Berwick the other day because there had been a change in the road. And I had been driving back and forward between here and there for 30 years.

32:00 When you think you know these places and changes take place, it can be quite confusing.

Where did you got to school?

I was educated by correspondence on the property and then I had a short period of time at grammar school.

Where was the grammar school?

Rockhampton.

What can you recall of those years?

32:30 I suppose the plum jam would be the thing I remember most. Plum jam and more plum jam.

That was the staple was it?

I think Mr Keller used to by it by the hundredweight. He was the headmaster. J. Keller.

And how much work did you actually do on the land there?

Oh, well on the property?

33:00 Oh well, you know you grew up with the thing really. There was always something to do. You would hear the rain on the corrugated iron roof. It was a happy sound because you knew that the rain was needed. The grass would be green as a consequence and the other thing was that there would be no work the following day.

33:30 Oh mustering. Mustering for shearing, crutching and that sort of thing. Bringing the sheep into the shearing shed over some distance. Mostly that and the same thing with the cattle, getting them ready and sending them off…nothing really exciting.

34:00 You know, when I think about it, talking about mustering. We had sheep dogs on the place, kelpies. And we also…they had their kennel up at the back of the place, and the dogs if they heard a car or anything they'd used to bark and make an infernal noise and my brother would walk out onto the rear porch and he look up and he'd call

34:30 out to them, 'Go on sit down there, what's the matter with you!' And the old cockatoo that we had sitting up in the bougainvillea he got so that he could say it himself. 'Go on sit down there, what's the matter with you' when he heard the bark. In any case, we had a chap called Jim Wilton who would break in horses for us and he was working in the stock yards

35:00 just a short distance away from the house and he used to come down in the mornings for a cup of tea, and he arrived earlier than usual this particular day and my mother commented on that. She said, 'You're early today Jim.' 'Yes and I'll tell you why Mrs Hatfield' he said. 'I was working with the horse up there and the old cocky was sitting on the rails and minding his own business and

35:30 another one came in and landed alongside him. He put his crest up like this and screeched out loud and the old one said to the new one, 'Go on sit down there what's the matter with you.' He said, 'Mrs Hatfield, when you think you hear the cockatoos talking amongst themselves like that, it's time for a cup of tea.'

36:00 Well you didn't have much to entertain you know you. We had a radio, a battery radio. We didn't have

electric power until much later. Kerosene lamps. No refrigeration. A Coolgardie safe [cabinet with cloth sides, dampened to give a cooling effect to the contents]. That was all we had. It wasn't until much later that we had refrigerators.

36:30 I suppose everybody was the same way so you didn't think it unusual.

And the radio, what sort of shows would you listen to?

Oh, there was a Young Australia League, YAL which used to broadcast from South Australia that we would listen to.

37:00 We used to get them. They were really very good stations and good entertainment. Uncle Vic and Uncle Bert were the two who conducted it. I suppose country music was one of the things we used to hear a bit.

37:30 Tex Morten was one of them. He used to perform. You would get the news of course.

What about sport?

Sport? Yes, the rugby was played in Queensland of course.

38:00 **Sorry, you were talking about rugby. Was it League or Union where you were?**

Union. Yeah the locals played it locally. They had teams in Claremont, a couple of teams and a team in Blair Athol. And they used to compete like that.

38:30 Sport didn't have the influence in those days in that area that it does today in this area. People these days…well they become indoctrinated at an early age. My

39:00 grandchildren they're interested and they have been from the time they were quite small. They've grown up with it. But it predominated to the same extent that it does here. The country races. Every year, the picnic races, a big event. That's when I first met Arthur Shutton in 1938. He shouts from Moorabbin but he's now deceased. But he's a well know chap right throughout Australia. He flew in on this occasion at the picnic races.

39:30 He was 'sucker bashing' as they call it.

Sucker bashing?

Joy riding.

40:00 Come in sucker. I've got one of his old aeroplanes now. I'll show you a picture of it later. Nice little aeroplane.

Tape 3

00:32 In the services, the army, first of all you are a recruit, and you're taught your left foot from your right and so on. You're instructed as a group and then finally if you're selected for promotion you're instructed in a group apart.

01:00 NCO [non commissioned officer] training I suppose is the first stage towards promotion, but the thing that struck me that was so different, was that I had never really mixed, or lived cheek by jowl with a lot of individuals, such as you do in the service and the barrack room.

01:30 That was unusual. But I quickly became accustomed to that. Life was pretty much normal. You carried out the instructions of what you were told to do. You had the canteen. Your meals of course, you had to full in and line up for your meals.

02:00 Go passed a feeding point. The food in those days wasn't as good as it is now. If an individual had bad feet or something of that kind, and they couldn't march and he wasn't too good regimentally, they'd put him in the kitchen, so he became a cook. And that's

02:30 not really the basic necessity of ensuring good food. So subsequently they got professional catering, indoctrination and training and the food was very very good indeed. And of course an army marches on its stomach is the expression.

Where was this?

Well initially,

03:00 the first…the racecourse at Sandgate in Brisbane. That was where I started off doing recruit training. But as I mentioned before, when I marched in – I came down by train from Townsville, and we were put into the Exhibition Grounds in Brisbane,

03:30 and we were given basic training there, foot drill and that sort of stuff. And then we went into this camp on the racecourse at Sandgate. It was from there that I was allocated to the armoured division, but I was initially doing basic training, foot drill and that sort.

04:00 I hadn't even got to the stage of firing a weapon or that sort of stuff. But when I went into the Armoured Division I was allocated to the Royal Australian Service Corp, 'Glamour Grocers' they were called. And I was a corporal and I had six vehicles and a motor bike. Six fellows.

04:30 When you moved anywhere you moved as a convoy, and your roll in that regard was to maintain the interval, vehicles to the mile. Forty vehicles to the mile with fifty yards between each vehicle. And that was necessary to ensure you maintained control

05:00 all the time on route. We did a long exercise in that regard because we went from Port Pirie in South Australia to Kalgoorlie by road. So I've ridden across the Nullarbor Plain on a motorbike.

What sort of bike was it?

Indian. An Indian had the gear stick here, and the Harley had the gearstick here.

05:30 The throttle and the spark control on the Indian was on the opposite side from the Harley. And I had an Indian allocated to me permanently, but we had to ferry a Harley from point A to point B and as I was passing the check point, I skidded into some gravel and went into a 6 wire fence. And I was picking myself and the bike up when the CO came passed and he said,

06:00 'Hatfield I thought you could ride a motorcycle?' And I said, 'Yes Sir, so did I.' Anyway, that was quite an experience going by road from Port Pirie to Kalgoorlie. That's a long long way, and in order to keep control of your vehicles

06:30 in the interval, the section commander had to ride up and down you know. Close up, or get back a bit. So it wasn't a matter of just setting out from point A and riding along, you were riding up and down like this. God knows how many miles we did in getting across there. But the bright spot was, when we were approaching Kalgoorlie, the Provos [military police] came out and met us. They were good

07:00 fellas these Provos and they said, 'I tell you what, when you get into town and you get leave, Hannan's Brewery opens at 9am in the morning, and you can get free beer, you just form a link.' So we got onto that.

07:30 The pubs in Kalgoorlie ran a curious schedule. Whatever the closing time was, say it was 10 o'clock or something at night, a tall sunburned serious looking fellow in a wide brimmed hat would come around and say, 'Right oh you fellas you've had a fair go, now off you go.' Policeman. So you'd all trundle out and they'd shut the doors.

08:00 Then you'd walk around to the back door and come in again, and all probability the first fellow you'd see there would be the policeman enjoying the hospitality of the pub. But it was a free and easy town the old Kalgoorlie, and an interesting place too.

It was a gold mining town wasn't it? Was it rough?

Not really no. I think

08:30 there were mines there but we didn't get involved in that. We were encamped and this camp we were in was enclosed by a large high fence. I don't know what it had been before, I never asked. But when we went in we were virtually tied in. And then of course we set out from there and we went to Mingenew

09:00 and up to Geraldton and round about and like that. We didn't go into Perth.

So what was the purpose of the convoy? Was it just for training?

They were relocating the Armoured Division. And that was part of the Armoured Division. Relocating from Central New South Wales where we had been in training, and of course we were training and we were training and we were training.

09:30 And it was getting awfully boring and things of that sort. Red Robbie was very stern, but we used to… they used to come round expecting our vehicle and so on. The engine housing and underside of the vehicle had to be cleaned because evidently the figured that idleness led to bad discipline and that kind. If the commander insisted that everything

10:00 be spit and polish, then we would always be so busy that we wouldn't have time to complain. I suppose it worked.

And what vehicles did you have?

They were Chevs mostly. They were Chevrolet military vehicles. Not the Blitz Buggy. We got those afterwards. They had a short nose and a lot of angles to the shape of the thing.

10:30 Heavy in the steering, crash gear box and a hell of a damn thing to drive under any circumstances. But of course very sturdy. You couldn't break them. But the ones we had at that time were conventional 13

hundred weight, 2 ton, road vehicles. And as I mentioned, a section consisted of 6 vehicles and 12 men, a driver and a co driver.

11:00 And a corporal. Then the company consisted of 3…that was a section. A platoon consisted of 3 sections, and a company consisted of 3 platoons.

And were these weapon carrying vehicles?

Oh yes. We were issued with personal weapons, but we didn't carry heavy weapons

11:30 of any sort. Of course the tank boys had them. General Grant and Sherman Tank. The Grant tank was equipped with an air cooled engine, an aeroplane engine actually which is unusual for a road vehicle to have a air cooled engine of that sort, a radial.

12:00 But the reason for that was because North Africa is a pretty waterless country and hot too, and the… there was also I suppose…there couldn't have been a surplus of aeroplane engines of that sort, I don't know. They also had a diesel radial called a Greebersun[?].

12:30 This was a very good engine. But the Grant was Continentals W670. The tank crew – well of course you can imagine in hot weather. The tanks used to get very hot, very very hot.

So did you learn to operate a tank?

13:00 I didn't drive tanks, no. No I didn't. I was just on transport. Another reason I wasn't very interested in doing what I had been doing before with my brother. And I got away from it as soon as I could.

You went on to do jungle training instruction at Canungra, how did that come about?

13:30 **Did that follow on from being in the Armoured Division?**

Well you see,

14:00 in the Armoured Division I was in transport and when I was going up for pre-selection, we went up before Colonel Knight and one of the questions he asked was, 'If you can't be accepted in your own corps, would you be prepared to transfer to another corps?'

14:30 And I was not the first to go through, and someone I knew, when he came out I said, 'How did it go?' and he said, 'Well Colonel Knight asked me whether I would be prepared to transfer corps' and I said 'I wouldn't'. And the colonel said, 'Highly commendable, and I'll see you're rewarded for that.'

15:00 Loyal to the corps you see. And I thought oh dear, I wanted to move. Anyway, when he asked me the question I said, 'Yes sir I would.' And he said, 'Well if that's the way you feel, I'll help you in any way I can.' So I transferred into infantry and that's when I went to the jungle training centre, after I had been to OCT2 [2 Officer Training Unit]. I was in the Officer Training Unit in South Australia at Woodside.

15:30 A very cold place. And that's where I did my basic officer's training. I graduated from there and went to Canungra. The McPherson Ranges are very steep and well timbered and that sort of thing. You had a problem of maintain direction in places.

16:00 It was also very fatiguing and I was putting one platoon through after the other through training, battle drills and things of that sort, and I was getting more and more cheesed off. As I mentioned before, I was applying for everything under the thumb, and I got to New Guinea with the New Guineans.

Before we get on to New Guinea, can you give me a time frame here. When were you at Woodside?

At Woodside in South Australia? Yes I can.

16:30 11th of March to 7th of July 1944.

And then you were at Canungra from July…

OC2 was 11th of March 1944. JJC Canungra was July 1944 to the 26th of December 1944, and 2NGIB [2nd New Guinea Infantry Battalion] Nadzab was December 1944 to the 26th of June 1945.

I would like to talk a bit more about the Canungra training and what your role was?

Well as a training instructor, it was to teach the soldier battle drills that he would use in actual contact and combat. And we used live ammunition too. When we said keep your head down

17:00 we meant it because there were live bullets passing over…you know, he's on the deck there and if he stood up he'd cop it. I don't know how this practice would be accepted in this day and age. They'd faint or they'd have a judicial enquiry or something like that. And we did, sometimes we would have causalities, quite inevitably. But when I was

17:30 at (UNCLEAR) School Harvey in Western Australia, we were going over the assault course there and it involved getting over a bridge, and you had to shin up and get over the top and go down the other side. And the instructors were throwing plugs of gelignite with a fuse in it and I found myself

18:00 towards the top of the bridge and something lobbed in front of me like this and I looked and it was gelignite with a fuse – I'm not kidding you. It was a stick of gelignite with a fuse and it would have blown my bead off if I didn't get rid of it, and I sure did get rid of it. But they got reality into training. A Vickers machine gun has got a very flat trajectory, and you can fire a Vickers gun if you put it up say five feet above the ground, you could fire across an open space

18:30 and the bullets, the trajectory of the bullets would remain at that height. Some weapons are quite different. They have a culmination point, they go out like so and come down, but others, and the Vickers is an example go straight through like that and they're very useful for that type of training. So reality was there and live ammunition was used and if you didn't stick to the procedure,

19:00 you could find yourself injured. One of the interesting chaps that I met. I was in convalescence in Brisbane, I had contracted something, and there was a fellow there at the same time who was having treatment done to his legs and his name was Bernard O'Reilly. And Bernard O'Reilly was the chap that found the Stinson that crashed in Lamington.

19:30 The O'Reilly's had a guest house up in the McPherson Ranges, right up in a most remote locality and Bernard was a very expert bushman. He'd seen the Stinson fly over on this particular morning and he saw it disappear in the direction of Lismore and when it didn't arrive at Lismore there were reports it had been sighted as far south as the Hawkesbury River

20:00 which misled people. And then someone on board a ship said they had seen it out off shore and the aircraft had gone into the water. It transpired anyway that it hadn't done that, and Bernard O'Reilly thought 'Well, people are obviously becoming confused, but I did see the aircraft and I saw the direction in which it was flying'. Now if it crashed

20:30 it would have crashed on the high points. The ridges ran across this way and the aircraft was traversing that way. So he saddled up his horse, took some bread and a hunk of beef or something and away he went into the bush, and he rode as far as he could and then he took the saddle off his horse and turned it loose and then he went on by foot. And when he got to the top of one ridge he looked out and he could see on the other ridge

21:00 that the foliage was a different colour and that conveyed the idea to him that fire might have caused it. It was the time of the year that fires didn't prevail because it was moist. So he decided to investigate. So he started off and he went down like so and across the bottom and up the other side. It probably took him about an hour and a half to do this. When he got up to the mark he had seen, and he called out and to his amazement he was answered.

21:30 And the survivors Binstead and Proud were there. They were injured, badly injured. They were lying alongside the wreckage of the Stinson. A third person survived. His name was Westray. He was an Englishman. He was quite mobile and

22:00 he started off for help but he didn't get there. And there's a memorial to him on the inland route there between Queensland and New South Wales at Mount Wellington. Poor Westray set off, I suppose in a partial state of shock. He followed a water course down and he came to a point where he had to get down using vines that were growing there.

22:30 These vines, although the trunk could have been as big as that, there's no strength in them. He tried to go down the cliff on this vine and the thing snapped and he injured himself. And survived just long enough to have a cigarette and then he died.

23:00 Bernard O'Reilly, when he arrived at the scene of the wreck, he spoke with Binstead and Proud and he got a message back to base and then he went looking for Westray. He found Westray sitting on a rock. He thought he was alive with his cigarette case alongside him there. He called out and got no answer and when he went down he found he was dead sitting up.

23:30 The Stinson disaster was something that was very clearly remembered. That was in 1937. It was quite remote.

And tell me again, how did you come to meet Bernard O'Reilly?

In a convalescent depot.

24:00 He had varicose veins and they were injecting some sort of coagulant into his legs, poor fellow. And in the end they didn't take him anyway. But there he was. He was so adept and competent in his bush craft and everything else, he would have been quite invaluable in circumstances where he could have used those qualities. But finally they didn't take him after they knocked him around a bit.

24:30 **And what were you doing in the convalescent depot?**

I had contracted pneumonia, and I was getting over it. Whilst I was out in the McPherson Ranges the… Bernard O'Reilly's sister Kate had a contract with the surveyors and foresters there to supply them and she had pack horses,

25:00 we'd be out exercising and suddenly we'd hear the clatter of hooves and here Kate would come past and

she'd have one leg hooked over the pummel of the saddle like so rolling a cigarette with one hand and holding the reins with the other. She was a character. There was no doubt about it. She was as rough as could be. But she could be a lady too. Very competent. At the guest house at night

25:30 they used to have an open fire place there because it used to get so tired and when it came time for bed-ee-bies, Kate would appear with a bucket full of water, slosh it straight into the fire. You can imagine what would have happened. Sparks and smoke and stuff, so people got the hint pretty smartly.

How did you come to be at the O'Reilly's guest house?

It was in this remote locality and out of more or less curiosity,

26:00 we took some patrols through there, and that's how I met the contingent of the O'Reillys. There's a book about this called Green Mountain. The O'Reilly's came up from New South Wales and they settled in this remote locality and they used to…the only way you could get in was by foot, and then more recently…when I say recently, round about the time I was there,

26:30 they cut a jeep track in. So a four wheel drive could in actual fact get up to the guest house.

So you were taking Canungra trainees up?

Yes. You know, one of the problems you encounter with troops or anybody if they're unaccustomed to the sounds of the night…in the rain forest at night,

27:00 you can sit down and you'll hear all sorts of sounds, and if you're in close contact with the enemy you could believe they were responsible for the noises, where in fact it was a big old snake or something of that sort, or a bird. So it was necessary to indoctrinate the troops into that environment, amongst others. That was one of the problems with the 8th Division in Malaya, that they

27:30 weren't accustomed to living and working at night in the rain forest. And this they had to overcome. But anyway that's what we had to do.

So how did you get your knowledge of jungle warfare?

We went through a jungle training course first. We did a parallel. A parallel course to the one we used to put the troops through. Not as NCOs, but as diggers [soldiers].

28:00 You could have your stripes [sergeant's stripes] but you didn't use them. You were there as a student. You took the orders, you didn't give them.

So how did you find that. Was it very rigorous?

Well it was yes. It was rigorous when you were going through as a trainee and

28:30 even more rigorous when you were repeatedly putting trainees through. And this is what was getting to me. I thought this is no damn good. After my experience with the armoured divisions, being on the sand plains of Western Australia and not getting any where. I was becoming a bit browned off. I had set off with the idea – you know, shortly after I had enlisted I wanted to be confronting the enemy.

29:00 And once you accept that then you set out to do something about it.

It had been a while hadn't it. About 3 years?

Yes, too long anyway. People talk to me about your reaction to contact with the enemy…after you've been in contact with the enemy for a while, the human mind sort of adjusts, and what was normally usual and extraordinary

29:30 just becomes matter of fact. It's part of something you work with. The contrast in the case of the Korean War came when you had 5 days R&R. Rest and recuperation. You came out of the line and by some means or other got across to Japan and went to the clubs and things of that sort and

30:00 if you were so inclined toyed with the locals, and then you had to face up to going back again. Coming out – that was lovely, great, you were in high spirits, but going back again wasn't too good.

So you were at Canungra and you decided you really needed to …

Yes, get out of there. And that's when Mick Stewart

30:30 came to me and said there was a job at the NGIB, and at the same time I applied for the British Army in India. And of course there was a delay in getting to NGIB and I got there, and after I had been there for some time my application for British service in India came through. So I got them both.

Now, MGIB, that's very unusual. I

31:00 **haven't come across any one who was with NGIB…**

Yes, New Guinea Infantry Battalion.

I'd like to talk about that in detail. Why did you choose, or what did you know about NGIB

before?

They were asking for volunteers and I had served with the native troops before and I thought that would be unusual, and it was.

31:30 Quite unusual because we were getting…when I finally got to the regiment up there they were getting recruits in who 6 weeks before they had been in the village. Some were head hunters. And there's one thing I learnt about the New Guineans is this. You can discipline them most heavily and severely providing you're right, but

32:00 don't make the mistake of making him guilty when he's not, because if you turn your back on him then you can have an accident and he'll be the cause of it. They were strange chaps. First of all I regarded them as being sub human, and I very quickly got away from that. There were personalities and everything else that you find in any group of people. There was the hard case, there was the doer, there was the googly one and so on.

32:30 **So tell me, where were you based?**

At…initially at Nadzab, and there was a big United States Air Force airfield at Nadzab and that's in the Markham Valley. We worked out from there. But we were training the natives.

33:00 **So did you go directly from Australia to Nadzab?**

Yes.

Where did you embark from Australia?

33:30 Townsville. We flew up to Finschhafen and then went across from there to Lae. Finschhafen was an interesting place. It was a very very busy airfield and whilst I was waiting for a plane – I was there for about half a day waiting on the ground,

34:00 I saw a Liberator come in with 2 engines out and I saw a DC3 or C47 it was called, come in with one engine. And I saw a young fella with a Boomerang fighter touch down, bounce 3 times and then went off at 90 degrees into the bush and came down. Things like that. Then he appeared, came back and on to the strip somewhat shamefacedly, but he seemed to be okay.

34:30 But it was an action packed incident in a very short period of time.

Why were these planes crashing like this?

The Wirraway of course, she's a sister ship to the T6 that we used to fly, and they're a bit tricky if you don't stay up on the pedals. And the surface at Finschhafen was PSP, perforated steel planking.

35:00 And this stuff you can lay it down on mud and it will give you…the planks are about that wide and about as long as the room. They interlock one to the other. So you can imagine with a surface like that what an incredible noise it made when an aircraft landed down on it. It rattled and so on.

35:30 **But it's a smooth solid surface?**

Yes, very effective. So that was that at Finschhafen. Then of course we went over to Lae. The Japanese had a hospital dug in under ground at Lae. I think it was about a 200 bed hospital. The Orientals, the Asians are very keen to dig in. The Popasan Mountain which I referred to and where I got shot down, that was riddled with passage ways and things of that sort. And of course in Vietnam they did the same.

So you arrived at Lae and what happened then?

36:00 Well Lae was a fairly civilised sort of place. As far as I can remember, I went to the officers club and got stonkered. Then we finally got transport out to the unit at Nadzab. Lae was quite busy too of course because that was one of the old civilian aerodromes that operated from Lae and up to Wau. Wau was an incredible place.

36:30 The landing strip was on a gradient of one in twelve. You used to land up hill and take off down hill. And the first Bristol Freighter to come to this country was being demonstrated by the demonstrator pilot and he took it up to Wau and the Bristol Frightener and they called them,

37:00 had pneumatic brakes which relied on air. The Captain parked this thing on the strip and the air bled away from the system and the aircraft trundled off down the road, down the strip and crashed into the gully at the bottom of the hill. So that was that.

37:30 **So you've picked up your unit in Nadzab?**

Yes I was met there.

And who were they? Can you give me a picture of who they were?

This was a static camp and the commanding officer was the highest up the hill and down below him was the officers mess, and down below that was the officers quarters,

38:00 and down a bit lower was the sergeants and warrant officers quarters, and right down below were the troops. And there you are. So that was how it was done. As I said, we had fellows there, native boys, who six weeks before they came to us, they were still in their villages, and in that

38:30 short period of time they were drilling on the parade ground and polishing their brass and doing all the sort of things that European soldiers do. But the Papuan Infantry Battalion originated and was principally Papuans but they also had

39:00 New Guineans incorporated. When the Japanese were pushed out of Papua, the Papuan boys in the Papuan Infantry Battalion said to the New Guineans, 'Japan man gone, finished. Place belong you, you look after Japan man.' So they dispatched the new Guineans back over to

39:30 New Guinea which was just over the fence, and the Papuans stayed back in Papua. And we got our chaps out of the Papuan Infantry Battalion and they formed the nucleus of the New Guinea Infantry Battalion. There was a very good sergeant, Sergeant Tapioli.

40:00 He was very good fellow and he was a New Guinean, and he had a distinguished record with the Papuan Infantry Battalion, and Mick Stewart the CO on a few occasions made mistakes. And one of the mistakes he made was to insist that our chaps wear 3 straight stripes (in the case of a sergeant) on their lap lap.

40:30 And also if you had had periods of detention, 3 months or something of that sort, then you had 3 stripes. So that conflicted with what the New Guinean considered to be right and proper practice. And Sergeant Tapioli who as I say was a distinguished fellow and he paraded himself to the CO and the CO heard his case and things of that sort, and of course all the boys in his company were waiting for him to come back to find out what the verdict was to be. And of course Stewart said 'No go, get back to your lines, do as you're told'. So he was going back to his lines and the boys met him and they said what happened and he told them, and they got angry about that because they had a great respect for Tapioli. An officer had just joined us about 2 or 3 days before, a chap called Andy Kerr, and he had the misfortune to be coming down the trail behind Tapioli and he arrived there in time to be greeted by the boys of Tapioli's company, and one of them…

Tape 4

00:33 **I'd like you to back track a fraction and pick up the story.**

Yes. Sergeant Tapiloi's members of his company were waiting to find out what the verdict had been and he just had time to get back down to where they were waiting for him, and they said how did it go and he said no good.

01:00 Poor old Andy Kerr who had just been with us a couple of days was walking behind and the boys were very volatile in some respects, they'd lose their head…

01:30 As I say the boys were waiting to get the verdict and they became very angry, and poor old Andy Kerr copped it. A boy was there holding a machete and Andy was walking towards the company and this boy was taking swipes at him like this, and Andy who was quite a courageous fellow, put his hand

02:00 up and he caught the knife, caught the fellow's hand and the fellow pulled the machete down and cut Andy quite badly across the hand. Of course as soon as he had drawn blood the boy knew he was in great trouble. He could get all sorts of punishment. Anyway he tried to do Andy over but Andy got the better of him.

02:30 We had a problem. At 9 o'clock that morning we were at full strength, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon we had about 10 soldiers because a great shame came upon the unit because they had done this thing you see. So they absconded. We got a message to say

03:00 old Harpoon, an old time ex police boy told us that some of the troops had decided to come back and do us over.

What was their reason for that?

Well as I say they're very volatile and it's hard to understand that this business of shame – if they did some discreditable to themselves they would become shameful of it and their reaction might

03:30 be not to decide to live a better life but to go the whole hog. And this is evidently what they had come to the conclusion that they were in trouble so they left us. And as I say at about 9 o'clock in the morning we were full strength and at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon we had about 20 people.

I'm not sure what the incident was that lead to them being angry?

Well it was the fact that Sergeant Tapioli wanted stripes.

04:00 He wanted his stripes on his arm and not on his lap lap because that meant detention. And the others all agreed with that, and that was true too. The Afro-American soldiers were wearing the same stripes, the

same badges of rank as the white Americans. That's where the precedent came from.

04:30 And they wanted to be the same as the Afro-Americans. And Mick Stewart said 'No, you'll do what you're told.'

Did they wear shirts?

Good question. No, they used to wear their badges of rank on a fabric sleeve, a thing that fitted around here. No, they didn't wear shirts, not ever, no.

05:00 Bare top, bare buff and nothing on their head. Anyway they had done this thing and we had to sort it out and we got the message from the old …that they were going to do us over. So we sent a message back to them saying, try it and we'll be in the officers mess and we've got machine guns and we'll receive you.

05:30 **What weapons did they have?**

They didn't have automatic weapons. They had stones and sticks and whatever. We had collected the weapons in and got them away from them, out of their reach. So that was the situation. Then we decided to resolve it. They drifted back one by one until

06:00 most of them were back there, and the CO of the Pacific Island Regiment was an old New Guinean hand, he came. We fell in on parade as many as were there, and the commander from the Pacific Island Regiment addressed the troops about what a bad thing it was that they should harm somebody

06:30 and they didn't have anything to do with it and things of that kind, and he evidently saw a youngster in the front row of the platoon and the boy was shivering like this, and he said, 'I know who did it, you did it.' The kid said, 'No I didn't he did it.' And he pointed to the one who did it. The one who had cut Andy Kerr.

07:00 So they grabbed him and he was tried in the appropriate manner and sentenced and that kind. That was one experienced we had where they let us down.

So how were they as far as discipline went?

They were very good so long as you were absolutely fair with them. Absolutely fair. Let me tell you, the garamut, the drum, it's amazing how news travels.

07:30 They heard about it up in Madang within 10 hours of it happening and that was right across New Guinea and that was being realised on the garamut. And the story got there. It's really quite amazing how they can communicate. And

08:00 of course you would hear the drums too when you were travelling around in a strange area or unsettled area. The natives talking amongst themselves on the drums.

And what was the role of the unit there?

The NGIB? It was preparing for battle. It was going to be used as a conventional infantry battalion, and there was plenty to do in

08:30 that regard because the Japanese were still in New Britain and they were still in parts of New Guinea. They cleared them out of Papua, we had. I was going to tell you something about this.

You were trying to remember something to tell me.

09:00 I don't know quite what it was.

Well we were talking about their role. So they were being trained as infantry?

Yes and they were very loyal, and they had the same personalities really of any other race of people. They were basically well disciplined and easy to handle if you were fair. You had to be strong and if they did something wrong they needed to be brought

09:30 to account, otherwise they would walk all over you.

What about drill and rifle training?

Oh they were good at that. That was the remarkable thing. As I say, 6 weeks before we got them, they'd been in their native habitat, and we had them on parade doing drill and things of that kind, polishing brass and doing

10:00 all the sort of things that conventional European individuals do when they're in the services. They were quite adaptable, most adaptable.

So they went through the whole basic training?

Yes they went through the whole basic training just like European and Australian trainees would,

10:30 and they drilled and drilled very well. The Papuan constabulary was a very well established organization in itself and we had a few of them, not to many, ex police boys. Aserwell was an ex police boy and he could slow march and do all that sort of thing, most professionally.

11:00 He was the old character that told us that the troops were going to do us over. Aserwell was his name.

Were they highland people?

Some of them were yes. The ones that lived near the shore, generally speaking were better physical specimens.

11:30 Generally better specimens I suppose because they swam and did that sort of thing. But we had them from all over and we had them from the Sepik River area and round about there, and quite impressively they had been head hunters some of them because they had marks on their bodies to denote it. It was a distinction.

12:00 I've got a picture around here somewhere. There's a picture of a very fierce but handsome looking chap and he's got his headdress on and that sort of thing, and then you look a bit more closely and he's carrying something in his right hand. He's holding it up by the hair and it's the head of another equally handsome fella.

12:30 He was obviously the winner.

What about rank...I mean they would have a hierarchy within their tribes. Did that translate?

Well Kiup is what they called them. house Kiup is the person appointed by the federation to be the responsible person in a village. And

13:00 it's handed down. There's certain individuals who are recognised in a power of authority. That's what it was like then anyway, what it's like now that they've got their independence I don't know.

But when they came into the unit, did that hierarchy still exist?

No, they had to accept that he was a private, or he was a lance corporal or he was a corporal and so on.

13:30 They had to conform to our conventional way of command. They used to be issued with tobacco you know. It's called plantation twist. And it came in a wooden box about that long and that wide. It looked like black pig tail. It had a lot of

14:00 something in it that was very black, and oh my god, when they lit it up. And they used to make cigarettes using newspapers with the printers ink and everything else. So they'd roll up these cigarettes. You'd go down in the morning on morning inspection and they'd be in their barrack rooms and they'd be just getting up and getting about and they'd be lighting their cigarettes and so on. It would knock you off your feet.

14:30 This plantation twist. How they ever survived I don't know. In these days if you smoke cigarettes you get lung cancer. They were issued with this stuff and that was their right and privilege.

What did they wear?

Just an ordinary lap lap. Just a piece of khaki cotton and then they had the web belt over that over the top. About knew length like a skirt. They wore underpants probably.

15:00 They did once they came in but out in the bush of course they were quite scantily dressed. They used reeds and things and that sort.

Did they wear boots?

Reeds, you know, sort of grass skirts.

Did they wear boots in the unit?

No,

15:30 they didn't wear boots and they used to play soccer in amongst the stones. You can imagine kicking the ball about and then kicking a stone.

16:00 But they were very loyal. When I was leaving there, and I'm not saying this to indicate that I was anything out of the ordinary, but when I was leaving my boss boys got to my sergeant and my platoon sections got to hear that I was leaving, and they followed me down. I had been down and I was leaving to go back up and pack up my bags and they would be coming behind and they would be weeping

16:30 (UNCLEAR). They didn't want me to go. Have you heard the description of a piano. This is a boy telling his friends he had seen a piano. 'A big black box belong sing sing.' (UNCLEAR).

17:00 **Did you pick up Pidgin [New Guinea dialect] easily?**

Yes, I guess so.

17:30 When they're talking you know and with their accent it sounds like a foreign language. The way I speak it hear and now you can understand it because it sounds like English, corrupt English. But they're rather guttural

18:00 and you had to become accustomed to it.

And that was the language, the common language you were using?

Playstork…that was the boy's own particular tribal language. And they designated one from each locality to talk.

18:30 Comjetame was one of the Sepik River boys. He had markings to show he had been a head hunter. Comjetame.

19:00 Yes, he…when I was leaving – after I got back to Cairns I got a signal from Captain Gaye who was the Company Commander and he concluded it by saying, 'Comjetame sends his best regards, love Chunder. That was the name we called Captain Gaye. We used to get a very small ration of alcohol and Captain Gaye

19:30 decided to make his own home brew, jungle juice. And he got this big bottle and he filled it with what he thought were the ingredients to make jungle juice. He kept topping it up and topping it up, and people would be saying how's it going now? And he would say 'I think it needs a bit more of this and that'.

20:00 But he had it under his room and the floor of our huts was like that. They were split timber and there were gaps in between. If you dropped your cigarette or dropped your watch or something you'd have to get the boy to go under the house. Well on this occasion sometime during the night, Chunder's brew went off like a bomb.

20:30 Bang! It was spewing up all over the place and he very quickly determined to save his prize. He got his mug out and he got enough to fill the mug and he drank it and he was violently ill. And that's where he got the name Chunder from. Chunder Gaye.

21:00 **So within your company were the corporals and the sergeants all native people as well?**

Yes, yes. No, the Platoon Sergeant was white. The Platoon Commander was white, but the rest were all natives.

So when you first came over you were replacing a Company Commander were you?

21:30 Well the unit was forming. It was being formed so we were actually initial reinforcement officers to make the unit up. The unit was actually created by our (UNCLEAR) being enlisted.

So how did you recruit?

Oh well that was done by ANGAU [Australian New Guinea Administration Unit]. We didn't…

22:00 We weren't in the field in that context. ANGAU was the Australian New Guinea Administration Unit. We were supposed to teach them field craft and that kind, and we had the conventional books on training. Of course to teach a New Guinean field craft is like teaching your grandmother how to suck eggs.

22:30 In any case I gave my boys the appropriate lecture on field craft and concealment, camouflage and concealment. They were very attentive and listened and so on and I said, 'Altogether man hear him talk.' That means you listen. So I said 'Now I'm going to turn my back and you hide and I'll come and find you. And that's a clear indication whether you've listened to what I've told you.'

23:00 So I turned my back and waited a time and then blew my whistle and turned around and there's not a soul in sight. I started looking around and I couldn't see anybody, and then a voice down here right alongside me said, 'Me looking you master.' He had the better of me. He could have taken my leg off.

23:30 They knew more about field craft and camouflage and concealment than I would ever had known.

Did they bring families with them when they came down?

No. We didn't have females there at all. There were some down in the village below where we were. They were Mary's. That's what we called them Mary's. No, they didn't have women in the regiment. All men.

But the recruits didn't bring their families down to camp?

No.

24:00 When they were recruited out of their village they were told they had to leave them behind.

Did they get visitors?

No. Not really. No, there was very little exchange of that sort.

So once they were within the camp, within the base, that was it?

Yes.

24:30 Yes they were virtually isolated in that sense, yes. You know, one of the newly joined officers was up in the Sepik and he said to the Boss Boy, he said 'Are there any sharks here?' And the boy said 'No'.

25:00 Anyway he went into the water and was swimming around and he thought 'I wonder why there aren't any sharks'. So he came back out again and he said to the boy, 'Why aren't there any sharks?' And the boy looked him in the eye and he said, 'Too much puk puk'. Crocodiles. No sharks because there were too many crocodiles. And he'd been swimming around in this water.

25:30 **So what did they eat?**

Oh they had good food. Conventional rations, army rations. Conventional as far as that was concerned, and the only thing that was in variance was the plantation twist. They didn't have alcohol of course, naturally enough. But they'd chew betel nut and go long long.

26:00 The betel nut used to affect them and when they spat you'd know because eating betel nut they seemed to make a lot of saliva. Red saliva.

Were they allowed to chew betel nut?

Yes they were allowed. They were discouraged from it. But so long as you didn't go to extreme. If you kept it at one or two.

26:30 **Were there ever any tribal eruptions?**

No, not where we were. They did occur of course. It was one of the old timers…I think it was Charlie Pratt, flying up in the Highlands there and

27:00 he saw two tribes and they were flighting, they were fighting like this, and he flew low over them to see what they were doing and they diverted their attention from what they were doing to him and they had arrows going up

27:30 in the air towards his aircraft trying to knock him down. So they lost the trend of the battle. Yes, Charlie Pratt was an interesting chap. He's not with us any more either.

28:00 He had a tremendous collection of photographs. He had been in World War I and he then afterwards came back and established himself in commercial flying here and he was up in New Guinea and he was flying there. And he kept a very good pictorial record of his exploits. Captain C.D. Pratt.

Were you able to learn very much about their culture?

Not really no.

28:30 We were rather too busy with our conventional training. We were given a time span of when we had to get them up to battle strength, battle standard. No we didn't…and of course the women folk weren't allowed in the camp. There would have been a ruckus if they had.

29:00 Someone would have got into mischief.

Were you doing jungle warfare training with them?

Yes. Oh yes. Conventional training at company training level. Not higher. We didn't attempt battalion… that might have happened after I left but we didn't do any while I was there. My friend, no deceased, Don Wright, he

29:30 was in the thick of it. He knew them backwards. In some respects he bore a resemblance to them. Although his skin was white he looked like a New Guinean. He had a very stern face.

He was there with the unit?

Yes. He was there yes. He retired eventually and lived on the Gold Coast.

30:00 He went to bed and didn't get up in the morning. I don't know how much more I can tell you about them.

They're bush skills…so you were teaching them jungle warfare training…

First contact business. Moving along a trail like this and then being set being upon in an ambush and this sort of thing. All these battle

30:30 drills that they learned almost by rote. They'd break up and spread out and the machine gun would go there and the rifle men there and so on.

They were already very experienced…

They were all very adept at that sort of thing. Yes, tactically because that was the environment in which they worked normally.

31:00 **Would they go off and hunt pig?**

Oh yes. They would. They were quite keen about pigs, and birds, balus. An aeroplane was a big bird.

31:30 There were some different types of birds up there too. Big birds like Macaw parrots and things of that sort that you don't see on the mainland.

So they were allowed to go off and hunt?

No, they were restricted. What they did on their leave was their business. No, no they just couldn't wander off like that. They had to…the routine was 0600 hours Reville [bugle call] and all the way.

32:00 That's what I say, they so quickly adapted to the lifestyle, it was amazing. It showed how very versatile they actually were. As I mentioned. I was quite mistaken. I didn't have too much of an idea of what their makeup was when I first got there. I found they were just as adept at these things as what we are. Given the chance.

And some of them would have had contact with the Japanese prior to…

Oh Japan Man. Yes some of them were and in certain areas they were in support of the Japanese. But no they could sniff out a Jap a mile away.

32:30 The Japs are very clean people you know and they would use a scented soap and the boys would sniff them a mile away. They knew, they could tell and anywhere there was a Jap around about they could sniff him out.

33:00 I have some pictures of them too. If I had known that you were interested I would have got them out.

Well it seems to me to be rather unusual to have an Australian forming a unit in New Guinea?

Well yes,

33:30 but you see the precedent was pretty much established with the police force. The way to administer discipline to a strange culture like that is to train their kin and put them in to do it. That's the way you get a closer affinity, than if you're purely white. But the Papua constabulary, they were a very fine force and they were very affective.

34:00 And the army of course developed from that. ANGAU was the administrative structure that mainly formed the connection between ourselves and the villagers.

So you had ANGAU in the unit as well?

Attached. Usually a representative from ANGAU attached. Or if there was an ANGAU unit somewhere near at hand we'd draw on them for support. But by the time we got our act together we had control of the individual,

34:30 so there was not much the ANGAU people could do. The ANGAU was an administrative organization principally. You know they were peculiar. The Pacific Island Regimental Commander was a staff man.

35:00 Rather heavily built and the boys called him 'Master Big Bell.' A big belly.

The Highlander men are quite short and stocky and strongly built men aren't?

35:30 Yes. There's an element called cuckoo cuckoo. They're savage men and they're highlanders. As I said before the ones who live on the

36:00 coast are fine physical specimens. The ones that you might say are more radical are the ones who live back in the area where white penetration in the early days didn't take place.

36:30 You didn't go in there unless you had to, and when you went in you went in very carefully.

37:00 **So did you see any active service with them?**

No I didn't. That's what I say, if we had poor old Ron here he did, he did a lot of times.

Where did they go to?

They were mostly on the north coast. Wewak, Aitape and around through there.

37:30 No, I didn't. I suppose I'm a bit sorry I didn't, but in any case.

So this was a temporary posting for you?

Well I never intended it to be. As I said, I put myself down for everything I could put my name down for.

My posting to the British Army – I should say that priority was given for my application for the British Army in India

38:00 and that was how I was released. There were a couple of other officers who also applied who were accepted for the British Army. I got a good testimonial from the Battalion when I left. The indications were that I had done my job.

38:30 **So your acceptance for the British Army came through, so what happened then?**

Oh well, I was in New Guinea when I was accepted. I had been out on patrol

39:00 and I came back and I came back and the boss said to me that I wouldn't be here tomorrow. I came back and I had a short stint of leave and then embarked here in Melbourne on the Chubertak and sailed from here up to Calcutta. When we arrived in Calcutta. When we stepped down and put our feet on the soil we ceased to be members of the Australian Imperial Force and we became members of the British

39:30 Army in India. That was the point in which it happened.

What was that like, transferring and going…

Well I suppose I hadn't had much experience in serving with the British. My experience all together is this. Generally speaking the fellow who is unusual gets a better run for his money than the rank.

40:00 What I'm trying to say is that I felt that I was always given preference whereas somebody belonging to the unit who was a Scotsman wouldn't be given the same consideration. That's how it works pretty much. It did in my case.

40:30 Before we left India I was given the opportunity for travelling quite a lot. They would send me away on exercises and I've been to so many different places, from Calcutta to Bombay. I did a course up at Chaklala which is up at Lahore, and up to the Khyber Pass.

Tape 5

00:31 **So could you tell us about the process of getting across to India? You'd put your name down for the British Army armed forces some time before, is that correct?**

Yes, early in 1944 I had applied for a number of things as I mentioned, and the British Army in India was one of them, in Burma. We embarked here.

01:00 Those of us who were accepted here, we embarked in Melbourne on a Dutch ship called the Chuberdak, and it sailed from here in Melbourne direct to Calcutta. And we went ashore at Calcutta. Lord and Lady Casey were…Lord Casey was the Governor of India then, and he

01:30 had a hand in I think us being allocated for this duty. We were billeted at the Grand Hotel on Charingi. It's an enormous place you know. You could get lost in it, really, absolutely. I've known people who have stayed there and not paid their bill because they just moved from one room to the another.

02:00 At the time we arrived the Grand Hotel on Charingi was being used as a sort of transit reception place for troops moving in and out of the area. It was almost completely without any civilian element at all.

02:30 We were only there…and when I saw we, those of us who were selected for the Cameron Highlanders… we were only there for a few short days and then we were despatched by rail from Howra Station which is the main station in Calcutta. And

03:00 we caught the train out of Howra and in due course we arrived at the Independent State of Hyderabad and the Kantooma town of Secunderabad. One of the interesting things I found about that was this. We paid our own fare

03:30 and we were charged second class fare for a first class ticket, and on our arrival at our destination, at our convenience we then put in a claim form E and we claimed back 3 and 1/7th times the 1st class fare. All this seemed very strange, but it was borne out of a time when an officer on being reposted

04:00 took with him his family and his polo families and any other help he had and they made provision for it in this way. You rode first class, paid second class and claimed back 3 and 1/7th time the first class fare. It was interesting.

So there were many who had come from Australia?

There were 3 others

04:30 who joined the Camerons. Ozzie Erving, Archie Welsh and myself. Archie was a funny fellow. He would get up to all sorts of mischief and I remember on one occasion the

05:00 CO dressed him down and then he said ‘This won’t happen again will it Welch?’ And Archie looked him in the eye and said, ‘I don’t know Sir.’ ‘What do you mean?’ and Archie said, ‘I never know from one day to the other what I’m going to do next.’ And the CO smiled knowingly and let him get away with it. Ozzie Erving – I haven’t seen him since that time.

05:30 And Paul McCullock came back to South Australia and got married I think. Archie was deceased. He lived at Telegraph Road Sydney. The activities at that stage – the regiment had just come out of Burma. It was doing a refit.

06:00 Many of the soldiers were due for repatriation to the United Kingdom and they took that. A few stayed behind and then reinforcements such as ourselves came in to take their place, and we then went into training with the intention that we would form part of an invasion force that was to land at Port Swettenham.

06:30 But that didn’t take place because the Japanese capitulated. So instead of being assigned to the task as I said, to Port Swettenham, we were consigned as part of the Commonwealth Occupation Force.

So how long did you have? You were based in Calcutta?

No, Sircundrabad which was a Cantooma town of

07:00 Hyderabad. Hyderabad was the capital, the state. It was controlled by the Nizam of Hyderabad.

So how long were you based there all up?

How long were we in that area? I suppose about 6 weeks. Then we went from there to De-ol-a-li which was the trooping station for embarkation for overseas, and that’s on the other

07:30 side of India. That’s on the Bombay side of India. So we went to Deolali and we did some training there and in due course I formed part of the Advanced Party that went to Japan.

08:00 It was an old trooping station Deolali, famous station, and I suppose one of the interesting places which I passed through while I was there was Poona. Have you heard of Poona? Poona was one of the old stations back in the history of the British Army in India. The used to have a song that went like this:

\n[Verse follows]\n De-olali Sarb De-olarli Sahb\n May the ship that takes you over\n sink to the bottom of the\n Blimey sahb.\n

Many long years you’ve loved\n my daughter, now you’re going\n Blighty sahb.\n

May the ship that takes you over\n sink to the bottom of the\n Blimey sahb.\n

08:30 **Lovely sentiment.**

Yes, and then as I say we were an element of 30 that was despatched from Bombay by ship and we went across to Kure.

09:00 **So you had a couple of years with the AIF, and now it was the British Army. What sort of differences and culture did you experience?**

Well the British Army is steeped in tradition and there are practices…

09:30 you take them for granted. I mean you just accept them. I suppose some of things that come to mind… when an officer is reposted, it was the practice for all the other officers remaining behind to tow a jeep with the engine stopped with the departing person seated in the jeep, to the barracks, to the take off point.

10:00 Or to the railway station as the case may be. Our CO (UNCLEAR) McCann was very keen on tradition and keen on pipes and guns. He played the bagpipes very well himself and he used to like to lead the band on occasion

10:30 as Drum Major must to the chagrin of the 2IC. He didn’t think it was a good idea at all, for the CO to be doing it. Yes, I remember seeing one officer off and the Colonel said we would all dance the Highland Fling on the railway platform. This was in Bombay. Of course I was never any good at Highland dancing.

11:00 He watched me for a while and then he came up to me and he said, ‘What is the matter of you Hatfield, are you tight.’ I may well have been.

How did the four Aussies fit into the British scene?

Well Archie Welsh was a renegade. Paul McCullock was a bit stubborn and a bit hard in the mouth. Ozzie Erving was a conformist, and

11:30 I think the hierarchy rather approved of Ozzie Erving’s performance rather more perhaps then any of the others. But the camaraderie was very good. The atmosphere of the mess was very amicable and life generally was pleasant. We played some sport

12:00 when we were at Deolali but then when we moved to Japan of course we were tied up with jobs to do

with the occupation. As I mentioned we came ashore at Kure. It was interesting to see the action the Japanese had taken in respect of certain of their large navy ships. They just opened the sea

12:30 cocks and sunk them and they were there with their superstructures above the water as we came in. Later on I visited the site of the atomic bombing at Hiroshima. I didn't get down further south than Kure.

13:00 And we didn't wear any protective clothing either. We should have done. One thing that fascinated me. There was a bridge there across a stream and on one side it had a brick balustrade which was painted white on the inside. And there etched on the white was the shadow of a horse and cart.

13:30 There evidently had been a horse and cart that was crossing the bridge at the time the bomb exploded. And the intensity of light was so great that the reflection was transformed into the bridge. The only building which was remaining standing in Hiroshima proper was the Dart Building and it stood there it great glorious

14:00 isolation. But you know it was incredible that there was a living city and in one explosion it was razed to the ground. I wouldn't have any idea how many casualties there were but there were enormous casualties. It brought the war to a halt and the one at Nagasaki.

14:30 And it was probably just as well it did because I tell you what, it would have been very difficult if we had had to invade Japan because of the nature of the terrain alone, and I'm quite sure the people would have resisted, man woman and child, and our casualties would have been enormous. Others may not agree with me but…the atom bomb was one way of stopping things pretty smartly.

15:00 **Keith you said you were involved in the first democratic elections there. What was the work of the regiment and yourself in particular?**

Well the part we were involved with the elections was only with a few of the regiment. The regiment otherwise was used in carrying out search and destroy exercises. There was a lot of stuff hidden in caves and things like that.

15:30 Weapons and one sort and another and things were not appropriate for the civilian populace to have control of. So initially we concentrated on doing that, and we found a lot of stuff here there and somewhere else. An enormous amount of stuff. Earlier in the conversation I mentioned that the Asians are always

16:00 …the impression that was left with me was their ability to dig deep, tunnels, and live underground. And they had done that here in that instance. But the people themselves were most receptive and very friendly and cooperative and helpful. So there was no problem there.

16:30 **What can you tell me about the elections and the sort of work you were doing?**

Well purely and simply our job was to supervise and make sure one person voted once, and that he was allowed, that he was not interfered with in the process. That was mainly it. We were just deployed and we stood around at the polling booths and watched what went on. I told you earlier

17:00 I had an Australian sergeant linguist who was very very fluent in Japanese, otherwise I wouldn't have known what was going on, but I did through the sergeant.

You picked up a bit of Pidgin while you were in New Guinea, did you learn any Japanese?

Oh (JAPANESE). Moshi moshi, that's hello. Moshi moshi.

17:30 (JAPANESE). Oh I say. (JAPANESE) was 'is that so'. Sayonara is 'goodbye'. If you were being entertained and you were indulging in sake

18:00 they serve saki usually from a funny little bottle shape. Not very big at all and it looks rather like a perfume bottle. The heat the drink and serve it in little cups like a small egg cup, and the expression is dorsoi, 'down the hatch'.

18:30 I remember think quite early in the piece that the sake didn't have any kick in it at all. But then I found the next morning I couldn't remember what had happened the night before and a few other things as well. Quite potent. When the midget submarines invaded Sydney harbour, I remember when we were cleaning them out they

19:00 produced something they called the 'Captain's Whisky Bottle'. It was about that high and I found of course when I got to Japan that that's what sake came in. But I never took to saki seriously.

So just going back to your sort of guarding, manning the polling booths, was there ever any problems or hiccups at that stage?

19:30 Not in the prefectures where I was involved, no. And I didn't hear of any others of our team who had any reason to report misconduct. I suppose…perhaps the Japanese didn't know anything more about the system

20:00 that what we did, not speaking Japanese. But they went through the process anyway and it seems to have worked out alright.

And you said that the reception was pretty good in general. What about amongst the returned soldiers from the Japanese forces?

Well they weren't really identified to us. I suppose they were discharged and decommissioned. We didn't

20:30 come across…we occupied barracks that the Japanese army had occupied, but there was just the occupation force in those barracks. No I didn't see anything. There was nothing left of the defence, be that navy or army. Lots of wreckage.

21:00 The Supreme Commander of Allied Powers, General Macarthur issued an edict about what they were to do and what they weren't to do. They couldn't have fire arms of any kind irrespective of what calibre they were. Swords similarly. Anything offensive weapon was taken away from them.

21:30 Somewhere I've got some pictures of the barracks we occupied. I'll find them later. The barracks down at Kotchi were enormous, big buildings. A couple hundred people.

So other than that task, what else did you do mostly in Japan?

22:00 Well we did training again. It was conventional training as far as we were concerned, and most patrolling, patrolling in the country to see what was going on. Yes indeed, intense patrolling. And Japan is very mountainous, very hilly, and valleys and things of that sort.

22:30 So that's about it. Our presence was the main thing I think. And of course the Americans had a large element there who had their head quarters in Tokyo. And that was a civilian and military mixture. Like ANGAU in New Guinea, this

23:00 element was there to liaise between the civil populace and the army, navy and air force, our occupation force, and other nations as well. The Commonwealth weren't the only ones who were there. 77 Squadron were over at Iwakuni and I don't remember where the navy were, down south I think.

23:30 The New Zealand Air Force were down south too in the southern islands. We were on Honshu.

You mentioned the sergeant who was fluent in Japanese, where did he pick up his language skills?

He must have trained quite early in the piece.

24:00 But I don't know where. He was already fluent. I never asked him that. I suppose I should have. You wouldn't have expected him to speak Japanese prior to the war. I don't think he would have. I think he must have gone to a language school quite early in the piece. There was liaison between ourselves and the opposition.

24:30 **Can you recall any other cultural experiences? You've already mentioned your experience with saki and about how potent it was without you really realising. What else did you learn about the culture and the people of Japan?**

Oh well,

25:00 one thing that really impressed me was their absolute cleanliness. They are fastidious about body cleanliness and waste and that sort of stuff lying about. Quite unlike some other countries in Asia where one that starts with C and ends with A is involved. No,

25:30 I think that was probably the most characteristic that I found. But I was detached from the battalion and I served on the headquarters of BCOF [British Commonwealth Occupation Forces] on the island of Etajima which is across

26:00 the water from Kure. I was the Assistant Camp Commandant there with the rank of captain and I remember the Base Commander got a message across to us – he was over at Kure – he said he wished to see and address all the officers of a certain rank at a certain time,

26:30 and we were to get these officers on parade. But of course the headquarters BCOF was up of not only Australian and British and other nationalities as well, but he was only concerned with the British and Australia. And the rank that was given to some people was in accordance with their responsibilities. Now the financial adviser to BCOF

27:00 was a civilian, but he was put into uniform and given the rank of Brigadier, and when I filled the officers in in accordance with instructions, and I could hear the sound of the approaching motorcade, I called them to attention and I looked along the ranks and low and beyond in the centre of the line was a brigadier. I thought

27:30 crikey so I stood at attention and saluted him and I said, 'Your parade Sir.' And he said, 'For goodness sake, don't give it to me, I wouldn't know what to do with it.' He was the financial adviser. And he looked appropriate in uniform too but he hadn't had much or any experience in that sort of thing. 130th

AGH [Australian General Hospital] was on Etajima and

28:00 it was manned by all Australians nearly. Wes Lloyd who afterwards had a pub in Flinders Street, was the Administrator of the 130th AGH. He was quite an impressive character. And we also had a senior Australian officer with the same surname, General Lloyd.

28:30 Wes answered the telephone and he said, 'Lloyd speaking' and the other end said, 'Lloyd here.' And Wes said, 'Is that you Lloyd?' 'Yes it is' said the other voice. And the other voice said, 'Who is that?' and Wes said, 'Don't you know?' And the other voice said, 'No.' And Wes said, 'That's good' and hung up the phone.

29:00 **And you met your wife to be while you were Commandant?**

Yes she was the WASPies [Women Air Force Service Pilots] and I met her when she was posted along with others for duties along with the Cameron Highlanders.

29:30 At that stage we were in Kure. Tunnel Barracks it was called and afterwards we moved away from there. She and I were married on the 17th of May 1947 at a place called Tacuma Bay which had been a Japanese sea plane base. We had a lot of fires and the Japanese were responsible for that. They would sabotage and set fires to buildings and we had some quite intense fires.

30:00 Big ones. The buildings on Etajima itself were different in some respects from elsewhere because back in history the Japanese navy had quite a close liaison with the Royal Navy, and the main structures on Etajima were done in the…they must have been advised with the construction and they were done in the British example of red brick.

30:30 And this didn't seem to appear anywhere else.

You mentioned the sabotage. Was that common and were those people rounded up do you know?

No, I don't think we ever caught them. The fires were too

31:00 incidental to be anything other than the result of prior thought and action. They'd be a fire for no reason at all. Maybe it was a vandal.

31:30 **Now during this period, New Guinea, India, Japan, was your interest in aviation as strong as ever? Were you making overtures to anyone?**

No, I didn't have the opportunity to do that. I saw a lot of wrecked aeroplanes, here there and somewhere else. You know there's been a lot of talk about the devastation caused by the atomic bomb and loss of life. But if you look

32:00 at the figures, the figures on casualties and damage to structures and so on from conventional bombs far exceed Nagasaki and Hiroshima. They bombed them.

Did you get up to Tokyo?

Oh yes.

32:30 On the lighter side of things. You know that expression about when the troops were overseas somewhere and they're looking at the local ladies, and they use the expression 'the longer I stay here the whiter they get.' Well we had Reg Saunders who was an aboriginal officer captain, and he was walking along with

33:00 Major Gerk and he was looking around and he said, 'You know Jack, I don't understand you fellas and that expression of yours that they get whiter and whiter every day, to me they get blacker and blacker.' Have you heard about Reg Saunders? He was quite uninhibited. He had no inhibitions about his colour. He was very good officer too. Very good officer.

33:30 **You came across Reg?**

Oh yes. I met up in Japan and also in Korea. He was a good chap. A good reliable officer. And afterwards he was out at (UNCLEAR) depot here, the north side of town, I can't think of the name of it.

34:00 **So did you have much to do with the Australians while you were in Japan?**

No. We didn't actually because we were allocated to different areas and the Australians had an area that was different to ours, so we weren't…you had the 66th Battalion, the 67th Battalion

34:30 and they were all based around Kure and we were very quickly moved out of there. But they were very helpful to us and an Australian Transport company gave the Cameron Highlanders tremendous assistance in getting settled in when we arrived there, and in consequence we felt we should show them some appreciation.

35:00 At that stage we were at Tunnel Barracks which was outside Kure, and so we issued them an invitation

to come on over to evening mess. They must have construed that because we were Scots we would be pretty tight and we wouldn't be offering them too much to drink. So they got themselves pretty well laced before they came over, and we were living in a two story block building and

35:30 that's where we had our mess, and anyway at some stage of the proceedings Archie Welch…ever since we had been in India Archie Welch he was the Wines Member and you couldn't have found a more suitable Wines Member because he was a connoisseur of wine.

36:00 So he was the Wines Member of our mess and in anticipation of there being nothing drinkable in Japan he brought up quite a large quantity of Narzic Rum. Narzic Rum is about the most potent stuff that you could imagine. They have it in stone jars because if you put it in anything else it would eat its way out. Well Archie had been trying to figure out how to get rid of this stuff

36:30 because when we got to Japan we found that the Australian Canteen Service operated very efficiently and there was beer and all the conventional sort of stuff. So he was left with this on his hands. But then we were having the Australians over for evening mess and cocktails and things like that. So he mixed up a concoction which was basically Narzic Rum and served it out in little glasses with the Cameron Highlanders crest on them.

37:00 And the Australian boys got stuck into this stuff and as the evening wore on, their CO was standing near the head of the stairs tottering a bit. He wasn't steady and Colonel McLean said, "Hatfield look after the colonial officer." And I said, "Yes sir.' And I stood up alongside the colonel and I said, "Let me help you Sir" and he put his arm around my

37:30 shoulders and he launched the pair of us down the stairs and we went down the first flight and we turned the corner and we down the second flight and we hit a palm tree outside the front door and he went one side and I went the other. And his adjutant came out just as we were on the ground…Tommy Clifton was his name, and he said…he had also got himself a bit hyped up and he said,

38:00 "If that's the way you treat your guests then I've had enough of this." So he helped his colonel into the jeep and took off home. And Archie closed the mess about midnight and as he was walking back to the lines – he had to go outside and on to the road – a police vehicle dress up and they said, "Did you have a mess evening this evening?" and Archie said yes and they said, "Well

38:30 perhaps you could identify this officer." And there was the colonel in the back seat and he was drenched and Archie looked at him and said, "My god, he doesn't look too good does he." So he loosened his collar and a little frog came out somewhere and that was the colonel.

39:00 So we then took over and Archie organised things and got him to his own lines and so on. But the reason I mentioned that was when I came back to Australia sometime afterwards, I had to attend a qualifying course for commissioned rank up at Puckapunyal at the services centre, and

39:30 the Chief there was the colonel who had assisted himself and me down the stairs. When we met he said, "By goves Hatfield I feel I've met you before somewhere." I said, "I don't believe so sir." I thought if he wakes up to the fact then I'll never qualify from this course.

40:00 But it was quite unbelievable. What had actually happened, he was bounced out of the jeep. There was a causeway like this and the water had built up alongside the causeway and the good colonel had bounced out of the seat of the jeep and had gone down the bank and into the stream, and that's where the Provos found him. He was sort of…he had his nose above water. And they resurrected him from there. Poor old chap. Don't know where he is now.

Tape 6

00:33 **So we were talking about Japan. You were based on the island. What was the name of the island again?**

Honshu was the island and the Chuku was a smaller island.

And was that where the 138th AGH was located?

No, that was on Etajima. That was a small island that was the headquarters of the Japanese Navy and it's just

01:00 a couple of miles across the water from Kure. Then farther north east from there was Etajima which was a paradise island and that was a recreational place. You know the trainees on Etajima used to be put into the water and they had to swim…they used to swim about 16 miles

01:30 as a test. They must have been all good swimmers otherwise they wouldn't have had a navy.

What were your duties then on Etajima?

Mainly administrative.

02:00 Harvey Goa [?] was the Camp Commandant and I spent most of my time running messages for him. But there were some very interesting people in the force there. There was an officer there who had helped crew the R34 which

02:30 was the rigid dirigible to cross the Atlantic. John Potter was his name. He was the fire officer. He told me the story and it was absolutely true. The R34 was a 4 engine air ship and the engine on

03:00 an airship of course are suspended from underside of the main body of the thing, and you get there, out to the engine on a walkway. Two engines up there and 2 down there. And John was the assistant engineer on board the R34 and he felt like a cup of tea half way across the Atlantic.

03:30 So he put his billy on the exhaust manifold and of the port side front engine. He went away to do something and of course the slip stream picked it up and carried the billy into the rotating propeller of the engine behind it and broke the propeller. So they had a major problem part way across the Atlantic. And needless to say he kept the accident a dark secret.

04:00 John Potter.

Just one or two things on Japan before we move on to Malaya. You said you met Elsa. Can you tell us exactly how you and Elsa came to meet?

Well whilst we were at Tunnel Barracks outside Kure we invited members of the Women's Services to come and have evening mess

04:30 with us and Elsa was one who accepted that. And I've always had this as a sort of time honoured joke. I don't know what attracted her excepting she might have been consumed by curiosity about what Scotsmen wore under their kilt, which is as a matter of fact, nothing.

05:00 **Is that right?**

Absolutely nothing.

Another dark secret revealed.

Well there you are. One of my officers was on the rifle range and he was given the command 'Lying low' and you take a pace forward with your left foot like that and you lie down like so with your rifle held like that. So his kilt flew up over his back. The adjutant was walking passed and he

05:30 saw he had a pair of knickers on. So he said, 'Take a week's duty mister.' And that was it. He copped it because he was wearing knickers. I don't know if you've ever tried driving around in mid winter in a jeep with a kilt and nothing else.

I can imagine yes.

06:00 You were asking me – when Elsa and I were married the Colonel said, "I think I'll put you to extra regimental employment." I said, "Why's that sir?" and he said, "Well it's been my experience that when officers get married they're no damn good for the first 9 months or so until the 1st child arrives, and

06:30 then they come back to work." So he said he thought it would be a good idea if he put me to regimental employment. And that was how I came to go to Etajima. And Elsa and I lived on Etajima for quite some time. It was an interesting period in its own way. You know there were some quite remarkable people. John Potter

07:00 was just an example. When you move around like that you don't know who the fellow is next to you. He could be an Antarctic explorer, or it could be Douglas Mawson.

Okay so is there anything more about that time in Japan before we move on?

07:30 No I don't think so. It just doesn't come to my mind now.

08:00 **What we might do next is if you could explain to us the circumstances behind the movement from Japan to Malaya, and what happened there?**

08:30 Well time went on and the necessity for the occupation force diminished. Colonel McLean was reposted himself.

09:00 And another commanding officer was put in in his place. And Colonel McLean was posted to (UNCLEAR). Headquarters in Malaya, Sub District it was called. He was posted there as AAQ&G [?], and he actually asked for me, so I joined him in the headquarters. He was very good to Elsa and me.

09:30 We arrived at (UNCLEAR) at about 2 am in the morning and he had somebody there to meet us with a car and put us into our quarter. I've got some pictures of him there. Again, I'll see if I can find them.

10:00 But the unit was stationed up in the Cameron Highlands, Ipoh was the name of the place. And they were there mainly on a hill station and then they were moved from there down to Singapore to Johor Bahru actually, and from there they went back to Scotland. Archie Welch and I visited them for a couple of

days when they were at Johor Bahru.

10:30 But I was at the Headquarters Central Malaya Sub District at (UNCLEAR) with the Colonel when they were there, and then they moved down to Singapore. Port Dickson was about

11:00 an hour's drive from (UNCLEAR).

So what was the purpose of that presence? This was to do with the Communist terrorists or…

Yes. There were insurgents. They used to shoot up the plantation workers and that sort of thing. They first of all regarded them as murders, and

11:30 then they realised they were following up on something that was a systematic attack of one form and another. And they came to the conclusion that they were military motivated and politically motivated and that they weren't just terrorists. They weren't just vandals, they were something worse than that. And I was the Intelligence Officer on Headquarters Central Malaya Sub District.

12:00 Previously there had been an officer there when the body of the Malayan People's Anti Japanese Army was deployed. And this big wall map was there with flags in the map which indicated where they're camps were, the Malayan Anti-Japanese Army. And we'd get reports about insurgents and the location

12:30 of their camps and I'd go to put it on the map and I'd find there was a flag stuck in there already. And these characters were operating in exactly the same way against the British as they were against the Japanese, with our help. Spencer Chapman wrote a very good book called The Jungle is Neutral and he spent quite a bit of time in Malaya

13:00 and doing intelligence work.

I've heard about that book. Had that been written by the time you were in Malaya?

Quite soon afterwards.

Yes, it was based on the Malayan experience.

13:30 Have you read that book?

No, I've just heard of it. It's almost a text book for counter insurgency.

Yes, that's what he was. He was good at that.

So you were the Intelligence Officer. What did that entail, the nitty gritty of that?

Well you were at a sort of cross roads. You receive information from patrols and other activities from civilian sources, from military sources and you put it

14:00 all together and I was working in conjunction with headquarters in Malaya which was at Kuala Lumpur, and it was my job to collect, collate and disseminate which was the expression I think…information that would come our way. So I would verify it as much as I could and then I'd pass it on to the headquarters and they'd take appropriate action.

14:30 It might be to assign somebody to go out and investigate some activity or they might decide to ignore it or they might already know something in that context that confirmed it. It was an interesting enough job but I was getting to a stage where I was due to come back. As I mentioned, Brigadier Jones said the Emergency was over

15:00 as far as the general concept was concerned, although it was still on in Malaya.

Sorry, just to get the time line clear. You went there in…

15:30 **I was appointed the Intelligence Officer on the 10th of October 1047, end of Emergency. Reposted Headquarters Central Malaya Sub District the 10th 1947.**

16:00 **Yeah that's it.**

I was just wondering if there's any more detail we can get because we have interviewed men who were there in the late 1950s. Was there a lot of activity at that point in the late 1940s? Was it at its hottest at that point?

Well I suppose it might be safer to say it was getting under way.

16:30 The Malayan People's Anti-Japanese organization became the Malayan People's Anti-British. So they were already in motion. I'm not in a position to say when the activity did reach its peak. But I would say this. It was quite intense. There was a lot of activity going on in the bush.

17:00 It wasn't a very enviable position for people living on plantations you know. Whilst most of the fuss was directed at the workers the managerial section of the thing was also threatened. It's just like being here and being attacked by an armed platoon. Almost defenceless.

17:30 The initiative was always with the other side.

What were your main sources of intelligence?

Mostly civilian. And that was the very good thing. The Malays didn't want the Chinese communists there. So they would inform on them and that was something that was lacking in Vietnam where you had the same situation.

18:00 The populace being involved and no proper definition of who was friend and who was enemy. And how do you determine that when they're living under the same roof. But in Malaya it was different and that's why we were so successful in Malaya in putting down the insurgents, because the Malays were cooperating with us. It's not for me to say but it was my impression that the Malays don't particularly like some

18:30 other Asian countries. They prefer to have their own people in charge. Did you have any dealings with the recently retired Prime Minister, Mahathir Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad]?

Not personally, but I know his style. We have interviewed a few guys who spent time in Malaya

19:00 **and are quite perturbed by his anti-Australianism.**

The Malays were definitely opposed to the insurgency.

19:30 Well you know what a Kris] is? A wiggly knife like that. And there were two instances down around Port Dickson where the insurgent was carrying a tommy gun and accosted a couple of Malays with a Kris and the Malays turned on the fellow with the tommy gun and chopped him up like that which is not the sort of thing you do as a hobby. The tommy submachine gun can fire at…it's got a cyclic rate of about

20:00 500 rounds a minute or something like that.

What sort of contacts were we having there with the insurgents?

Well the military were not...I wasn't with the military then as such. I was in the headquarters, not in the field.

20:30 The main thrust was made up of special constables. Initially there just not enough police to handle the situation. And as I mentioned it was considered to begin with…what was happening people were being murdered and

21:00 the incidents were being treated as individual murders, until a pattern formed and we worked it out from that. But I can only say this, as I've said before, the Malays were the principal source of information and where they could they handled the insurgents themselves.

21:30 You would have been talking with people who were at Butterworth and places like that.

I think to at Malacca there was a camp. But yes, Butterworth for sure.

Yes, Malacca was a very ancient city.

But I guess the kilts weren't a bad thing in a tropical climate or were you not wearing them at that time?

They're hot in a tropical climate and their cold in a bitterly cold one.

22:00 I don't quite frankly…they might be alright for dress and they add a lot to an occasion when the troops are marching, when the troops are in step and the kilts go backwards and forward in unison. It makes a good appearance, but I would classify the kilt as being an outmoded form of dress.

22:30 I shouldn't say that because the ladies still wear them. That's what happened to my kilt. My mother reworked it and made a skirt out of it, and my wife had something done to the pockets of my trues and sewed up the fly and that's what happened there.

While you were in Malaya where was Elsa?

She was with me. We had

23:00 a house. It belonged to the local parishioner. It was a two story house not far from the guest house. Is the guest house still there?

I haven't been there for years. I wouldn't have known, no.

Yes, a two story house, nice house. Things were a bit primitive even then. There was no proper sewerage.

23:30 In the community.

So how much of the peninsula did you see? I mean you were based in (UNCLEAR)?

Well apart from road trips to Kuala Lumpur and to Johor, Singapore from (UNCLEAR), I really didn't get

about much at all. Port Dickson as I've mentioned. But not very much.

24:00 Being on the headquarters I was mainly chained to the headquarters.

So what has stayed with you most vividly from that experience?

24:30 I suppose…I had just come away from other situation where there were problems, I think you would have come into Suremban and you wouldn't have seen

25:00 anything unusual or anything that indicated there was a state of emergency in the country until you went to the (UNCLEAR) club and then you saw people coming in wearing revolvers and hanging them up with their hat. Elsa was working for Geoffrey (UNCLEAR) who was the Chief of Police and we used to dine with them occasionally.

25:30 And someone took a pot shot at one of his dinner parties which was to be expected. Didn't have much result. Geoffrey (UNCLEAR) was ambushed after we left there and he ended up at AGH Hardware and he got a surprise when I walked through the door.

26:00 "Oh God" he said, "Hatfield!" He nearly had a heart attack.

So was it still very much "the sun will never set on the Empire" [reference to period when British Empire seemed indestructible] in Malaya?

Oh yes, very much so. You know the White Raj [colonial era] still predominated.

26:30 The (UNCLEAR) Silk Store where Elsa used to spend our money.

And those fellas hanging up their revolvers, were they the plantation owners?

Yes. Members of the club. It was just over from where we lived.

27:00 There would be people sitting dining out and that sort of thing as they were accustomed to do. The Brits have got a certain pattern. You know, they seem to achieve normalcy where you'd reckon that normalcy was unachievable. Even in Korea I remember you could hear gun fire and explosions going off and here they were

27:30 entertaining with their silver and cut glass crested glass and things like that within a few miles of the angry men. Normalcy completely. Then there was a report that a mortar was firing on the right flank or something. This was during the late afternoon and it transcribed that it wasn't a mortar at all. It was the Brigadier shooting pheasant.

28:00 He only would have had to put his sights up a bit and turned the barrel up a bit and he could have been shooting at the enemy. They're blasé in that respect. I found them very good to work with. They say bloody Brits and all that. But they've got a lot to commend them. They really have. The world would be a better place if the British Colonial Service

28:30 would still operating, than what it is today with its absence.

Were you sort of adopted?

Well I never saw any discord or discontent anywhere in Malaya where the British Colonial Force Service was operating.

29:00 The Brits might use strong language in dressing down a servant because he split the coffee or something of that kind, but they were also very conscious of the welfare of their subordinates. Very conscious indeed. Heaven help you if you maltreated anybody. They had a certain positive sense of responsibility with the local population.

29:30 And I liked the way they operated.

Was that the case in Japan as well or was that a little bit more diluted?

In Japan officially they divorced themselves from the civil populace. The civil populace became the responsibility of somebody else and directions were issued from that source. I'm trying to remember what they called it. Something

30:00 like USAID. Forgotten.

Now we're talking 1947 to when?

I think Butterworth was still operating until the early 1950s. You see we had Korea in 1953 so Butterworth would have carried on until about 1955. Something like that.

30:30 **And when did you leave Malaya?**

Well that would have been the 10th of the 10th 1947. That was when I started to withdraw anyway.

So what can you tell us about that time. Why were you pulled out?

31:00 Brigadier Jones had said that the terms of my engagement had been that I was engaged for the period of the Emergency and the Emergency implied World War II, and once World War II was over there was no need to keep Hatfield around.

31:30 **Were there any remnants of the Japanese there? We've heard a bit of legend…**

No, there were no Japanese visible in any make shape or form in Malaya or Singapore when we were there. No they'd all departed. We

32:00 would come across weapons and things like that sometimes where you leased expected to find them. The ancient city of Johor.

Is there something at Johor that you want to talk about?

There was something, now I don't know. It's gone.

32:30 Old age is a terrible complaint.

You're doing just fine. So when the Emergency as such had run its course and you were…

I often wonder sometimes what might have happened. Sometimes in life you're bitterly disappointed and you don't get something you apply for and you badly want it. I would

33:00 have been delighted to have accepted the short service commission in the army and taken that. But then the Suez affair came up immediately, and that's when they sunk the ships in the Suez Canal and there was all the hoohah going on about that. The Brits were involved in that. So I would have been doing something out there.

So as soon as you came back to Australia, that's when you made that application for…

33:30 No, I made it from Malaya and I was interviewed by a selection panel at Changi Prison. It wasn't a prison then. Changi is now the main airport for Singapore.

So how did you feel at the end of that interview, that selection process? Did you think you were in with a chance.

Well you never know with these things.

34:00 You never know if you've done alright or what. You know sometimes you can be very fortunate and be asked the right sort of questions, and they play right up your alley. I remember being interviewed for promotion on one occasion and I had taken out the handbook on the Qualities of Leadership and that was one of the questions he asked.

34:30 "And what, in your capacity would you term the elements of leadership?" I said, "Resolution, initiative, enthusiasm, cheerfulness, self control and loyalty." And then he went a bit silent. "Maybe he's got a bit more than what we think". You can get the wrong question too.

35:00 **Do you remember what that process involved at Changi? The selection process?**

The questions? Well sometimes the questions are very basic. "Why do you want to do this thing? What do you want to serve here? Why do you want to do that?" And you've got to be careful not to say "Because it's next door to my girlfriend". You've got to be serious about it and you've got to put a proper meaning on it.

35:30 It's advisable, or it used to be advisable to be well aware of what was happening in the rest of the world, and to show you had a certain consciousness of what was happening and how that can affect you in doing your job and general way of life. My grandson will be experiencing this very shortly.

36:00 He's going up to Tamworth to be tested for acceptance in the Royal Australian Air Force. Suitability.

Good luck to him.

That's what I say good luck.

So why were you still adamant that you wanted to be a pilot?

36:30 Well you know I just carried that ambition. I had been in the army for a very long time, but I was still thinking about flying aeroplanes, and of course when I left the army I established my own business out at Casey Airfield and I was rather surprised to find that over a period of time I had owned 36 aeroplanes which for a retired army officer is a bit unusual.

So in that time from New Guinea, Japan, Malay and back to Australia, had

37:00 **you kept your hand in with the flying?**

When I had the airfield up until December 1991 yes. But more recently no. I don't have the medical now. And I don't even know if I can get in and out of my aeroplane.

But what about back then when you were in Malaya and Japan. Had you done any flying back then?

37:30 No, I didn't get the opportunity. There was an active flying club at Kuala Lumpur, and there was also one at Singapore, but it just wasn't available to me. There was an air force unit based at Neesume[?]. They had spitfires.

38:00 **But you were reaching to get back up there weren't you?**

Oh yes. I was most anxious and always in the back of my mind was the idea I wanted to fly aeroplanes. Anyway I suppose I got it out of my system by the time I had finished.

38:30 **So get us back to Australia. This was 1947. You were at Changi for that selection process there. What was in store for you upon your return?**

Well, let me see.

39:00 Well one of the first jobs I had when I came back to Australia was second in command of 3RVR, the Royal Victorian Regiment. I was 2IC there, and we had companies at Mildura and Bendigo and roundabout like that, and

39:30 I did use an aeroplane on occasion to visit Mildura. I had the demoralising experience on one occasion flying an Oster up to Mildura and against a very strong north westerly wind, and looking down…feeling myself to be the intrepid aviator, and looking down at a semi trailer on the road that paralleled my flight path, I saw this semi trailer doing this. He was getting ahead of me.

40:00 Takes the steam out of you you know. Then for my sin, after I finished there I was made Commander of 3 Cadet Brigade. I think …

40:30 I had a staff of 68 and there would have been something 15,000 altogether. Thirty two units and some of these people who had served and been involved with the cadet system used to get the shock of their lives when they'd come to see the camp. On one occasion somebody steamed down and I had 3000 people in camp up at Scrub Hill. That was quite a satisfying job. Headmasters and officers of cadets are not the easiest people to handle because they have minds of their own and some of them are a bit unorthodox. The ones that I remember best are Brother Mortonson from Christian Brothers College. He was an ex war time captain. A very very efficient fellow, very hardworking and very conscientious.

Tape 7

00:32 **Maybe we'll just move on to Korea because that was a big part of your career. So how did you come to be posted to Korea?**

I was supposed to go to Staff College at Queenscliff and I was never a favourite of the Brigade Commander.

01:00 I was serving with the 15 National Service Training Battalion at Puckapunyal and I expected to go to staff college and I was informed that I wasn't going to staff college I was going to Korea. So I joined the 3rd Battalion Royal Australian Regiment and they were already on the line. They were commanded by Colonel Hughes. Colonel R L Hughes

01:30 under whom I had served in Puckapunyal in the 2nd Battalion. I was sort of an odd bod in the sense that if he had a job of any sort he would give it to me, and it ranged from going out in the valley in broad daylight and trying to rescue a patrol that had got themselves caught in heavy rain and they were on the wrong side of the Chamazon River,

02:00 or away from that, being Company Commander, being Company 2IC and things of that sort. And then finally adjutant. And it was whilst I was adjutant that I saw this notice come in that the Americans were anxious to have participants from other nations with the Mosquitos.

02:30 I got onto the Brigade Major and said I wanted to do this so what about putting up my name. He said "The Brigadier is not going to send anybody, he doesn't want to be in it". So this was the closest to blackmail that I've ever applied. I said, "Brigade Major Bill Morrow, do you remember when one of your patrols shot up your noggy train [explained below]? And I did the investigation? Do you remember how easily I let you off."

03:00 So he said, "Leave it with me Keith." Anyway he did and I was accepted. A.L. McDonald, afterwards Sir Arthur McDonald, he was the CO at the time of that happening and like myself he was a frustrated aviator, and he said "I'll let you go". You've had a fairly long stint as adjutant,

03:30 and you must be getting a bit tired of it now.

You have to tell me though what the story is about the noggy train?

Well the noggy train. The noggy was a North Korean. That was a supply…they used to resupply the company with local indigenous labour and on this particular

04:00 occasion it was a very dark night and these poor unfortunate characters were going forward to a company that was quite far forward, C Company, and they had a patrol working in that general area and they mistook the noggy train for the enemy and they opened up and wounded a couple of them.

04:30 This is not good for discipline and it had to be investigated. Of course it wasn't the company commander's fault. It wasn't anybody's fault. It's just one of those things that can happen when friendly and unfriendly people are moving about in the dark. They had an instance of one young chap,

05:00 he should have known better. He's a delightful fellow so I won't say his name. But he was still full of training and this day he was actually out on operations and that's a bit different. Operations you apply the principles there with discretion, that you apply in training. You can take risks in training where you're not using live ammunition that you don't take when you're in close proximity to the enemy.

05:30 Peter put his platoon down in a defensive position and told them that they were to remain quiet and they weren't to make a sound and this sort of thing and he drummed it into them, and then he retired. I'll find out what they'll do. I'll just turn my back and they'll start to talk. So he waited a while and then he started to sneak up on them, and he was a very well proportioned chap, and

06:00 he was crawling forward like this and then suddenly bang and a bullet penetrated both cheeks of his backside. One of his own boys was much more efficient that he thought and they hadn't been talking at all. They had remained very very quiet and he had gotten into such close proximity without him realising how close he was. So there was a lesson in that.

06:30 **So when you first went to Korea, you went as the CO…**

When I first went to Korea I went as a reinforcement officer and company commander and I was the Company Commander of the Support Company. No 2IC of B Company first of all, then CO of the support company which contains machine guns and mortars and anti tank and pioneers. Platoons.

07:00 **So did you go to the front line?**

Yes. I was supposed to be battle ready at that stage and I was getting to be the oldest in the group too.

How battle ready were you?

I was about as battle ready as I ever would be, certainly more so now. Well I was up to date with things. I had been continuously in training.

07:30 But it came as a bit of a surprise to me that I wasn't going to Staff College. You don't get too far in the permanent army in peace time unless you've been to Staff College. So I was disappointed about that. But anyway I saw out my period of time there and then I got clearance to get away and fly with the Mosquitos.

08:00 And I enjoyed that very much.

Keith I'd like to get a bit more detail about your first tour in Korea, is that okay. Where was B Company position?

They were on the north eastern flank of the Commonwealth Division, and our

08:30 forward defensive line parallelled the Samatron River. And on our left were the US Marines, on the right were the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. And the Samatron was a stream that normally you would be able to cross with ease at certain intervals. But on certain occasions when the rain came down,

09:00 then it became a roaring torrent. And these boys that went out…they were doing a long range penetration patrol and it rained when they were out there and when they got back to the Samatron she was awash. I was sent out in daylight to get them if I could.

09:30 I didn't get them, somebody else got them. They went down stream.

How many of them were there?

Three.

And they survived?

They survived. Yes. That's the only time I've ever been…or there's one or two occasions when I've been…the beaten zone is

10:00 pattern set by the cone of fire where it strikes the earth and it tends to vary a bit. And on this occasion the valley was saturated with water and the enemy was firing on us, and the bullets were splashing up in front of us and behind us, which means it's pretty close.

10:30 We weren't hit. And another time that happened…on that occasion and other occasions, it was mortar

fire. Major Chandler from Tasmania was 2IC of his battalion and he was support commander I think. He was sent up to Korea to get a bit of local background knowledge and experience, and I had Support Company and he asked

11:00 if he could come out and fire the mortars. I said, yes. Charlie Company was forward and getting out there was a bit of a problem because part of the trail leading out to there was exposed to the enemy. Well we got out there alright without gaining too much attention, and then he set too with my permission, and he fired the mortars and he let off about a dozen rounds I suppose.

11:30 He succeeded in stirring up the enemy. The enemy didn't like it. We might have woken them up I think. Anyway then he was satisfied and we started back. Well when we got out of cover, out into the open I heard 'ping', and the next thing crash. The shell hit about 50 yards in front of us up there.

12:00 And I said to Chandler, "What's this, we had better get out of here pretty quick." And the next one came minus, so we had plus and minus and that meant we were bracketed. And we broke a record I think in getting clear of that. It doesn't sound much but I suppose he fired about 6 rounds at us.

12:30 It can be frightening, pieces of shrapnel going all over the place. But we came out of it unscathed and he went back to Tasmania with a bit of experience that he didn't have before.

So you broke a record getting out of it?

John Landy thinks he'd won it all but he wasn't in the race with Chandler and I. And on another occasion when I was getting back from being shot

13:00 down, oh yes, I've broken records before. Couldn't go any faster.

So is there any more you can tell me about that period when you were very much in action before you became the adjutant?

13:30 You know the boys who came out of Duntroon at that time, they did a very quick course in preparation for operations. They would have spent…your tour of duty in Korea was 12 months, and those boys with no background experience, operational experience were sent up to the units

14:00 servicing in Korea and they were told when they arrived there that they were young and green, you're lacking background experience and things of this kind, so rely on your platoon sergeant because he knows the score so take heed of him. I suppose that's what they did. But my point is this. I suppose

14:30 3 nights out of 7 on average they would be out in the valley at night where they would be in close contact with the enemy and probably involved in a fire fight of one sort an another, and they did all of them most remarkably well. I admire them greatly and I know several of them. And I've been in contact with a couple of them in recent times. I would like to take the opportunity to say that because it was really a very tough experience for them.

15:00 Full of theory but not too much backing experience.

When were you made adjutant?

I was there like everybody else for 12 months.

15:30 26th of January 1953. It was May 1953 that I was shot down. So from the 18th of August 1952 to the 26th of January 1953 I was on regimental duties for 3RAR.

16:00 I was Company 2IC and then Company Commander, and then I became adjutant on the 26th of January 1953.

16:30 19th of May 1953 I emplaned Korea for Japan, home and mother.

17:00 **Can you tell me what your role was for adjutant?**

Well the best way to describe the adjutant is that he's the senior staff officer in the battalion and he's responsible for all incoming and outgoing mail. He's responsible for ensuring that those who are concerned with correspondence in relation are kept informed of it, and he monitors what they do about it and he reports back to his CO.

17:30 He's the commanding officer's right hand man. He lives in the commanding officer's pocket almost. He has to virtually read the mind of the commander so he can interpret what the commander would do if he wasn't presence because very often he's away, and things like that. It's quite a busy job and you find yourself in the command post 18 hours a day easily.

18:00 It's quite a responsible job and it's one…you can do it if you've had the experience and if you know what you're doing. You make an awful lot of mistakes if you don't. And you have to keep your commander informed otherwise he doesn't know what's going on. He can't sit by the telephone all the time.

18:30 **Does this include intelligence?**

Well there is an intelligence officer. IO. “Seagull” is the name given to the adjutant. This is the appointment’s code. “Sunray” is the commanding officer. Seagull the adjutant. “Acorn” is the IO.

19:00 And if you’re talking about the 2IC he’s “Sunray minor”. Second in command. “Sunray Bravo Company” is the CO of Bravo Company, Commanding Officer.

19:30 **It would be just good to know about your day to day role?**

Oh well as I say, you have to keep the commanding officer and that includes the 2IC as well. The CO first and the 2nd in command second, abreast of any movement that’s taking place or anything that you glean from any source that may affect the operation of the battalion.

20:00 You’re the cross roads of all that. And if you don’t do that you’re not doing your job and the boss can’t be everywhere at once and you really keep the seat warm for him if he’s doing other things. The way in which things can go unstuck. Commander Place VC (Victoria Cross winner). Commander Royal Navy.

20:30 He came over to see us when we were in the line behind Little Gibraltar. We were holding Little Gibraltar, point 355, and that was the main hinge pin on the MLR, the main line of resistance.

21:00 And Commander Place expressed a desire to have a look at the troops, the enemy. So (UNCLEAR) Hughes took him on to the top of 355 and coincidentally with their arrival an attack came in and they attacked the position. So for a navy officer he got quite a lot of condensed learning.

21:30 And they were up there for 3 days because the road coming down was exposed and they needed to be there. So in that time the adjutant carried most of the load where he could and what he could he passed on to the 2IC.

So that would have been quite an emergency situation?

22:00 Yes it was because the boss shouldn’t have been so far forward for a start. The boss is supposed to stand back and monitor what goes on and touch buttons and things like that. But he got caught. That was an experience I had too which I quite enjoyed. I spent a week on HMAS Ocean. We flew out to the ship with what they called the COD, Courier on Delivery. It was a shuttle service that operates to maintain

22:30 communication with shore stations, and whilst we were there, we went on a couple of sorties [operational missions] and this particular day having nothing to do and I was just about to move up to the flight deck when the alarm sounded and ‘aircraft crash on deck, aircraft crash on deck’. And we got up there just in time to see a young fella trying to get himself out of rather badly bent aeroplane.

23:00 And the next time I saw him he was driving a deck on K13 which was on Suai. They had decided to give him a different sort of job.

How did you come to be on the ship?

Oh it was a courtesy thing.

23:30 It was part of orientation, to get a feel of the other fellas job, because other wise you would say I’m the only one who does anything around here. And get it all wrong. Mainly orientation. And in response to us being out on the ocean we had Royal Navy officers come over

24:00 and spend a day and a half or something on land.

So were you coordinating with the naval people?

The visits, yes.

With your strategies and defence strategies?

Yes. You see the navy of course…there was no air threat.

24:30 There was in the region of the corridor, the Yalu corridor. The Yalu corridor at the top of Korea. There was air activity up there. Nothing as far south as the 38th parallel. So we had air superiority there. But we did use the navy a lot with their Sea Furies and Fairy Fire Flies

25:00 on ground strike, and I worked them when I was with the Americans. They were good too, very accurate. Yes I remember this particular day putting in a strike and this boy said ‘Flight leader I’ve been hit, I’ve been hit. The cockpit’s filled with smoke. I can’t see.’

25:30 And the Flight Leader said, ‘Number 3 orbit right three zero degrees, maintain heading one two zero. Right hand bank Mekong River, make it there.’ And I said ‘How cool can you get Flight Leader?’ He said, ‘Hell, I ain’t hit.’

26:00 There’s wasn’t anything to be hit about. He wasn’t hit.

But he maintained his cool?

And the young fella got down. It wasn't too far away.

As the adjutant you would be privy to the naval ground strikes and what would be going on?

26:30 Yes, as far as they affected. The adjutant is only concerned with the left and right flanks of his unit, and what's in between of course. That's the extent of his responsibility. And liaising of course with the units on the left and on the right.

27:00 He doesn't do it on his own. One of the principals of war is cooperation and concentration of force and cooperation. And it's the adjutant's responsibility to apply those principals where he can.

27:30 But the simplest explanation I can give you is he's the commanding officer's right hand man and he's suppose to know what's going on and keeping the commander informed.

So there were nightly patrols going out?

Every night. Yes. And they'd be in the command of either a lieutenant or a sergeant.

28:00 A reconnaissance patrol of say two or three and sometimes in the command of a corporal, but mostly a sergeant.

And did you organise the briefing?

No. The Intelligence Officer would be the one who would give them the operational background. He would give them the purpose of their going. What they were to find out, ascertain, and what resistance they would be likely to

28:30 encounter and so on. And they would intend a briefing at the intelligence office location and they would debrief to him when they came back. The intelligence officer would then pass that information on to the CO or the company commander or to whom it might apply.

29:00 **So how far back from the front line was the command post?**

The command post was I suppose three quarters of a mile. That sounds a long way, but

29:30 it doesn't take too long to cover that distance and you've got companies deployed in front of you on the flanks or whatever. You might have three companies up and two backs. Something of that kind, depending on the ground and the terrain and such like. 355 Little Gibraltar was a much contested area.

30:00 They were always trying to get rid of us off there and there was another place which was over on the eastern flank, the western flank of the MLR. There were many encounters there. (UNCLEAR) Hughes said to an American liaison officer in my hearing, there was a hell of a ding going on out at the Hook.

30:30 Colonel Hughes said to the American liaison officer, 'And how are things progressing on the Hook this morning lieutenant?' And he said, 'Well Colonel the best way I can describe it to you is this. There ain't no heathens in them fox holes up there.' The heat was on. 'There ain't no heathens in the fox holes Colonel'.

31:00 **So you had the Americans on one flank and the British on the other?**

Yes. The Marines were on the left and the Brits were on the right.

And you had day to day contact with them?

Oh only as necessity demanded. We had the radio going all the time of course.

31:30 Working the radio and keeping each other informed as to what was happening. And anything that would affect them and have any bearing on what they were doing. You have to maintain security too as well. As well as keeping everyone informed you had to maintain security.

32:00 **Were there times when you didn't use the radio? When you would use a despatch rider?**

Oh yes. A liaison officer. You would send an officer over if something had to be explained on the map. If you couldn't do it verbally and make yourself clear then you'd send a liaison officer across.

32:30 If the situation demanded you could send the intelligence officer, or his sergeant to brief the others what was happening.

And how did the status change on Little Gibraltar during the time you were there?

Oh I see. We never lost it. There was one

33:00 unfortunate incident before I got there. We were pushed off it and counter attacked and got back on it and tragically the friendlies came over and dropped some napalm on us and that gave rise to what I said before when our American friends said, well if you know something about it…there was a bit of a hoohah about it…they said,

33:30 well if you know so much about it then you had better come and give us a hand. Make sure it doesn't happen again.

So the Americans dropped napalm on you?

It could have happened to anybody you see because they were so close together, and our troops were advancing. So maybe the information didn't get back,

34:00 or they were farther up the hill or they were farther advanced than what they had been told up there. Sometimes of course confusion reigned supreme. We're not all perfect.

So what do you mean when you said they then said you should come and help direct things?

Well the idea was to integrate us and to integrate the elements, so all would understand the complexity and the problem.

34:30 It's easy to criticise the other fellow for doing the job. It's quite a different thing to do it yourself, or maybe you'll do it better than he. That's problematical.

35:00 When the war is moving. When things are fluid it's very easy to make a mistake. Your ground troops can be farther forward than your support troops have been told.

35:30 **And what about getting reinforcements. How did that work?**

Well in the case of Korea the reinforcement holding unit, RHU, and there's always a reserve of troops there. And they were training and keeping themselves fit. Haramuria was up in the hills about 15 miles away,

36:00 and they used to practice battle drills and that kind of thing in that vicinity and keep themselves up to required they were shipped over to Korea. When I say shipped I mean taken over by air. They got there by the simplest and quickest means.

36:30 RHU, the reinforcement holding unit. I remember poor old Don (UNCLEAR) a friend of mine. We both arrived up in the same aeroplane and I heard this afterwards. This was in the middle of summer and we had come out of the northern hemisphere winter. And I heard this afterwards that the OIC [officer in charge] of the RHU said, "Oh Hatfield, oh yes. I remember him.

37:00 Yes, he told me once that he wasn't going to Melbourne and he then passed me on the road when I was on the back of a semi trailer or something. I'll give him a welcome." And the welcome took the form of having to march from Hero up to Haramuria which was about 15 miles up hill in the middle of summer, stinking rotten hot. I can only say my radiator was boiling at the time and so was poor old

37:30 Don Inkston as an innocent party. But there it was. It takes all kinds to make a world.

Perhaps we should move on to the next phase of your career. The air force with the Americans.

38:00 **You were in Korea at the time. Just tell me the story again.**

Well I

38:30 applied for and was accepted for service. There were two other Australians who were there at the same time. One was Gus (UNCLEAR) who lives in Sydney and the other one was Bruce Boyce who's no longer with us. He's deceased. He died in Australia. He wasn't killed up there. They were all applicants such as myself. I was the only one

39:00 from the 3rd Battalion to go. These two other boys were from the 1st Battalion. We did a course of training at K47 in which we were briefed on the roles to be carried out by the directing aircraft, and the way in which this was done. And then we would fly several missions with the pilot who was familiar terrain and familiar with the nature of the exercise himself. There was also a senior experienced pilot and a green horn observer, or an experienced observer with a green horn pilot.

39:30 So there was always not a case of the blind leading the blind, but someone who knew what it was all about. We quickly got in the way of things but you needed to be able to use the radio and you needed to be able to make yourself understood,

40:00 and you had to adhere more or less to the American idiom and expression and otherwise. If you said, 'Are you familiar with where the railway intersects with the creek.' He would probably come back and saying 'Negative, say again.' And you'd say 'The railroad intersects with the drawer at point so and so.' 'Oh affirmative boy.'

40:30 But you had to use that sort of thing. And very often there was a lot of crackle and stuff going on. Static and things like that. And of course when you had been doing that for several months you got in the way of talking like them and you'd come away and someone would say "why are you talking like that for?"

Tape 8

00:36 Well when I was shot down and I was evacuated to the MASH, to the 16th MASH (Mobile Army Surgical Hospital) and then when I was fit to do so, my Squadron Commander came over to pick me up and take me back to Chunchon.

01:00 And Hank Hanson was his name, and I was standing with him at the fence of the strip where we were going to take off from. A boy came in in a little old…and he bounced like this and he hit the deck and he bounced and he landed a wing and a wheel tip, crash crash crash,

01:30 and I turned to Hank and I said, “Gosh, that was a heavy landing.” And he looked at me and he said, “That weren’t no heavy landing Hatfield, that was a controlled crash.” A controlled crash.

So what were they like to fly, the T6?

02:00 The T6? Well what you got the hang of them they were quite easy to fly, yes. Our strip paralleled the railway line. We had a C124 come in there one time. I think he brought in some refrigerators or something of that kind, and his wing on one side was overhanging the fence of the railway, and

02:30 the wing on the other side was overhanging our emplacements. He was so big. So that gives you an idea of how close we were to the railway line too. Yes. The call sign was C47.

03:00 “C47 this is Exile Five inbound.” “K47 Exile Five late finals, I’ll touch and go.”

What does that mean?

Touch and go. Go green. If he doesn’t give you a green light you’re just going to touch down and go round.

So were you teamed up with one other crew?

03:30 Not just one in particular, no. I had my favourites. But you were a pool. But in the case when I got shot down I was with Winner and he was a stranger in that capacity. I shouldn’t talk about him much, but he had a problem with alcohol. And he might even have had a death wish, I don’t know. We shouldn’t have gone back when we did.

04:00 **So were you teamed up with the other Australians at all?**

No. I never flew with either of them, no. And they…well Bruce worked with the Commonwealth Division and that was over on the western side of the peninsula. Gus was out in the area the morning when Winner and I got shot down.

04:30 He was in the precinct. He said somewhere in something that I’ve read when he was being debriefed by somebody, similarly to one that I did, and he mentioned then that he had seen two parachutes when we bailed out. So he must have been pretty close to have seen it. But they

05:00 used to fly…when you were going into the area and you knew there was anti aircraft build up there, you’d request flak suppression. They’d fire the artillery to keep the enemies head down. Then you had to be careful not to get within the line of fire.

05:30 That would be a matter of judgement and doing the right thing at the right time.

So what sort of territory were you flying over as part of your operations?

Territory? Some of it was very mountainous. The Ch’orwon Valley was the invasion route to South Korea. That was

06:00 quite a broad valley and it was fairly flat on the surface. But otherwise there were mountains on either side of the Ch’orwon. The Pogae-San Mountain that I’ve spoken of before was on the eastern side of the Ch’orwon and it was a very large feature. Very heavily defended.

06:30 Again I was never on the ground, excepting that time when I didn’t have an aeroplane to sit on. But I’m quite sure that the Chinese had dug out the core of the mountain and goodness what they had there. They probably had a big store supply and all sorts of things because we used to see trucks coming up to the back of the feature and obviously they used to do re-supplies through there.

07:00 **Did you fly up to the Yalu River?**

No I never got up to the Yalu corridor, no. Les would be the one to tell you all about that. 77 Squadron. No, didn’t go up to the Yalu. A bit too far away for me.

Were you always the pilot or were you the observer?

No. At that time there was no provision

07:30 made for…well the rule was the aircraft commander had to be an American, and the pilot is always the

commander. But we had to be able to fly the aeroplane because there were instances when the pilot got badly hit and couldn't fly…could no longer concentrate and fly the aeroplane. So we needed to be…and the pilots were very keen to make sure that the observers could fly the aeroplane.

08:00 So when we were not actively engaged in putting in a strike, we'd fly the aeroplane and carry out practice, forced landings and all that. And in that way keep our hand in. But each cockpit was fitted out in exactly the same way. It had the same instrumentation and the same radios. It was identical. Full dual control.

08:30 **Triple Nickel was the plane you were shot down in – and you were fond of that plane?**

I was yes. I had flown in her quite often. She was a good bus, and we never had any trouble up to the time we copped it. And another…747 was another one. That was called Patches, and I got a newsletter from Sid Johnson the other day

09:00 which I might be able to find to show you. But Patches, gosh. She nearly bought it. I've got a picture of her where the wing is almost divorced from the fuselage. A shell came up and evidently exploded. I don't know how the pilot and the observer made it out because there must have been a lot of stuff floating around.

09:30 Just outboard of the starboard wing and there was a hole that you could put that chair in. So it wasn't a pea rifle that they shot him with.

So what was it about Triple Nickel that you liked?

It was a smooth aeroplane. It flew well. It would trim out well. It wasn't difficult. It didn't fight your hand as some do. Some of them were a bit out of rig.

10:00 So you would get to like one aeroplane more than another. And everything as far as I was concerned was ticketyboo.

Would that be because it had a good maintenance team?

All the aircraft were very well maintained. Oh yeah. Oh no I never had any criticism about the maintenance there.

10:30 The C24 was the largest propeller driven aeroplane in existence at the time, and the reason it was there which I learnt after the war was over when Colonel Ferdick was here, why it came in. It was because he needed a charging plant and some refrigeration.

11:00 The pilot did a good job putting a big thing like that down on our strip.

Now the T6 was a fighter bomber?

It was intended initially, going back into the 30s, it was intended as a strike aircraft, but of course it was no match for the Zero [Japanese aircraft] or anything like that.

11:30 But it just became a good training aeroplane. It was very robust, very strongly built aeroplane. It would take a lot of hammering. It had the advantage that it could carry a crew of 2 and stay in flight for a period of about 4 hours with the equipment that was in it. We had 5 radios in each cockpit.

12:00 They had a range of about 30 frequencies. So we could communicate with just about everybody. The control overall was maintained by a C47 which flew backwards and forwards along the parallel with the 38th, and in our instance

12:30 when I was there that Mosquito's call sign was "Mosquito Howstep". "Mosquito Howstep this is Exile Five."

How did it get the name of mosquito?

Because the Chinese reckoned the aeroplane made a noise like a mosquito.

13:00 You'd have to hear the darn thing. They were all the same. They were fitted with these Hamilton Variable Pitch propellers and the tip speed used to go almost supersonic and it made an extraordinary noise taking off, and when you changed pitch – and of course before you went in to do something you would put it into fine pitch. Fine pitch is like changing down the gear.

13:30 Course pitch is like going in top gear, and fine pitch is low gear. So we picked up the name from their intelligence. The Mosquito.

You picked that up from intelligence?

Yes and intercept.

14:00 We had a liaison officer with us in the 3rd Battalion, Captain Tung. He was Korean officer. He had been studying law before the war broke out. A good fellow Tung. Tough as nails. The Asians don't have much respect for life. They don't have the same consideration for life as what we have, I think. When we took over, when we went into Camp Casey,

14:30 the American unit that was locating the camp for our benefit, going into the line themselves. We were coming out of the line, they were going in. They said we would have a lot of trouble here with the local villagers, pilfering things. They were quite adept at it. They'd come during the night and they would be in your tent

15:00 and someone would slip in and take your wireless or take your watch or anything like that. Colonel Hughes said to Tung, "Major Tung this just not on. Here we are, we're fighting your war for you and we're being maltreated by the locals. I'd like you to go down and speak to the head villager." So Tung said "Leave it with me", in effect.

15:30 So he took his trusty carbine the next morning and he went to the camp. He saw a couple of fellas coming down the ridge, so he promptly shot one of them. He said to the other fellow, "Now, do you see what I've just done. I'll be out here every morning of the week and I'll do the same thing unless you people stop stealing and pilfering." It stopped.

16:00 Drastic treatment. You wouldn't believe it but it's true.

Did you have a batman?

Oh yes. His name was Kim. Every Korean was called Kim. Yes Kim came with me and he was with me when I was with the 3rd Battalion with the K47. And in the Queensland Cameron Highlanders

16:30 I had an Irishman. Private Lokes was his name. When I was in Japan they had an earthquake with 30,000 casualties, not deaths but casualties, and I had been the night before seeing Elsa. She had come down from Okayama overnight, and

17:00 stayed rather too long and drunk too much Old Soldier Rum and went to bed and slept very heavily, and I was due on the rifle range the next morning quite early. So I sprang out of bed and I nearly trod on my razor and I yelled out, 'Lokes come here. What's the devil is all this stuff on the floor.'

17:30 And he said, drawing himself up. He was all of 5 foot 6. He said, 'Sir, last night we had an earthquake.' Which implied that he and I had had an earthquake. We had had an earthquake all right. When I looked out across the square the roof had fallen off the barrack building over the way.

18:00 Yes that's right. It was about that time…no it was after that, we had a visit from…what the Royal Navy ship that was impounded in the Yakzkeiang River? Gosh I can't think. She brought supplies in.

18:30 Up in Shanghai. Nothing between the ears. The Armistice. That was it. HMAS Armistice. That's what she was called. Commander Scott McCloud.

19:00 **So what did the ship have to do with that?**

What did the ship have to do with it? That was just connected with the earthquake and they brought supplies down from somewhere else. I don't know where, and two of their midshipmen spent a night with some of our boys in the Camerons.

19:30 **So was Loke with you all the time?**

Lokes. Yes he was pretty much. I only ever had the one batman [officer's servant] in the Camerons when I was there. He was an Irishman and belonged to

20:00 and Irish regiment. But he was obliged to wear the Cameron kilt when he came to us. We had a Black Watch [Scottish] officer too. Every time he got the chance is used to put his Black Watch uniform on. Sporran Jock McAllister used to hate him for it because he didn't wear the Cameron outfit.

20:30 Campbell was his name. And you'd see him come in and one would be down that end of the bar and the other down this end. They'd be ignoring each other and then they'd start to look at one another and they'd finally get together and the next thing…you know. I once had a sad experience. One experience that I would sooner not have had

21:00 was I was in the mess and Warrant Officer Scholes came up and spoke to the adjutant, and Sandy came back and said, "Scholes has got Major Farty in the guard house. He was speeding round the circuit." So Sandy said, 'Go and get him and bring him up to the mess.' So we did that and filled him full of liquor and let him go. Sent him back home. What he had been doing was this. It was Exercise Grape Shot

21:30 and the Dorsetshire Regiment was celebrating Exercise Grape Shot and don't ask me what the history of that.

22:00 And Colonel O.G.W. Wight who was the CO had the guests duly present at the Great West Indian Golf Club and all the dignitaries round about. Anyway they were making a lot of noise and enjoying themselves and Farty was duty officer,

22:30 and he was sitting alone in the mess. Everyone else had gone out somewhere else. And he could hear all this going on, and he used to talk through his nose a little bit. 'I'll show them Exercise Grape Shot'. So he went out and he took a gun off the lines and he took it down the track a little bit and he levelled the

muzzle at the entrance of the marquee and he

23:00 put a blank round in the chamber and fired it, boom! And the thing belched smoke and the marquee went up like so and collapsed all over the party. Well then of course he took off. He didn't want to be associated with that and that's how Scholes intercepted him. 'You know me Sergeant Major.' And he said, 'I've never seen you before in the whole of my life sir.'

23:30 He wasn't going to admit that he knew him. So he threw him in the guard house. So Farty was treated to a liquid refreshment in our mess, and he must have remembered my face because he extended a very cordial invitation to me to go

24:00 over and have dinner at his mess which wasn't all that far. And we'd had a few drinks and he said, 'I say, have you ever tried gin and fruit salt.' And I said, 'No.' He said, 'It's a very pleasant drink. Here, try it.' And of course I took it and it knocked me out, and I started to go back to my own lines and I collapsed

24:30 half way across. Well the next thing I knew it was sunrise, a company was within sight of me. I was lying on my back with my kilt pulled up over my nose. All the work of Farty. Extracting retribution and what have you. Them were the days.

25:00 **Slightly embarrassing.**

Yes you're quite right. Indeed so.

Well let's get back to Korea and perhaps finish off that tour that you had there. You did a lot of operations didn't you?

Yes 79 missions. I flew most of the missions after I was shot down.

How did that affect your nerves?

I was a bit clanked up for the first couple of sorties and then I was okay.

25:30 **So you're flying up the valley and you were flying over the mountains…**

Yes. We weren't supposed to go below a certain indicated altitude but the altimeter

26:00 is set on atmospheric pressure and not on…you can set it on sea level if you like, and then it will indicate sea level and everything gradient from that upwards. And you might be flying over a mountain that's 500 feet or a 1000 feet but have terrain clearance of only a couple of hundred feet

26:30 and your altimeter would be indicating much more than that. In principle we weren't suppose to fly below 4000 feet over the terrain which meant we probably had about 1500 to 2000 feet terrain clearance. That would be the case when we bought the farm as they say.

27:00 We would have been much lower than what the altimeter would have been showing. And that's why they were able to hit us so easily. I'll just go and see if I can find this copy of the Mosquito News.

27:30 **So how many operations did you get shot at?**

Apart from getting shot down I think four. I told you about the one in the Ch'orwon Valley when we went out and that was a few days after I got shot down. I went back to flying duties when Orville Scott invited me to go flying with him and I copped a burst through the starboard main frame, and we

28:00 got…another time a bullet came up and creased the back of the seat. It came up and it was 45 cal or something like that. It was just like you had run your thumb up the seat like that. That was how close it was to his back.

28:30 Something like that, four times I think.

Did you always go out singularly or did you go out…

Just one. One aeroplane, one location. There were different areas of course, different locations assigned. You did a briefing at 6 am in the morning.

29:00 And you'd do another one in the afternoon. Not the same crew. One set of crews would brief at 6am and the other would be probably at 1400 hours.

So you always went out after briefing?

Well either after the morning briefing or the afternoon briefing. And the average sortie was about 2 hours, and by that time you were pretty pooped out because

29:30 you flew lazy eights and you kept varying your attitude and your direction and so on to make it a bit confusing for the fellas who were trying to get at you. And that meant that your hands and your feet were going all the time. It was tiring after a while.

You were saying before they were fighter bombers…

30:00 They had been fighter bombers, yes. We only carried smoke rockets. We weren't allowed to have HE [?] bombs because the thinking was that if we carried explosives that we would be tempted to attack targets rather than directing the attack aircraft. So all we would do was come in, fire the rocket

30:30 at the target and hopefully hit the target and then we'd say, "Have you got the target in sight?" You'd say "Affirmative, what colour is the smoke?" If he said "yellow" or something and it was white then you'd tell him he was off the target. So that's how you'd mark it. You'd mark it with coloured smoke of one sort or another. White or blue or yellow or something of that sort.

31:00 "Have you got the target in sight?" "Affirmative." "Can you see the smoke?" "Affirmative" "What colour?" "Yellow"

So where would he be flying in relation to you?

Oh he'd be orbiting around. He would be in an F80 or F84 or something of that sort, or a Panther jet.

31:30 One of the navy officers flying and F9F, he was up towards the Yalu and putting in a ground strike, and he got down so low that he hit a telegraph poles and he took 6 feet of it away in the leading edge of his aeroplane. And he got back down to base and the base said, "Commander we can't fix this sir. We'll have to go over to Iwakuni. And that's going to involve a big

32:00 exercise." So he said, "No not at all. Get a hand saw and cut the top and bottom off the son of a bitch and I'll fly it over." And that's what they did. They cut the top and bottom off the pole and left a pole like this in his leading edge just outboard of his intake, and away he went over to Iwakuni and they fixed it up. They put another wing on and they did things like that. It was an incredibly cool character.

32:30 **Any other operations that stand out for you?**

I don't think so. Nothing comes to mind particularly.

33:00 As they say, your mind adjusts to these things. I didn't like the situation on Ocean. I wouldn't have liked to have served there because the aircraft…in the evenings you used to dress up for dinner in the

33:30 mess, and you'd be talking to someone and the next morning or next lunch time or evening you'd ask where was so and so, and they'd say he bought the farm yesterday. That was a bit disturbing. So that's the contrast you see. The Ward Room, that's what I was trying to say, which corresponded to the mess. The navy is very right and proper. They

34:00 dress for the evening meal. You'd dress up and then of course you'd have your oily overalls on and you'd be briefed and away you'd go and put in a strike somewhere and you might cop it and not come back. Just like Les would have told you about 77 Squadron. They would fly out of Iwakuni in the early days and

34:30 the wives were up there when the war started and they'd see their husbands off. They'd drive their husbands down to the strip and they'd know about what time they were due back and they'd back down and wait for them. Some of them didn't come back and it was awfully trying.

35:00 A friend of mine. I knew him before he joined the air force. His name was Lou Spence. He was the CO, the commanding officer of 77 Squadron, and he was killed up in Korea. That happened to him. He promised his little boy that he would take him for a ride in a Blue Spinner…in Red Spinner. The spinner cap on the propeller.

35:30 The little boy was down with his mother when Lou was supposed to have come back and he just stayed there. He was just a brown mark on the side of a hill. He got hit. There's another reason why I remember Lou too. This was in Emerald Central Queensland. Lou at that stage was a very good looking blond chap. Very good looking.

36:00 He was working in the Bank of New South Wales as a bank officer. We were staying at the same place. It was a boarding house. On this occasion Lou said to me, "Keith are you using your car tonight?" and I said, "No Lou." So he said he would like to borrow it, and I said "Well yes, but my mother is arriving on the early morning train.

36:30 And I would have to have the car back, make sure you bring it back with some petrol in it". I was a bit late the next morning so I raced out, jumped in the car and took off to the railway station, picked up my Mum and drove back to the place where we were staying. I went into the boarding house to make some arrangements about something

37:00 and when I came back my mother was holding up a pair of dainties, what have you's, unmentionables [underwear] like this. And she said, "Who's are these son?" And I swallowed, "Oh they're just old dusters Mum." She said, "Well they look to be in extremely good condition." Naughty Lou. I suppose my mother still thinks I was the culprit.

37:30 Poor old Lou. Wish he was here still. A character. Well I've talked myself dry.

Perhaps we'll move on to your return to Australia. I mean it would be good to talk about what you were doing in Cambodia.

38:00 I was the Service Attaché in Cambodia from January 1960 to 1963. I represented the army, navy and air force, and it

38:30 was my job to collect, collate information and intelligence on what the Cambodians had. Any information I could pick up. But in any case I was part of the staff in the Australian Embassy in Phnom Penh. And the Ambassador was Francis Stewart, a very delightful fellow, and afterwards Mal Dashant.

39:00 And Francis Stewart got us a beautiful home. A 2 story house in Phnom Penh. Very comfortable indeed. It had everything that opened and shut, and we carried out the role of well, MI5, MI6, ASIO [intelligence services] and so on you know.

39:30 There was nothing very much to report on because the Cambodians at that stage…Sihanouk was sitting on the fence and the Russians were trying to get at him to get him on their side, and the Americans were trying to get at him to make sure he stayed on their side, and so on and so on. And he was actually playing one side against the other. But it was an interesting

40:00 period of time. I quite enjoyed it. I drove all over Cambodia and part of Vietnam and also Laos. Cambodia is about the size of Victoria with a population of about 15 million. And a very peaceful and well established country at that time. There were…there was a group of insurgents

40:30 up on the Cambodian-Laotian border, and there were about a 100 of them and that was about as much as the communists had in the area at that time. Well of course subsequently the whole thing deteriorated into a horrible mess and everything I knew in Cambodia would be deceased. They would have been killed by the communists. A person called Pol Pot [leader of Khmer Rouge, later dictatorial Prime Minster of Kampuchea] was the head of the communist element, and a pretty nasty bloke. They killed two young men…an Australian, an American or a Frenchman. They were just visitors there. Just tourists. And they were riding the train down to Kampot and the insurgents held up the train and took these 2 chaps captive. They killed both of them. That was one of the sort of things they used to get up to. It was a peaceful country.

Tape 9

00:34 **So Keith, you've told a little bit about Cambodia which is quite intriguing in itself. Those intervening years when you got back from Korea and 1960 when you went to Cambodia, what was happening with your career then?**

I was at Army Headquarters in St Kilda Road Barracks and when I wasn't there I was up in Canberra at the headquarters there. At that stage the Army Headquarters was changing location

01:00 from Victoria Barracks in St Kilda Road to Canberra. And I was in a branch doing staff duties which was the sort of thing we were talking about with the adjutant. Organization, methods and procedures and that sort of thing.

01:30 And I used to fly backwards and forwards to begin with. I never lived in Canberra during that stage. I had a house in Canberra, an address in Canberra and never lived in the house. Nobody lived in the house while I had it. I had an empty house. I remember…

02:00 in those days the hostesses in the aircraft used to come and sit down and talk to you. They were well versed in public relations and current affairs and all that sort of thing. And I remember sitting on the starboard side and there was a vacant seat and the hostess came in and sat down alongside me. I looked out and I saw the Albury Racecourse.

02:30 And I said, "Look there's the Albury Racecourse, that's where I met (UNCLEAR) out of the DC2 during the Melbourne Air Race, do you remember that?" She said she did but not very clearly, "I was only a year old at the time", so I became conscious of the fact I was getting on a bit. Losing the plot.

So back from Korea you got slotted back in to where you had been previously with the army. What was that transition like?

I had been

03:00 on Headquarters 4 Brigade and then I went from that to Army Headquarters. Headquarters 4 Brigade was at Swan Street Richmond. That was the reserve. And then I went from there to Army Headquarters. I always seemed to have someone somewhere who felt that I should be given something to do. And sometimes it was good and sometimes bad.

03:30 **Now we can't leave today without asking about the decorations that you received from the Americans?**

Oh my Distinguished Flying Cross. Well you know, when Bill Myer…he saw me and he said,

04:00 "Now you've got the Distinguished Flying Cross Hatfield, let's see you do some distinguished flying." And the other guy…a couple of days after, more than that, a week. He tapped me on the shoulder and said, "When did you find Christianity Hatfield, the day you got shot down?"

04:30 They were good boys, good mates.

So the DFC was for…

The Distinguished Flying Cross? For various acts of stupidity I suppose. The Air Medal was the equivalent of the Distinguished Flying Medal principally for the 79 missions that I flew.

05:00 The DFC was for going on the jaunt with the F86 pilot when we nearly got shot down. I think the reason I got the medal was because …recently I had been in that position myself.

Is that where you located that…

Yes, the F86 yes, out in the Chunchon Valley.

How difficult a mission was that?

Well as far as I was concerned

05:30 it wasn't that difficult. The chopper [helicopter], "Adro Pete" was his call sign. Adro Pete was a brave fellow, he flew in and picked him up and got him out because we couldn't land, but we flew top cover and directed fire against the enemy. It was during that time that we copped a burst through the starboard main frame, just outboard of the petrol tank.

06:00 Somewhere here is the album I think. You can have a look at that if you want to. It will tell you more.

Is there anything more you can tell us for the archive?

Not really.

Just one more thing. Cambodia. You set things up there for us.

06:30 **You were talking about Pol Pot. So was that…from '60 to '63…was he seen or was his group seen as the threat if there was one?**

No, he wasn't recognised at that stage. He was still in the back of the jungle somewhere.

07:00 I think somewhere around about Battambang which was north west Cambodia, somewhere in that region is where they started out. It was a comparatively inaccessible area where they established themselves to begin with and then they

07:30 very quickly spread out across the country. There were only 120 and Pol Pot might have been one of them, I don't know. And they were still outside Cambodia. They were in Laos. The Americans were always concerned that the Vietnamese, the Viet Cong were using Cambodia as a base,

08:00 and that's where my work was mainly concentrated. To ascertain if that were so. And beyond a couple of border incidences I saw no evidence of that. Sihanouk had a good control over things but when he went away to Paris for health reasons, and very badly advised I think somebody encouraged General Longmol the commander of the

08:30 armed forces to stand as head of state. And the populace didn't owe General Longmol the loyalty they gave Prince Noradom Sihanouk. Prince Noradom Sihanouk was regarded as a god, and they would do anything for him.

09:00 They would see them sitting alongside a road like this and when they did you knew they had got word that Sihanouk was going to come passed. He was revered and he held the country together.

Did you meet him?

Oh yes.

What did you make of him?

Oh he was a character there was no question about that. He was a flamboyant sort of character. He played musical instruments and he sang.

09:30 You had to be a bit careful of him though because he could explode. He had a very short fuse. But I never had any trouble with him at all.

And he understood the sort of work you were doing?

Oh yes. He referred to me 'As one of those 3rd rate pseudo spies'. He knew exactly what I was doing. If I gave him an order I would soon find out who was boss.

10:00 **So at that time you were answering back to Australia, or working through the ambassador?**

I had a desk in the embassy in Cambodia, yes.

10:30 **So what do you think was your main achievement during those 3 years there?**

Oh I suppose just being conscientious, that's all it was. I have pieces of paper that say…this is an example of some of them. This is an NGIB report. This is signed by the 2nd in Command of the 2 NGIB. 'I write these words in appreciation of Lieutenant Hatfield.

11:00 This officer whilst under my command has been an extremely efficient and hardworking officer. He possesses a most pleasant of personalities and a good sense of humour. It is my great regret that Lieutenant Hatfield has been accepted for the British Army in India but I'm sure it is the latter's gain.

11:30 I'm certain that where ever he serves he will maintain the highest standard of military efficiency which he has displayed whilst a member of this unit.' I really had a fairly trouble free sort of existence in the services. You need to know when to talk and when not to talk. If you allow your tongue to run away with you

12:00 you get into trouble. That's for certain.

Well I guess we might wrap things up. That seems like a reasonable place to do it. I don't know if you want to say much more, but if there is we've got plenty of time left on the tape. So if you feel there is anything you feel is important to be recorded…

12:30 I don't think so. My success or lack of it has mainly been attributable to my own conduct. 'Colonel Hatfield has been awarded the United States Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal for gallantry. He has also been awarded the Pacific Star, the War Medal, The Australian Service Medal, the Korean Medal, the United Nations medal and the Queen Elizabeth the Second Coronation Medal and the

13:00 South East Asian Medal. During the Second World War Colonel Hatfield served with the Royal Australian Army Service Corp in the 2nd New Guinea Infantry Battalion. During a period in the British Army in India he was appointed to a permanent commission in the Australian Army in 1940 and served in regimental appointments until posted to Korea

13:30 in 1952. Subsequently he held the following appointments: Adjutant of the 3rd Battalion Royal Australian Regiment; (UNCLEAR); General Staff Officer Grade 2 and Director of Staff Duties at Army Headquarters; Service Attaché in Cambodia; Executive Officer of the (UNCLEAR) Regiment, and finally Commander of 3 Cadet Brigade.

14:00 Colonal Hatfield served overseas in the south west Pacific area during 1945 and in Japan and Korea during 1952 and 1953 and in Cambodia from 1960 to 1963. Colonel Hatfield has been a commissioned officer for 25 years and has proved to be loyal, hardworking and trustworthy and has carried out all his duties in an efficient manner. Signed A.L. McDonald (Sir Arthur McDonald). Not everybody's favourite officer but he was alright with me. I speak about him as I found him. He was very loyal to me and very helpful. But he would take you apart in the drop of a hat. He could do it very well too. He didn't spare people.

14:30 He wasn't very pleased with the padre one morning. I attended church service with him and he was grumbling away and he said, "I'll get that fellow shifted." He didn't approve of his sermon.

Well it's a fascinating and varied career that you've had.

You reckon. Yes, it's been a bit of a mixture hasn't it.

Well we don't want to eat into your dinner time too much. Elsa has been patient out there in the cold. But it's been great today. So that you very much for bearing with us.

Thank you both for being so tolerant and patient, really.

It's been our pleasure, really.

INTERVIEW ENDS