Australians at War Film Archive

Jack Hunt - Transcript of interview

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Tape 1

00:30 **Can you tell me where you born?**

I was born in Numurkah, on the 6th of April, 1916,

01:00 And then I came back then at Wunghnu. I was the third son of Alice and Hubert Hunt. My eldest brother William, he died, I have only a very faint memory of him. And my older brother, Sid,

01:30 he was two and a half years older than myself, then my younger brother, Perce Hunt, he was six years younger, and he was supposed to have been a daughter, but he didn't turn out to be a daughter. There was a son, and a son, and...there were three boys, and we grew up together, we're a very close family. My father was a farm contractor, and he and his brother

02:00 had a traction engine which they used to do for chaff cutting, and thrashing, originally. They used it for carting wheat and chaff for the railway station. They also used at that time, those years, you might say, around about the '20's, in shifting houses.

02:30 Originally Wunghnu was the terminus of the railway, which was before my time, but I saw the last of the removal of most of the houses, that was at Wunghnu, and they shifted them up to Numurkah, which was six miles closer to the Murray, because they wanted to put branch lines out to Cobram and Nathalia, and there were three creeks between us and Numurkah,

03:00 and to avoid putting another three bridges in, they then said they would shift the terminus, or the railway junction, to Numurkah, and they shifted the town, virtually, which was originally about three or four hotels, and a wine saloon, and they ended up not having a hotel, or anything at all, it was just the bare back bones of the town, and that is where I grew up actually, in Wunghnu.

03:30 I went to Wunghnu Primary School, and at grade four I had a set back, I got ear trouble, which involved. We lived close to the railway station, and my father used to go up at night to arrange for the railway trucks to be shunted down to where he was cutting wood for transport by train to Melbourne.

04:00 He used to send about four or five truckloads a night. As I was going up, unfortunately, I got giddy, and I kept going around, and around in circles, until I collapsed in the middle of it, and I had gravel rash right down my arms and legs. He took me to the doctor in Numurkah, and he said my balance had gone in my right ear,

04:30 and he advocated that for some unknown reason I wasn't to go to school, I just had to take the rest of the. that was from August, virtually, to the end of the year, and I stayed at home. I used to spend my time with Father over at the railway station, on the traction engine and so forth, until the end of the year. Fortunately the headmaster came along

05:00 and told me, he put me up to grade five, and on probation, which relieved me a great deal. I was reasonably bright, and I went on then to grade six, and on grade six, my father decided then, but my older brother, he had just got his merit certificate, and myself to Numurkah to the secondary school there.

05:30 I went to Numurkah then, for four years, and I was either first or second in the class right up until. it was the intermediate certificate in those days. That was a set back, I received there because, they were in forms in those days, not in years like they are now. I was at,

06:00 virtually what would be Year Ten now, and he called me into the office, and told me I couldn't do nine subjects at intermediate level, you were only allowed to do eight. He said, "You can drop your lowest mark," which happened to be French, and I'm mentioning this because it had a big affect on my life. I had to drop French, with a mark of sixty seven percent,

06:30 which was the second highest mark in the class. I had to drop French in the middle of the year, virtually,

at the end of first term it was. At the end of that year, because I was top of the school, dux of the school, my father said, "Well, you go on doing high school at Shepparton." Shepparton was twenty miles away from Wunghnu. It was the nearest secondary school north of Melbourne.

07:00 The nearest ones were Bendigo, or Benalla. So I had to go in on Monday mornings, catch a half past six train, and board in Shepparton for the nights of the week, and come home on Friday night to Wunghnu, then go back again on Monday morning. Then when I got to do the leaving certificate, in those days,

07:30 of course I tried to do leaving French, and I failed, because I didn't have the grammar which you learn the year before. My father said, "Well, you didn't have a very good run," because the place he found to board for me was an AMP [Australian Mutual Provident Society] supervisor,

08:00 and the family had a wife and three little kids who yelled and screamed and howled practically every night, I couldn't study. about a mile from the school, but that wasn't an excuse, they were just the facts of life that existed. I did my first year, as I said, and I got my four leaving subjects, but I failed in French.

08:30 And the French teacher, she told me, "You've got no hope of doing leaving French without the grammar. You've got to go back and do the intermediate one." Which I did do, passed it, and then I got my four leaving subjects again, the second year, so then I had eight matriculation subjects which I was annoyed about, but it actually served a good purpose later on. When I did try and do the leaving certificate

09:00 I failed, because I failed in the grammar in French. So I now had two years at Shepparton High School, and the third year, halfway through, I was offered a teaching job at Cobram. So I went home, and took up the teaching job at Cobram.

09:30 **I'd like to take you back to Wunghnu, did you stay in the town after it was shifted?**

Yes, the last bank that they shifted there was the Bank of Australasia, and the farmers bought them for homes, and for out buildings actually.

10:00 I've got a photo actually of my father shifting one of the buildings behind the traction engines. It showed them all standing around it. They used to lift the houses up, as they do nowadays, and then with jacks on each corner, and pull the house shifter, as he called it, underneath,

10:30 and then lower them down on the jacks on the house remover, and then take them out. Of course, in that area up there, they were putting through the irrigation system, and all the channel bridges were only narrow bridges. So my father had to go out and take down the sides of the bridges before the house came along the road.

11:00 They would get out to the place, and they would have to put the stumps in. They used common sense, instead of using laser levels like they have today, they just used a garden hose with glass tubes on the end of them, about eighteen inches long, which came out of the engines, which showed how much water was in the boiler, and they used these glass tubes, and that gave them the level of the stumps.

11:30 So they had the one centre one, and all the others were made level with that particular stump, and that was the way they levelled off the stumps underneath the houses, then they lowered the house down onto the stumps, and then the carpenters would come along.

Did the railways pay for this?

No, they paid for nothing, no, nothing at all. There was no compensation

12:00 for the people who were in the houses originally, they were only the railway workers, because that was the railway terminus at Wunghnu, that was where the men were employed, and once they shifted the terminus, the men all moved, but they didn't move the houses in Numurkah, which was one of the funny things about it. They were rebuilt there, they were all rebuilt again, railway housing it was. But I can just remember that in my early days.

12:30 **But that must have been strange to have half the town move out?**

It was, there was probably no more than, at that stage, about twenty houses. The school originally was just two big rooms, what we used to call a little room, and the big room. We had one teacher in the grade four, and the senior room was grade five to grade eight. It was an agricultural school,

13:00 which meant, it was a very big area. They kept a garden, they had vegetable plots, they also had an experimental crop plot. We used to sow different breeds of wheat, weigh out the grains that we put in it, harvest that at the end of the year, the same as the farmers, weigh those.

13:30 This was in the teaching, the elementary science, which was practical actually, because most of the people were farming people who came into the school from the surrounding district. One of my chief friends there, was of the McPherson family, Ron McPherson, a contemporary of mine,

14:00 and we got into beehives, and keeping bees. It used to be a practice for us then, and encouraged by our parents. We all used to use pea rifles, and guns, right through the area, we were only just kids, in junior school. I had a pony, and he had a pony, and we'd go along the creeks,

14:30 and we'd wait for when the bees would come down to the creek to drink, and people don't believe this, but it is a fact, and we used to get a piece of cotton and drop it over the top of the bee, and so when it got up to fly it couldn't fly very fast, and we used to follow it to the trees and then back to its hive. We'd climb the trees with spikes that I got from my father, he used them taking down bridges for the council,

15:00 these were nine inch spikes, and we'd drive them in, imitating mountaineering people, and we'd climb up. My father gather me a cross-cut saw about four feet long, we'd haul it up with a rope, and the one up the tree would cut down the bow and the other one would be down the bottom with the smoker, to smoke the bees when they crashed to the ground. Then we would take the honeycomb out.

15:30 The bees, we were immune to them, we didn't even wear anything. They used to just land on you, they wouldn't bite you, so long as the fear element, which is a major factor in all our lives, if you weren't afraid of them, they didn't worry you. The same with dogs, I had no worry with dogs, or horses, I'd get amongst them, I wasn't afraid of them,

16:00 they sense it. The bees, they used to just land on your hands, and you'd brush them off, and away they'd go. We used to keep about six hives, each, and when I finally left Wunghnu, that was practically at the beginning of the war years, when I broke off from there completely. Ron McPherson was the same,

16:30 so we bequeathed our hives to his younger brother, Blair, who is still an apiarist, and he now runs two semi-trailers, one he has about a hundred hives on in boxes, and the other one he has a whole plant for getting the honey from the hives. He has twenty acres of land all around the Riverina in Northern Victoria, he puts his hives there, and shifts them from area to area as the blossoms come out,

17:00 and he has made a very good living out of it. I used to call in there, and pick up a can of honey when I was coming back from the Gold Coast, and this was only a few years. I'd pick up the honey from there, and we'd have a good old talk. This was the younger brother Blair, and he. His two sons are in with him, and the three of them work a farm, and they also do the honey business.

17:30 **So when you came across the tree with the bough with the hive in it, and you cut the bough down, did you then make a hive?**

When they came to the ground, we'd used smoke to actually quieten the bees down, and then we'd have a big sheet of white paper, and we'd put the hives onto it, get the bees out of the hive.

18:00 We'd pick out the queen bee, you could always pick her out, and once you picked out the queen bee, that meant the rest of the hive would follow her. We could do that without any problems at all, and once we got the queen bee, we'd put her in a box and take her home and start a new hive.

18:30 We'd put her in the hive, put the rest of the hive which we'd empty out of the sugar bag. We'd just put them into a sugar bag, or actually into my mother's pillow slips, much to her horror. The hive, and the honeycomb, we'd put that into another pillow slip and take it home and hang it up on a tree and let the honey drip out through it.

19:00 It would take about a week or a fortnight for it all to drip out of the honeycomb, and so forth. We had that much honey that I used to give it away, that was an interesting past-time. In addition to that, we used to go rabbiting and so forth, shooting, and rabbiting. Every duck season, my three brothers, we all had guns,

19:30 either single barrel, or double barrel. Ron's father, we used to go, and he had a double barrel gun. That's how we used to occupy our spare time. On weekends we'd yoke up our horse, and drive out to the Golbourn River, which was about ten miles out, and we'd drive out on the Friday night, and camp on the river side on Friday night

20:00 and cook our tea. We would fish overnight in the river, and then spend Saturday there, fishing, and then drive home on Sunday and go off to school again on Monday. It was a great life, a good life. Meanwhile, my father, he was with his brother, Thomas was his brother, they ran the traction engine, and they used to go around all the farms,

20:30 chaff cutting, and the hay would be put into stacks. When we were big enough, my elder brother and myself, we'd go out on weekends and holidays and work the chaff cutter, and assist in cutting bands as they went up into the chaff cutting plant, and other little odd jobs around the chaff cutter. I probably saw the last of the thrashers.

21:00 The thrashers were the old time, when the hay was brought in, it was just cut, and it had to be thrashed, and they separated the grain from the straw in the thrasher. It took fourteen men to operate the thrasher, and farmer's wives used to dread the sight of the thrasher coming into the farm, because they had to provide five meals a day.

21:30 They'd start in the morning, as soon as it was light virtually, there was morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, and then dinner at night. It used to spend two or three days at each of the farms where they were working. I saw the last of the thrasher. It was brought home and put into a big shed on my uncle's property, my Uncle Thomas's property.

22:00 It stayed there, and stayed there, and it was never ever used again because the farmers then had the

headers come in which did the job for them, as they cut the grain, as they do nowadays, and they separate the chaff from the wheat on the machine as it goes along, the wheat comes out. But in the summertime,

22:30 my father used to take the traction engine from the railway station, which was only next door to it. He would get up at about half past six in the morning and go over and light the fire in the traction engine, and then come back for breakfast. Then they would go out to the farms with three wagons, and they would haul in two hundred and seventy bags on each trip, one trip a day virtually.

23:00 As they went out to the farms, my father would go ahead, on the old…days when wood was very plentiful, and he would cut slithes of wood for the traction engine as they went along the road, or someone might go ahead and do it, and he had a . (rone?UNCLEAR). there that he had brought from Mansfield, actually, and she was the workhorse.

23:30 When they got to the farm, my uncle used the traction engine, and my father then organised. (UNCLEAR). and they'd pull up against these bags of wheat in the field, and the horse would be hooked onto a bag loader. The bag loader used to have a chain on it, and the horse, on urging from someone,

24:00 or when we were there, us kids, we used to lead the horse, that was our job on weekends, or holidays, and so forth, and we'd lead the horse, and the bag would go up onto the wagon. My father used to catch those bags as they came off the bag loader, and he would carry them across the wagons which would be here to the end of this room long. He just dropped them down, he never had time to do anything than to just drop them into their right place.

24:30 He would do this for two hundred and seventy bags, right through. When they finished loading, they set off then to go back into the railway station to unload it at the railway station. I've got photos of the unloading of it, and the elevator that my brother Sid. he left school in.

25:00 year ten, he didn't want to go on, he just wanted to go and work for our father, go out on the farms. There was plenty of work. He used to get seven shillings a day, fifteen dollars an hour now, or more. You couldn't get anybody for that now, they wouldn't work for that, but anyhow, he went out working for our father.

25:30 He then got a job later on as an agent for receiving wheat at the railway station. They'd stack the wheat at the railway station during the summer, and then during the season as wheat demand rose in Melbourne, to be shipped overseas or to flour millers, he'd truck it away from the station.

26:00 That was his job, he was also an agent for receiving sheep and cattle, and they'd be trucked away to New Market sale yards, that was my elder brother Sid.

So when you moved to Numurkah, did they close the railway line?

No, they didn't close the railway line. Wunghnu was before Numurkah. It was Wunghnu, and the next station on, away from Melbourne, was Numurkah.

26:30 Then they opened up Numurkah, their idea was to get to the Murray at Tuckamore. They did that, then they put a branch line out to Cobram, and that wasn't a great success actually. Then they did another branch line that went out to Nathalia, out the other side. They all branched out from Numurkah, the three lines at Numurkah. I went to school, then, at Numurkah

27:00 for four years, and did reasonably well, and went through to intermediate, and then my father said, "I'll let you go onto high school," Shepparton High School.

You mentioned before an Uncle Thomas, so did you have other extended family around the district?

No, that was all.

27:30 My mother's family came from Ballan, they were butchers in Ballan. My mother used to deliver the mail out from Ballan, to Blackwood, Pykes Reservoir, and all those places, and she still had the revolver she used to carry, a nickel revolver, twenty two gauge one it was.

28:00 She used to carry that with her when she was delivering the mail. We're talking now about. it was 1905 when they were married, they moved up to Wunghnu. Some years later, my eldest brother, he was born. I don't know the date to tell you the truth, but it was about 1910, or 1912,

28:30 and then my elder brother was born in 1914, and then I was born in 1916, and my younger brother Perce, was born in 1922. That's right, six years after me.

So when was your mum delivering the mail?

When she was just a teenager virtually, from Ballan, that was the centre in those days, for the area.

29:00 She used to tell us all the names. she would tell us about them, but in those days I didn't know the location, to know exactly where…She always mentioned that Blackwood was one place that she went to, Pykes Reservoir was another one she used to mention, which is a fair way from Ballan, and it was all on horseback.

Pretty rugged country.

Yeah, pretty rugged, they were only tracks, just horse tracks they travelled over.

29:30 She said the mail was delivered once a week to the outlying places.

Why did she carry this little silver revolver? What did she need protection from?

Well, in those days, she didn't know. Don't forget, we're still on the tail end of gold discoveries and settlement in Australia. It was on the main road, people going up to the gold fields still,

30:00 and going up into central Victoria, and so forth. “All people carried one,” she said, “In those days. I never ever fired it off, I was often tempted to, but I never ever did, never fired that one, no…”

It was pretty unusual for a female to be doing a job like that?

Yes, it was, but they did a lot more then, than they do now,

30:30 as far as that sort of thing goes. The whole family. .she had about three sisters, and three brothers. They were all butchers, the brothers. The last one was a butcher at Essendon, just near the Essendon railway station, and I knew him, that was Uncle Aldie. I lived in Essendon at that stage,

31:00 and his two daughters were there. I've lost track of them, one of them is still alive. I've got a photo of the last of the Lay family, four cousins. We had a reunion in the early '90’s, and I went back to it. There was only four of us there, of the Lay family.

31:30 One of those was still alive, and she lived at a village out beyond Burwood, we still correspond and so forth.

Where did your father hail from?

He came from Lancefield. The Hunt family, there were two brothers came out from England.

32:00 I don't know where the other brother went to at all. His family lived at Lancefield, and they were butchers too. The thing that always intrigued me, and eventually I found out by enquiring of my mother and father, how did they meet? Because she was the daughter of a family from Ballan,

32:30 and my father was the son of a family at Lancefield, and they were a long way apart. It turns out, that my father was the best man to his older brother at a wedding, and my mother was the lady in waiting for the bride. They could have met at Hanging Rock, which was the racing centre in those days. I was still

33:00 going up there, I used to stay at Lancefield, we used to go to Hanging Rock races, and of course the Picnic At Hanging Rock, it had a great significance. I knew all the rocks, I had climbed it a dozen times myself at the races. We weren't interested in the races, we were interested in climbing around the rocks. It was an interesting story for me, the picture of Picnic At Hanging Rock.

33:30 They would all go in horse and jinkers [carts] in those days, too. We never had a car, we just kept horses. My father was very, very good with animals, he never ever used a whip on a horse. He used to break in these ponies that came as a gift, really. The chap behind us,

34:00 he kept a stallion there in a very insecure enclosure, and almost every year it would break through out over his fence, over our fences and into. We had this, roan mare in our place, and she would have a foal almost every year, almost. So we had roan ponies, I grew up on them. My father used to break them in, and we were the ones that had to ride them, to break them in,

34:30 but we enjoyed it, it was great fun.

What's roan pony?

Roan? It's…almost the colour of that, a little bit whiter than that, but there were red roans, and blue roans, a bit more reddish tint in the colour.

35:00 They were known as roan ponies. We used to these ponies, and we used to ride them all over the countryside. We used to go duck shooting, and we'd shoot off their back, which wasn't an unusual practice, and they never worried, as long as you never shot over their heads, you'd shoot sideways. playing cricket, and coming back.

35:30 I think I was still in primary school. I might have been going to Numurkah Elementary School. We were playing cricket at home, and we had these wickets, and we'd pick them up, my elder brother and I, and as we were walking along, we'd throw them into the ground, just to make them stick into the ground, like kids do. I threw one and it fell over, that was all right. My elder brother was coming along,

36:00 he threw his, and a chance in a million, the point of his hit the one of the ground, zipped up, I've still got the scar underneath my eye. It just missed my right eye. Of course, I couldn't shoot with my right eye, it was all black, so I then started shooting with my left eye, my left eye open, and I then became a left

hand shooter, and that was a very great thing,

36:30 because we would be riding along, either with Ron McPherson, or my elder brother, I'd be shooting out one direction, and him being a right hander, he would shoot out the other direction. When I got into the army, the first job I went to. I'll leave that for further on,

37:00 but it turned me into a left hand shot.

I'm curious about the picture of you on the pony, shooting off the pony. It sounds like something out of the Wild West, did you have saddles?

Sometimes, our father didn't want us to have big saddles,

37:30 too much to handle. So we just had what they called pads, which was a leather thing, and it had two stirrups on it of course. You could carry it in one hand, and that was all we used. We often didn't bother about that, we used to ride bareback quite often. When we were out with my father, carting wheat, we used to ride home on top of his wagons,

38:00 we'd eat our lunch up there. We had a cousin who was the same age as I was, Edison, he was my Uncle Tom's boy. unfortunately, his eldest son's, boy, suffered kidney trouble, and of course there was no dialysis in those days. He had one kidney removed, it didn't affect him that much, he played football with us. On the football team, we ended up with five Hunts playing

38:30 My two cousins, and myself, and my elder brother, and finally my younger brother joined us, so there were five Hunts. We were pretty formidable. If anyone tackled one of the Hunts, we were all in, we played it hard. No, we were very loyal, the rest of the team was very loyal. I've got a photograph that shows me as the playing coach,

39:00 of Wunghnu football team the year after I left high school, I was only seventeen years old. I was a very good footballer, exceptionally good footballer. I was a better player than my younger brother, and he played with Geelong for five years. He begged me after the war to go and play with Geelong, because he went and played with Geelong, but I said, "No," because I still had one subject to do to finish my Bachelor of Arts.

39:30 This was one point that came up. I entered for arts and commerce, of course they claimed they did so much for returned servicemen, but they wouldn't let me do arts and commerce, I was only allowed one degree, which was very annoying. I had the commerce subjects already, but they wouldn't let me count them for commerce.

40:00 So I was very annoyed about that, I finished up doing two subjects, including French. I had to have French originally, to do modern history. All the special study that year was The French Revolution, and all the documents were in French. I said to you earlier

40:30 about how the fact that I failed in French turned out to be a benefit eventually. I think it's in The Sound Of Music, where Maria says, "When God closes one gate, he opens another door," and it turned out to be true, because when I went to the uni [university], I had French then, matriculation French, and I had done that when I was at the teacher's college.

41:00 I went to Shepparton High School after Numurkah, where I played cricket, captain of the football team, and dux of the school there, it was great. My younger brother, he started then going to Numurkah School also, and he went right through to intermediate, then he wouldn't go on to do the leaving certificate, or year eleven,

41:30 he just wanted to go to Melbourne to play cricket. He was a great cricketer, he was captain of the team, a good footballer too, of course. I went to Cobram teaching.

Tape 2

00:30 **So you were going to talk a bit about the economy of the district during the Depression?**

01:00 The years, in the '20s, were very, very severe. The normal practice where we were, because we were only the first house down from the railway station, so during these years, I can well remember, men on the train who would jump off the train, and dash down, begging actually,

01:30 and they used to mark your house in front with a piece of chalk or something, if you were a good catch or not. A recognisable sign amongst these travellers and people who were unemployed, who were actually humpies [swagmen; itinerant Australian labourers who carried their personal belongings in a bundle as they travelled around in search of work] carrying their back swag, looking for work and so forth. My father couldn't employ them

02:00 because he had a permanent chap, who had a wife and family. He used to employ this chap, Mr Morgan, for years I remember he worked with my father. So he didn't have any work in that respect. My mother,

she always did her best to give them something, as far as helping them out when they came off the trains and so forth, and the guards on the trains, they didn't worry them, as long as they didn't damage any goods,

02:30 and you would see them riding 'The Rattler,' as they called it in those days, as they went through, but in our own area, ourselves, my father, because he was a farm contractor, that still had to go on, but the point about it was, the farmers were only paid on the crops that they sold once a year,

03:00 and so of course, the current year, until they got their money for their wheat or their chaff or whatever they were selling, my father didn't get paid, and he still had to pay his workman, which to us always sounded very difficult. He didn't have that much for us kids. Having three boys was lucky in the respect that we all got hand-me-downs. One grew out of it,

03:30 and it was passed on down through the family. We grew up with that, but everyone was the same, you didn't worry. The neighbours next door, they had a farm three, or four miles out, Burke was their name. Finn was actually their correct name, but they went under the name Burke, now I don't know why they called themselves Burke.

04:00 But the family grew up there, they had two or three girls, and two boys, and they joined in to provide activities, cricket, and football, with us. There was a vacant block between us, which had become vacant, because I can remember my brother and I slept in a big double bed when we were young, and I can remember waking up one night and seeing a red glow on the window,

04:30 it was the house next door on fire, which was a rather unnerving experience, which lasted me all my life. I've always been afraid of fire in the house. It was burnt down completely, there was no fire brigade in Wunghnu.

So the house next door, being a neighbouring farm?

No, we were in the town, we lived in the town itself. We were only about fifty metres from the railway station, we couldn't get much closer to the centre of activity in that respect.

05:00 The actual people that worked there, the farmers, they were only paid once a year. my job, actually, I used to do it,

05:30 was write out the accounts for the farms, and they would send their cheques in and so forth. Had to keep some sort of ledger, a pretty rough and ready one admittedly, but it taught me that you needed to keep a ledger of your money and accounts and so forth. Once a year, we would fill in the income tax, I can remember going through it. I was only in year ten actually, filling in these income tax forms to send away.

06:00 I can remember one year, my father's income balance came to fifty five pounds. That was all he had for the year's work. Out of that, of course, my mother. she was a good housekeeper fortunately, and made do. When I went off to Shepparton High School, they had to pay for my books, and clothes, and so forth.

06:30 I had to pay board of course, when I went to Shepparton.

Why did you go to Shepparton? Giving that you were doing eight subjects at Numurkah.?

That was the end of the story there, I only went to year ten. In order to get matriculated, which I needed to do if I wanted to go on to be a teacher, and I did at that stage, want to be a teacher, and I never ever forgave the headmaster at Numurkah

07:00 for not letting me do the French at the intermediate level, because that became a burden.

Why didn't he allow you to do nine subjects?

Because he was a. I won't say it. He wasn't experienced enough, he was a returned soldier, he had little or no education at all.

07:30 He wasn't qualified at all to be a headmaster, but we're talking the years in the '20's, it was just after the war. I was there until 1928, I can still remember the years after there, when most of the people around the town were returned men,

08:00 and the idea of giving them support on their homes, and their own farms, to a certain extent, but his job was there, Youlden was his name, Joe Youlden.

Just on that subject of the returned soldiers from the First World War, what do you recall of them?

08:30 **Did you know men. ?**

Well, the chap behind, who owned the stallion, he was a returned soldier and so forth, he was on a pension from the government, he was very. when I look back I can realise, he was very erratic in his behaviour, and his attitude, and everything else.

09:00 My father said we have to forgive him. we used to go past his place and give him a bit of cheek as we

went past. My father went crook about that, he said, "No, you're not to do that, he's a returned soldier, and he's had a pretty tough spin." My father couldn't go because he was a farmer, he had a farm contract, he wasn't allowed to join in those days, he stayed on the farm, doing the farm work.

09:30 My mother used to go over to the station where they had a Red Cross centre, and they used to do the bandages, the making up of bandages, to send away to the Red Cross. I remember going over with her when I was a toddler, 1916, I was only three years old when it ended in 1918, I can remember that. Even after the war,

10:00 they continued, for a couple of years afterwards, because the returned soldiers, still coming back, were still being treated in hospitals, and wherever they could treat them. I can remember them taking a train through the station, this was about 1920, I was only about four years, and watching the train with all the guns and stuff on it, for an exhibition, and you had to pay so much in order to view all these things at the station, just to get money

10:30 to help the government and all that sort of thing. I can remember the war trains going through. Little did I realise that it was only another twenty years and I would be on the train going through the station, too. I could only wave to my parents, they didn't even know I was on the train as it went through.

Your father, what kind of education did he get?

11:00 He only went to merit certificate. My father, from Lansfield, he and his brother became shearers, and each year they would yoke up two horses. and put a big bag of chaff on the back of it,

11:30 and they would set off and go right up through Queensland, the two of them. Then they would shear through the sheds, from Queensland, right through New South Wales, right down to Victoria. They'd be away, my father used to say, for about six months. By the time they got down to Victoria, it was virtually into the summer. He was living at Lancefield in those days. At Lancefield, next door to them

12:00 was a place called Clarkefield, now Clarkefield belonged to Sir Rupert Clarke. He was one of the political giants of those days, he had this big place there called Ruperswood, and my father, and the Hunts of Lancefield, were on good terms with him, and he used to get them to come over and do any work he had to do, shearing, and cropping, and things like that.

12:30 My father's father had a butcher's shop, and they used to buy their stock from around about Lancefield. My father, and his brother, they were what's known as gun shearers, in other words they were top of the shed, and they could demand their own. Any shed they'd go to, they were welcome in,

13:00 and my father, I can remember at that stage, he used to go to the agricultural show at Numurkah, and at Shepparton. and he used to compete in the shearing competitions until they wouldn't let him compete. He'd be just about finished shearing a sheep, and they would only just be starting. He was a fantastic shearer,

13:30 never marked a sheep. It used to be a blot on his. (escugion?UNCLEAR). if he even nicked them, or anything like that, but he had his own shears, hand piece and shears and everything else, he used to take those. All plants were standardised, strangely enough, one of the rare things that's ever happened in industry. All shearing plants were standardised, and still are. The same hand piece will fit all makes of shearing machines.

14:00 He used to go to the shows, and when he finished competing, and they wouldn't let him compete, they used to pay him then to give exhibitions at the shows. He would give exhibitions on how to shear, he would teach other farmer's boys and so forth how to shear. When it came up to the beginning of the Second World War, when all the young chaps and shearers had all gone,

14:30 he used to go out and shear sheep. He could still shear sixty or seventy a day, and that's enormous. He used to shear well over a hundred and twenty easily, without trying, that was in the Second World War. I can remember him at night, sitting down in front of the fire with a bowl of water, cutting his toenail,

15:00 he had an ingrown toenail. Now, eventually the ingrown toenail festered, gangrene set in. I wasn't home, I was up in Darwin, and Mother wrote to me, eventually I got the letter. to tell me that, “Your father

15:30 has had to have his leg amputated, and it was amputated up at the thigh,” she said, "It looks as though he'll have to get a wooden leg," I said, "Okay then," I said, "We'll go to Ropers," who were the crowd in Melbourne who provided these wooden legs and so forth, I said, "Get him what he needs, and let me know how much it is, and tell Ropers that I will pay the account."

16:00 Which I did do, I think it was twenty five pounds or something, which was an enormous amount of money in 1940 even, but I paid that from my army pay. When he pulled it on, it had all straps over his shoulders and everything. For my father, that was absolutely the end thing, so he had crutches. The first I saw of him was when I came home after the war,

16:30 and he was on crutches. He would go down the streets for walks and so forth, he could keep up with me, he could go along as fast as I could, and his crutches. used to take bigger steps than I took. It was amazing the fortitude he had, before the war, he was working over at the railway station sawing wood,

to truck away to Melbourne.

17:00 He was the sawyer, the one who used to push the log forward onto the saw. The saws were about five feet in diameter, huge things whirring away at thousands of revs a minute, and he had been doing it for years, and years, and years. During the summer, or autumn, they used to cart the wood in from around the district, stack it up at the railway station,

17:30 with the traction engine they would cart it in, by the truck load, or the traction engine load, and unload it near where their saw was set up, and then during the winter, they would then cut the wood up into foot blocks to send away to Stuckies at Essendon. That was the place they sent most of it. We used to go over on holidays, weekends, school holidays,

18:00 and we used to stack the wood into the railway trucks. We thought that was marvellous, stacking it into rows. I wasn't there then, I must have been away at Shepparton I think. It's a bit hard to place it now, I wasn't at home I know, anyway, in doing this on one particular day, he pushed it forward and the saw hit a knot in the wood, turned the log over and he didn't get his hand out in time. It crushed the whole of his right hand to pieces,

18:30 and of course, he was the only one who kept his nerve. He raced down to engine where they had a towel and wrapped the towel around the hand, all the crushed pieces, and my mother drove him up the doctor's. In Numurkah, there were two doctors there, a young doctor who was just out of the uni, and an older doctor, Dr Bunskill.

19:00 The young doctor said, "Oh, we'll take the hand off," the older doctor said, "No, we'll patch it up, if it doesn't patch up, we can take it off afterwards, as long as it doesn't deteriorate." Anyhow, they patched it up, there wasn't a straight finger, this was after it all healed. They wrapped it up, and he couldn't use his right hand at all. Of course, he was a great smoker, pipe smoker, to the point of where.

19:30 (UNCLEAR). getting his pipe going, and he had to hold a matchbox in order to light it, and he held the matchbox under his arm, and he'd strike the match to light his pipe. It was the only solace he had, I think, the pipe smoking. As a result of that, it gradually got better, and better, and he found it a great achievement if he could hold a matchbox in his right hand.

20:00 He didn't have a whole finger, he didn't have a nail at all, he just had all stumps and things, all twisted and turned, but they always get him to work, the doctors, and so forth treated him well.

Did he lose his hand before he lost his leg?

He had his hand crushed before, yes. .a lot longer before, fifteen or twenty years.

20:30 I always remember him with his right hand all twisted. It never affected his relationship with us at all, which was strange. When I look back on it, he was still the same father with us. He used to carry with him a pocket-knife, a Joseph Rogers pocket knife, the best there was, of course, it was English made.

21:00 We used to come across a paddock and there were these. yams. Have you ever heard of yams? I would borrow his pocket knife to dig up the yams from the paddock as we were coming across. I was digging up these yams and so forth, and I broke the blade on this marvellous pocket knife. God, I didn't know what to do, whether to tell him or not.

21:30 When we got home I said, "Oh, Dad, I broke your pocket knife," he said, "Oh, did you? Give us a look at it," and I showed it to him, and he said, "It's no good to me now, is it?" And I said, "No," I was in tears, I said, "No, it isn't, I'm sorry." I knew what he thought about it, he said, "Oh well, you come and told me, that's the main thing," it taught me a lesson myself, it's not the deed, it's what you do afterwards,

22:00 and consequently, I always insisted with my own kids, if anything goes wrong, just make sure. and when I was teaching, when I was a principal, this was one of my main requests to my own staff. At. (Plympton?UNCLEAR). High School, I finished up with sixty five members on the staff. I said, "The only thing I want to know is if anything happens with you and students in classrooms or anything, make sure I'm the first one to know,

22:30 that's all I want you to do, you tell me, it won't go any further, you tell me, because I want to be the first one to know, so if there are any complaints or anything else, I don’t have to make up a story or put them off, or have to say, 'I don't know what happened,’" I said, "If I know, I will deal with it, and I will protect you to the best of my abilities," which I did do.

Do you recall why you wanted to be a teacher?

I've got no idea. that's not true,

23:00 because when I went to school, first, went into the kindergarten and went up through the junior and so forth, the teacher we had there was a teacher called Albert Kennett, and he came Tallygaroopna, which was another seven miles nearer Shepparton. He used to ride his bike down every day and I thought he was a marvellous person. He taught the whole school in the room,

23:30 “He was a marvellous teacher,” I thought, “That's great. I would like to be a teacher, that would be all

right.” I never had any thoughts that it would be an easy job, because it wasn't an easy job, it never has been an easy job. It's not an easy job I can tell you, because I've got a son and daughter both teaching, and a son in law and a daughter in law, and they're all teachers and they don't get paid as much as they should either.

24:00 It took me, when I went teacher, I had to do teacher's exams as a junior teacher, student teacher, now that was one year. Then I went to teacher's college, that was one year, and I got TPSTC, which was the Trained Primary Secondary Teacher's Certificate, that was two years, and then to be a secondary teacher, I had to do three years university degree. Now I'm up to five years.

24:30 Then I had to do a diploma of education, I was doing a six year course, that's the same as medicine, and they don't put it in the same category, and it's far more important. Doctors are only fixing the physical side, teachers are actually on the brain, which is a far more important thing.

25:00 Another film that I've got here that I very much admire is The Student Prince. Have you ever seen it? The student prince goes to Heidelberg University, and he's a prince, and of course his keeper, or the chap that is looking after him, is a graduate of Heidelberg University. He took him there to get warmth and charm because the princess.

25:30 They wanted them to marry between the two principalities in Germany, and of course she wouldn't have him because he was a military man, he had done training in the army, and everything, she said, “He lacks warmth and charm,” so they send him off to Heidelberg, and of course when he gets there, they introduce him as a prince and one of his tutor,

26:00 said, "Herr Franz," which is the common name in Germany, as you probably know, "Herr Franz," and of course when he goes into the first classroom, for modern and ancient history, so when he goes in one of the wardsmen directs them to their room says to him, "Oh, Herr Franz," and of course he looks at him and he thinks he shouldn't be called, "Herr,"

26:30 which is just a common name. He complained to his minister that is with him, "They called me, 'Herr Franz.'" He said, "Well, why didn't you correct him?" He says, "Well, he probably wouldn't know what it was anyhow," and he says, "You've already learned something today. You're a student here, that's all." Of course when he goes in and sits down and the lecturer came in,

27:00 I don't know whether they still do, but we did it when I was at the university, whenever you got a lecturer came in at the beginning of the year, you always gave him a good old stamping with you feet as he came in the door, give him a few cheers, and if you did that, it shows that the lecturer is very well liked. This chap came in

27:30 and he complained to his minister afterwards, he said, "Oh, he came in there, and he called me, he called me, 'Herr Franz,'" he said, "Why didn't you correct him?" He said, "Oh, who was it?" "Dr Glober," "Oh, who's he?" "He's just a lecturer." He said, "He's a Nobel Prize winner, you know, for academic achievement," "Ahhh." So anyhow, that's getting off the. but it illustrates the point. That sort of stuck with me all my life.

28:00 **Did you do your training before you started teaching?**

No, I went straight to Cobram. The first year I couldn't get a job after I got my matriculation, I had to go back the second year, I couldn't get a job. There were only two jobs from seven high school

28:30 who got into teaching from both those two years, and they were both, they had already stayed on for an extra year or two, in order to get the job. I stayed on for a third year, and I got halfway through it, and these two jobs came up. The principal said, "There's two jobs, there's one over near Bendigo, and there's one over at Cobram." I said, "I will take the Cobram, because I live up at Wunghnu, which is on the way up there."

29:00 It was still twenty nine miles from Cobram, so I took the Cobram, and I went up there, and I struck one of the Keddie family, and five of them were teachers, and they were all. .unpleasant to the headmaster. When he got me up there, of course, I was supposed to do a year or so as a student teacher, alongside another teacher, to learn the job. I had to do teacher's exam, learning how to write on the blackboard,

29:30 how to make up and prepare lessons, how to keep a book of preparations for the class for the next day. all that sort of thing, that was my training. Of course I was only in with the senior teacher at primary. and she was in the prep, too. He said, "Third and fourth there are a combined grade," he said, "The teacher there has left, you can look after them."

30:00 I was just thrown into the deep water, but with a natural aptitude towards it, a natural ability, I got on well with the kids. I used to go out and play football with the boys, and play basketball with the girls. I knew all the sports, I'd learned that, coming up through the schools, I'd learned it all, I knew them.

30:30 End of the year I said, "I'd like to go to the teacher's college," he wouldn't recommend me, he didn't have a valid reason for not recommending me. Anyhow, the district inspector came around, he said, "I suppose you're going to teacher's college?" I said, "No, I'm not, Mr Keddie won't recommend me."

31:00 He said, "Unfortunately, it is too late for you to apply this year," but he said, "If it doesn't happen again,

I will arrange for you to be transferred to Numurkah State School." So much to the horror of the headmaster, he got a note to say, before the end of the year, that I had been transferred to Numurkah State School. So went there the next year, and of course I didn't have any problem there.

31:30 It suited me in a way, because my younger brother, Perce, he was six years younger, he was just starting off to go to Numurkah, and we drove up together. It's a different world to what it is now. When I was going up there to the school, Mayor Stockery, who was a grain buyer. at the station,

32:00 was really in opposition to my father and my elder brother. He came one Sunday night, less than a week before school resumed, and knocked at the door and opened the door, my mother said, "There's Stockery, I wonder what Mayor Stockery wants?" Because my father and him were sort of mutual enemies,

32:30 little bit at war with each other in business and so forth, "I wonder what he wants?" It turns out, when father came back in again, he said to Mother, "Mayor Stockery was wondering if it would be all right for his daughter Vicki to go up to the school with Jack and Sid," Sid was my brother, and we were driving to school, to come up to school with us. My mother, of course, was a very kind-hearted woman and so forth,

33:00 she said, "I don't see why she can't." So anyhow, it turned out that Vicki went up to the school with me, and for four years. she was a girl, and Sid my older brother said, "Yes, she can come, so long as she's there waiting at the door when we come up. I'm not waiting for anybody," time was pretty keen.

33:30 We got up in the mornings and milked the cows, we had three or four cows, milked the cows, went and got the horse in, fed the horse and so forth. I went up and cooked breakfast, then took my mother in a cup of tea and toast before we left in the morning. She didn't have to get up, she only had the younger brother Perce to look after, so we used to do that for her in the morning.

34:00 I'd cook breakfast, and have everything there ready. By that time, Sid had milked a couple of cows. I'd go down and milk one, he would milk two or three. My mother used to do the separating in those days after we'd gone to school. She used to tie young Perce up, the baby, so he wouldn't wander off, she would put a rope around his belly and tie him up to the post on the veranda

34:30 near where she was separating so he didn't wander off. Perce used to remember this, he said, "I used to remember being tied up," he said, "I used to think this was great fun." But anyhow, Vicki used to come up with us. She was a lovely girl, actually, she was a beautiful girl. I grew up, and these were two things that came back to my mind later on.

35:00 I never asked Vicki to go to a dance with me. I never asked Ron McPherson, my greatest friend, for his sister Rol, who was a beautiful golden blonde. absolutely beautiful girl, and she was still the last I saw of her five years ago, when I called in to see her at Numurkah.

35:30 I said to her then, "I don't understand why I never asked you to go," she said, "Well, I don't think I ever put myself forward." I said, "Well, I'll say that you didn't, but I should have." That's the sort of thing when you grow up. you took it for granted. She was Ron's sister, and that was it. There was no thrill about taking Ron's sister to the dance, and I think that was a milestone. that's going back a long way.

36:00 **So you had another year teaching in Numurkah?**

Yes, and then I went off to teacher's college. I was fortunate enough because of my very strong matriculation qualifications. well, they weren't matriculations. because I had eight year twelve subjects, which is enormous. You'd never hear of eight these days. They'd faint if you asked them to do for, but I had eight, or nine I think it was. I had all the subjects.

36:30 Three Math, and English A, and English B, and English literature, and English grammar, I had physics, and chemistry, geography, and history, commercial art. I had. I also had geometric drawing, also in the arts course, it was a separate subject, I also had commercial law.

37:00 I had an inkling to do commerce when I went to uni, because I liked it. It stood me in good stead, I learned a lot.

What teacher's college did you go to?

Melbourne's Teachers, it was the only there was in those days, it had three hundred students. I went to teachers' college, and my father said, and Uncle Jackie said, "We can afford to give you a hundred pounds, you can put that in your savings bank,

37:30 that has got to last you the year." So that was it. So I supplemented it during holidays, and over the Christmas, I supplemented it by humping wheat at the station with my brother, and going out on the chaff cutter on school holidays and uni holidays, as the uni year went on. That just became petty cash, extra, but a hundred pounds was all I was to get.

38:00 I was also told, "That's it, I would get nothing out of the family. If there is any money left when we go, you don't get anything." I said, "I'm getting an education, there's nothing more I would want. If I can't make a go of it, then that's my fault." I was eighteen or nineteen years old, old enough to make the

decision.

38:30 The rest was to be divided amongst my two brothers, Perce, and Sid, which did come to pass. Anyhow, I went to the university…In teacher's college the first year, I was up in the top thirty, and I got a position in residency, because of my high qualifications in the eight subjects that I had. I was in the top thirty, so they gave me a residence in college which was marvellous.

39:00 You were amongst thirty men and thirty women, you couldn't get a better ratio than that. We had a marvellous time, no other word. We worked hard, and we played hard, we did both. They were a marvellous crowd. There was only one girl that I was not happy with, as far as the social. But no-one else was either, so it wasn't my fault.

39:30 She was just a person, and her attitude. I still see her, she became a principal. I see her at the principal's reunions and dinners and we're still a little. we laugh about it a bit. Not to her, but a couple of the other principals who knew her at the time. But anyhow, it was a marvellous experience. When I went to Melbourne,

40:00 I rang up a lass there, a senior student, there was twelve senior girls, twelve senior boys, they were doing university courses when I went there in 1937, and they were in the dining room, it was very formal the dining room, and they had the tables around, and there was one senior man, and one senior woman at each table,

40:30 and they were responsible for the behaviour and the conversation and the manners and the etiquette of that group at that table and that was changed about every six weeks or so, it could have been sooner, and you switched over to another group, and you had another senior woman working with you at the table. This was in the second and third years I was there. In the first year I went there, there was a senior man and a senior woman,

41:00 and they were politely suggesting what you should do. "You don't lean across the table with your feet off the ground to reach to get the sugar," and things like that. We were all country boys. I rang up a girl and I went and had dinner with her a couple of times not that long ago, and I said, "Joyce, I don't know about you. " I asked her, I took her to the first social and so forth,

41:30 in the big one, in the hall it was, a big social, I had asked her. Couldn't understand why I was going to ask this senior girl, she was very good looking. She had a club foot, well, what I thought was a club foot. it must have been because I was amongst animals, I've always had a weakness for people who have disabilities and so forth. It could have been my own.

Tape 3

00:30 **What year did you start at the college?**

1937, I was there, '37, '38, '39.

I noticed in the notes there was something about you meeting a lady called Margaret?

Yes, that's right, Margaret McDonald, 1937. It was just a teachers' college meeting and I took her to the final ball that was held at the end of the year, and I said, "This is goodbye," "Okay," and away we went.

01:00 She went off, she was primary teacher, she went teaching up into Mallee. shocking place to stay at, at a farm house there, where the farmer gave her more attention than he should have. The place they gave her to board was in a lean-to, could see out, and the dust would come in, it was a shocking place. The only correspondence I had,

01:30 she wrote to me and asked what I thought she should do, and I said, "The first thing you should do is see your president of the advisory council or school committee, and just tell them that you're not happy with it, and if you don't get something better, you won't go back after Christmas." So she did that, and they shifted her to somewhere else, which was only slightly better. The second year she was there, '38,

02:00 she wrote to say that she wasn't too well and so forth. I'm not quite sure when she was. it was confirmed that she had leukaemia, and that was the beginning of the end unfortunately, because in those days, there was no. When she came back to Melbourne, at the end of the next year it was,

02:30 I advised her to just walk out. I said, "If you don't get something decent, just walk out or ask for a city appointment," where she could get some medical treatment, which she did do. I'm covering this fairly briefly for you. She came back then to Melbourne. Her mother kept a boarding house in Parkville, and I became very friendly, and was always welcome over there at any time, and being from the country myself, it was just somewhere to go,

03:00 but I didn't have to go because I was in residence at the college, I had all the facilities you could want, a room, and everything. But I used to go over there and I got friendly with them a lot, and when she came back to the city then, that was in, '38, or '39, I think it was, that she came back and it was said then she

had. she was very ill.

03:30 I don't think they actually told her then it was leukaemia from my own memory. I wasn't that close enough to her then to say so. There was no emotional attachment at that time, or at any time really, it was more or less a sympathetic friendliness, and I was happy to take her out, and go to the pictures, and odd dances and so forth that we went to.

04:00 But it was more or less a friendly relationship, because in the college itself, you had that many relationships that you just didn't need to keep count of them. It was just like any college where you meet people, and so forth.

Did she continue to work when she came back to Melbourne?

Yes, when she came back. she had matriculation, which took her up to year twelve, nowadays, and she got a job teaching

04:30 history and English out at Williamstown High School, where she continued for a couple of years. just keeping with Margaret, I went then in '40, I went down to Maffra, and at that stage we just kept corresponding and so forth, and I invited her down to Maffra, and she came down to there and she spent a week, and that was about as close as we got you might say.

05:00 A couple of the other chaps that were there, they used to do the same thing, it was purely just a friendly visit. She came down there, I learnt then that she was ill, and she was attending the Lonsdale cancer place for chemotherapy treatment and so forth, but it didn't do any good.

05:30 Leukaemia in its advanced stage is probably one of the hardest to treat, because it doesn't remain in the one spot, it's in the glands, and once it's in the glands and the bloodstream, it's very, very difficult. They are getting somewhere with it nowadays, fortunately, which is good to see. I'm very sympathetic with it. So much so that when. my present wife, I told her the whole story when I first met her,

06:00 that comes later. Anyhow, when Margaret came back, she lived with her mother of course, who kept the boarding house in Parkville. When I went to town from Maffra, I used go down there and stay the weekend down there and so forth, Friday and Saturday nights, and then came back to Maffra, on the Sunday. Eventually, she was confirmed to have leukaemia then. coming into the war years,

06:30 and I originally was in the University Rifles, over the Christmas vacation, to Balcome, and Mount Martha, and finally at Darley, and I still used to use…McDonalds, used to call in, my stopover place. Of course, when I went down to Colac, eventually.

07:00 This is where we get confused now, because I've got a mix-up how I got into the army and got into the survey, which is a story on its own.

We'll do that on its own.

Do it on its own. but eventually, at that stage when I went to Colac, I asked her would she marry me, and she refused, and I talked to her into eventually. I said, "I've got nothing to lose, if I come back, we'll see whether we can make a go of it, and if we can't,

07:30 we'll just call it off." She was very reluctant. I said, "You'll get my sergeant's pay, the married sergeant's pay." I said, "You'll get my. (settlers?UNCLEAR). pay, if anything happens to me you will be a war widow and so forth." I said, "I've got nothing to lose, you've got something to gain, it will help you and your mother out in these difficult times that you're having," and anyhow she finally accepted, and we were married in '42.

08:00 I went off to Colac, then up to New South Wales. The next news I had from her was that she had become pregnant, and the specialist aborted the baby, and she wrote and told me, she said, "I didn't write to tell you, Jack, I just had it done."

08:30 I can't remember the specialist's name, he was well known, too, and his sons went into the cancer research. He advised it, and he said there was no way the baby would have been clear of the leukaemia. That was a relief in those days. Once more I saw her, when I was going up to Darwin,

09:00 I called in there, because we stopped there on the train coming down from New South Wales to go over and get onto the train over to South Australia, and I stopped over there for a couple of nights. That was the last I saw of her. I was up in the Territory, out on a lugger, over near Timor as a matter of fact, when they got word.

09:30 The telephonist on the boat. it was only lugger, it only had a. survey party of four, that she was dying at the women's hospital, and Captain Tate had the boat recalled to Darwin, they had a plane ready waiting for me, and they flew me down. I got there in time to take her home for Christmas, and she died in early January 1943.

10:00 I won't call it a marriage of convenience, that's not true, I thought a lot of her, but I didn't love her. It was a different feeling altogether to my second wife, who I met later on. she was a lovely woman.

10:30 She was a very good woman. Anyhow, that's that, so back to the teachers' college.

Just picking up on a quote from earlier, you said that you worked hard and you played hard. Tell us about the play.

Well, in the teachers' college in those days, they taught you the rules of the games that you were likely to be asked to act as referee for. I actually played football as my main game.

11:00 The first year I was in the college team, the second year I was vice-captain of the team, and the third year I was captain of the college team in football, and the third year I was selected in the Victorian amateur team to play against South Australia in the final of the amateur competition, Australia wide, and over there I got the, 'best and fairest award,'

11:30 in the match. Of course, when I came back, Richmond, Melbourne, and Collingwood chased me hard to get me, and I said I wouldn't sign up with anyone unless they could get me a city appointment, or near city appointment. In September, I had already been appointed to Maffra, and Julia Flynn, who was the director of education, and responsible for.

12:00 So we come now then to the point of the teachers' college. The University Rifles, we were attached to, so I was in the 1939-40, at Mount Martha. I was in the 1940-41 at Balcome, and in 1942 I was called up to go to Darley, to the NCO's [Non Commissioned Officer's] school, at Darley.

12:30 I was sitting in the train at Spencer Street Station on Monday, December 7th, when we heard over the loudspeaker that the Japs [Japanese] had bombed Pearl Harbour, and the whole six of us just said, "That's it, we're in this for the duration." The truest words we said. So I went to Darley.

Can I just take you back a little to, '39. When war broke out

13:00 **you were 24, so you had a pretty good sense I guess, of what was going on in the rest of the world. Can you tell us about that period?**

Because I was in the university, it was a reserved occupation. You couldn't get in, Manpower [National Manpower Directorate, determined reserved occupations for workers] wouldn't let you. No-one from the college went in '39, for that particular reason.

13:30 They frowned on you going in from the teaching service, particularly the ones that were in residence, they were the top of the group, and I can't remember anybody who left the college to go into the army at that period. They might have left at the end of the year, because they just didn't turn up in 1940.

14:00 You don't know what happened during the vacation, they went off. We were well aware of it, because it was. even at that stage, when the Japs bombed Pearl Harbour, that was in '41, December '41. even in those days,

14:30 when I came. the university studies, I was doing Arts/Commerce, and in the first year at teachers' college, I was doing teachers' college, and I ended up in the top thirty, and I still kept my place in residence. We were reduced to twelve, that was all they would accept as university students

15:00 out of the thirty who were already in residence, they would only take twelve. and I was lucky enough, or good enough, to remain there. I had a good relationship with the vice-principal, Mr Moore, and also with the principal of the college, Professor GS Brown, who was a famous figure in those days.

15:30 They were both very keen on football too, which helped me along. I won the cup in the teachers' college in football, but I also played lacrosse, I played hockey, and I played soccer. I played all the sports during that first year there, in '37. Did a lot of boxing too,

16:00 with Huck Hamilton, who was the lightweight boxing champion of the Australian universities, he was our PE man, so he taught us boxing. There was a gym there and we used to go over there after study at night, at ten o' clock at night, or eleven o' clock, and do a few rounds of boxing amongst ourselves, or with Huck Hamilton, who came over there. Yeah, it kept me remarkably fit, I could go on for hours, but I kept very fit, what else?

16:30 Oh, I was in the study there with Jack Withcomb. Now Jack Withcomb and I were study mates, we were both in residence in '40, and '41. I spoke to his wife last night and he died a fortnight ago, I didn't know about it, and Barbara, his wife, she was a very, very attractive young woman, and if she hadn't been attached to Jack Withcomb I would have put my oar in there too.

17:00 She was a lovely woman and so forth, and so much so, that everybody thought that we were closely connected, but we weren't. So much so that Professor Brown, in 1938 it was, invited us over to his residence in Parkville, which was a great honour, because he was the dean of the faculty of education, and he invited two students from the college over, and he had an eye for the good looking girls

17:30 in college, we reckoned, and she was. she took anybody's eye. Anyhow he invited us over. I spoke to Barbara last night, and I asked her if she minded if I referred to her and she told me then about her husband dying a fortnight ago. I said, "What about Prof Brown?" and she laughed because when she got the letter in the morning from the university, she opened it just before breakfast,

18:00 and they asked her what it was, and they said, "You've got to go to Prof Brown," and she said, "I'm not going, I'm certainly not going, I won't go near there," and she went on like this. I went over after breakfast, and there was a letter there for me, I just slipped it into my pocket, didn't even bother reading it. I thought it was some more university rubbish they were sending me notices about, I didn't even read it until lunchtime. When I read it at lunchtime, they had invited me to go over, I didn't know about.

18:30 I knew then that she was going, but she didn't know that I was going, I didn't tell her, I kept it to myself. We went to dinner that night, and Barbara was still telling her group, no, she's not going over, she's going to tell her group that she's sick, she's too ill, "I'm not going over there on my own," and so after dinner, we used to go out on the lawns and have a yarn, this was the point about the college which I thought was the greatest asset. You went and met all the other students,

19:00 you talked about the current affairs, you became a grown-up, you became a person of the world, you were meeting your peers. We went out to the pictures together, we all used to all go to church on Sundays in groups of five or six, we went to all the churches in Melbourne. We went to St Paul's, St Pat's, St Jame's down in North Melbourne, a beautiful little Anglican church it is down in Melbourne,

19:30 we used to go to Wesley. and we'd go around the whole sequence, in groups of five or six of us, which was a great experience. It was a thing that I think every student appreciated at that stage. When I told her after dinner that night, she said, "I'm not going over," I said, "You ought to go," she said, "No, I'm just not going." I said, "Would you go over with me, then?"

20:00 And she looked at me and it dawned on her. She said, "Are you invited, too?" I said, "Yes," "Thank goodness for that," she said. So we had a good rapour anyhow, so we went over together and we had a marvellous evening. He was a gentlemen of the highest standard, a beautiful supper, a beautiful dinner to start with, a beautiful supper, and then about half past ten,

20:30 Barbara said, "I think I better go." She said, "Mrs Law," she was the chaperone, "she will be wondering where I am," and Prof Brown, he said, "Don't worry, Barbara, I've rung Mrs Law and told her that you and Jack will be home a bit late. I'm quite sure that she will be in agreement. She's left the key over the side door, so when you go in, would you lock it up afterwards, and put the key under my door," and so forth, "Anyhow, good evening."

21:00 It was very nice. I rang her up last night and said, "Do you mind me mentioning the incident?" "No," she said, "It was great fun, wasn't it?" I said, "It was quite a turn up," she agreed it was. I didn't know about her husband dying, because I was close to him, that was the point about it.

21:30 It was a marvellous socialising experience. I went to the university the next year. Father put up a hundred pounds again for me for another year. It had to be on the same conditions. I didn't finish teachers' college, I still hadn't matriculated. I had to have either two languages

22:00 at year twelve, or two years at year eleven, or year twelve French. Of course, I didn't have year twelve French. I tried to do it when I was out teaching in the primary school at Cobram and Numurkah, and failed both times on the orals, passed the written work with flying colours. Of course, I had no-one to speak French to, so they wouldn't pass me on the orals.

22:30 So when I went to first year teacher's college, I was doing my teachers' college course, I then went to Taylor's correspondence school and I did French down there. You can't fail down there, if you wanted to, you couldn't fail, they were very, very good. Thousands of students got their qualifications through Taylor's, they were very good, and thorough. Anyhow, I got French, because I had to have it,

23:00 because the next year I had already applied to do modern history, which French was a pre-requisite, I knew that, that's why I made the point of getting the French, and also to get to university, otherwise I wouldn't have matriculated, therefore I couldn't sign the matriculation, as you probably know. Anyhow, I passed, and everything was sweet. So in 1939, I did the four subjects, arts and commerce, combination subjects.

23:30 I went through, I got my four subjects, I went on to do second year. My father put up another hundred dollars because I had done so well on the first year. I entered my four subjects in second year, which was wrong, because you're only supposed to do three second year subjects. But I entered for four, because I reckoned I could do four, and I certainly could too. But unfortunately, I was doing English B, and in doing English B, we had.

24:00 a woman, Shirley, she died only a short time ago. I'm afraid I didn't give her a blessing on her way through to heaven, because when I finished up, her name didn't appear on the board. they used to put all the results on a board outside the library, big lists, and you'd go along and see whether your name was down, if you had passed that exam from the day before, or whenever it was, and my name didn't turn up for English B, which I couldn't understand.

24:30 Because I knew the stuff, I knew everything and so forth. Anyhow, I lined up an appointment with. She was the dean of the faculty unfortunately, of English, Mrs Darren. Her lectures were absolutely hopeless. She never gave anything at all that was of ever any value to you at all as far as English B was concerned, because we had, at that stage, twelve Shakespearean plays to do.

25:00 We had all the poets, from Spenser to Arnold, all this was in the English B course. Then we had the novels, about a dozen of those, it was a terrific huge subject. It turned out my name didn't appear, and when I went and asked around the teachers' college. There was about twelve of us doing English B, and of the twelve that was there,

25:30 she had failed eight of us, and it turned out she had a set against teachers' college students, and I'm saying this in sheer modesty, we were far superior to most of the other students because we were an elite group, and naturally it was. and she didn't like us, she put the boots in, and so when I asked her then,

26:00 and keeping my temper hardly, I said, "Well, Mrs Darren, what mark did I get?" I said, "What did you fail me on? What subject? Which section?" She said, "Oh, Mr Hunt, you didn't fail in any of the written word. You got sixty seven percent." I bloody near fell off the seat. I said, "Well, why did you fail me?" She said, "Oh, your style was not mature enough for a second year English student,"

26:30 and that finished me, I couldn't say anything more, I said, "You failed me on that? I've done four essays. I got A for the whole four of them, why didn't they find my style not satisfactory at that level?" I said, "Why didn't you find out from them if my style wasn't satisfactory?" It was difficult to stomach. She said, "That's it, you failed."

27:00 Now that was a heavy penalty, because that meant next year. Not like maths or the sciences, where they do the same work every year. When you do your second year again, all the novels have been changed, all the Shakespearean plays. I knew every Shakespeare plays ever written. I did the whole twenty four of them eventually.

27:30 I could almost tell you any quote from any Shakespearean play now, and the same with the poets, right through from Spenser up until. 1939. The novels were the same, I knew them.

You joined the Melbourne Uni rifles, was that after the war?

No, that was before the war. The first year I went down to Balcome,

28:00 for the whole of the teachers' college vacation, but I had the rest of the university vacation spare, because I had to wait until March until they started again. So I used to go home and help my father and my brother lump wheat, which I got paid a penny a bag for, which was good pocket money.

28:30 The next year, of course, the third time, I was at Maffra then, and I'd been down there for the first twelve months. twelve months I went to Nafra, that's correct, and that was '40.

29:00 After Collingwood, and Richmond, and Melbourne. (UNCLEAR). one was a solicitor who worked with my younger brother in the firm he was with, he, he assured me it was no problems. "I go to the same church as Julia Flynn. No problem. .goes to St Francis in Lonsdale Street," he said, "I'll get you into Richmond."

29:30 I said, "Well, okay, you get me a job in the city, or within reach of the city, and I'll play with Richmond." Anyhow, I had a run with Richmond, and they said, "You're right, we'll fix you up," anyhow, the answer came back next week, and he just rang me up and said, "She just won't move," anyhow, I said, "Okay." So the next thing, I get a ring at the college from Percy Page, he rang me from Melbourne. He said, "Will you come out for a run with Melbourne?" Which I did do, had a run there.

30:00 "Oh yeah, all right, we'll get you," but I said, "You've got an obstacle, this principal won't give me a city appointment." He said, "But we're the Melbourne Cricket Club. Julia Flynn and all them, they're trustees of the club, no worries." I said, "Okay, if you say so." Same thing, he rang me back, he said, "She won't move." The next thing I was walking up the street back from the library in Swanson Street, and somebody yelled out, "Oh, Mr Hunt!"

30:30 And I turned around, and a chap came down out of the stand there, near the Carlton Brewery as it used to be, he walked over to me, he said, "Do you know who I am?" I said, "No, I'm afraid I don't." He was all dressed up in a blue suit, with a blue dust coat over it. He said, "I'm Mr Race, the Tramsway board chairman, and president of the Carlton Football Club." He said, "Will you come out? I've had a report from others who know you

31:00 had a marvellous game at the teachers' college and the Victorian Amateurs?" I said, "Yes, that's true," I said, "I can't get a city appointment," I said, "I'm not going to travel," he said, "Oh, no problem, Collingwood Football Club, Julia Flynn, we're all in the same ilk, the same religion you might say." The Collingwood Football Club is still a very Catholic group, very good too, I've got no objection to them.

31:30 Anyhow, they were marvellous chaps. He said, "I'll see what I can do for you. I don't think it will be any problem." I said, "You get me a job anywhere near the city," anyhow he rang back and said, "We'll wait and see." Anyhow he gave me ticket, he said, "The finals are coming up, come out to the ground, show this at the entrance, it will get you into the ground at the MCG [Melbourne Cricket Ground]."

32:00 He said, "Come along to the doorkeeper at the Collingwood rooms, and they'll let you into the changing room." I get there, and I'm the only bloody civilian in there. I met Jock McHale, he said, "Are you going to play?" I said, "I hope so." Race was there, and I sat up there with the committee and everything else,

and everything was going fine. I went and saw three finals with Collingwood,

32:30 and the Collingwood dressing rooms, and I heard all their tactics and everything else. So that was very interesting. Anyhow he said, "She won't move," he said, "What we'll do, we'll send a car down for you on Friday night. Come down and play Saturday and we'll run you home Saturday night, if you want to, back to Maffra, or take you back on Sunday, if you wish."

33:00 I had two subjects to do to finish my Arts/Commerce degree, and I just couldn't risk it. He said, "Oh well, if you change your mind, just ring up and let me know, and we'll fix it up for you." He came from Hayfield later on, but he died, it was too much for him, it finished him.

33:30 He was a good Collingwood football player. Anyhow, that's the story of the. I didn't get into it. I think that finished the teachers' college.

Let's get onto the military side of it.

It started off then. When I went to Darley for the NCO's school, when we got there,

34:00 being a very keen sportsman and everything, I didn't drink or smoke, so when I went to Darley. there was twenty four of us, and I was a corporal machine gunner, Vickers machine gunner from my MUR [Melbourne University Rifles] training. When I went to Darley, to the NCO's school, for machine gunners, the group I was in.

34:30 Of course we were about three or four kilometres out from Backers Marsh, and after the evening, the group used to go in there to drink and so forth, and I didn't drink, so I didn't bother, I used to stay back in camp with the other group, and we used to play cards, and chat, and so forth. Anyhow, at the end of the training session which was about.

35:00 We went in on December the 7th, which I told you about, and we were there to about January the 7th, about a month. When we got there, we went back to Bonagilla to join the rest of the Melbourne University Rifles, who had gone up there for the training period, and they announced then that in the ones that went to Darley, there were twelve who were selected to be sergeants, of which I wasn't one, because I didn't go to the pub. Purely and simple, the whole twelve

35:30 of us who were made corporals were all non-drinkers, it's unbelievable. This is the sort of culture that was in, in those days. For some reason, we didn't hold it against them, we just accepted it was a fact of life. Not that I didn't drink at all, that's not the truth. When I was living with my father, when I used to go home, we used to go to the pub, he would go for a drink himself, and I used to have one drink,

36:00 just a social drink with him. I wasn't a prude or anything of that nature, I just didn't see any sense in drinking. I saw no reason, I didn't have the bloody money either, I couldn't afford it, that was part of the problem. Anyhow, that was Darley, we went to Bonegilla, and we were there the. I actually turned out to be the top machine gunner. I used to be the one that actually fired the guns

36:30 at practice. We used to go out over the border where they used to have the training grounds for the AIF [Australian Imperial Force], and our machine gun unit used to go up, and they had four machine guns, there was twenty four, that was six to each machine gun, and we used to fire over the top of the advancing AIF troops. You've got no idea of the noise the bullets make when they're going over the top of your head.

37:00 But anyhow, that was the training. We used to fire over the top of the advancing line of troops, and then they would say, "Up a hundred," and you would have to raise your elevation another hundred or two hundred, whatever they asked you for, and you were shooting a mile away you know, you didn't even see where they were landing, or whether you were hitting anything.

They were AIF troops training?

They were AIF training.

37:30 We used to train with the AIF at Darley, actually. We used to help them, because they'd come up to train, to become NCO's, and sergeants, and we were very sympathetic towards them because they were going overseas. We couldn't go, we weren't allowed to go, we weren't even allowed to join up at that stage at all, unless we resigned our teaching jobs. Anyhow, I went back to Darley. Anyhow, towards the end of January,

38:00 a list came out of all those who were going to an officers' training school in Sydney, my name was on it. So I got my gear together, the truck waiting to take us into Albury, to go to Sydney, to go to an ATS [Auxiliary Territorial Services]. Anyhow, I threw my gear in, I had my foot on the back of the truck, and a chap comes running out from the orderly room, yelling out, "Corporal Hunt! Corporal Hunt!" I said, "Yes, what's up?" He said, "Throw his gear out, throw his gear out!" I said, "What's going on?"

38:30 He said, "You're not going to Sydney." The driver was yelling out, "Hurry up! We'll miss the train if we don't hurry up!" There was a panic going on, he had to get away to meet the train. I didn't have any time to argue with them about what was going on. I went back afterwards and the truck was gone, so I was still a corporal. I went to the orderly room and said, "What's going on?" They said, "Here's the list that just came out from the education department, you're down on it, you're not allowed to go. You're

not allowed to join the AIF."

39:00 He said, "You've got to go teaching maths, and geography, and geology. Out at Brighton Technical School." I said, "Well, I'm not going." They said, "You've got to go," I said, "I'm not going." They gave me a railway pass, they said, "You better go argue it out down in Melbourne." They took me into the train, put me onto the train, I went down to the headquarters of the MUR, he looked through his list.

39:30 He said, "All we've got here is the list from the Education Department. We've got no list from Manpower at all." Then I went down to the Education Department, I spent from ten o' clock in the morning to two o' clock in the afternoon to find out who had actually sent my name on that list. After arguing through all the underlings, up through the thing, we got to the secretary of the Education Department, he came out eventually about half past one, and he said, "I was the one that put your name on that list," I said, "Well, what authority did you have to do it?"

40:00 I said, "I want to join the AIF," he said, "Well, you can't," I said, "Well, I'm going to," he said, "Well, we're going to have to see what Ms Flynn says." So it was Julia Flynn again! Anyhow, he walked around the corridor and I followed him around, he didn't even know I was around him. He opened the door to Julia Flynn, Director, he walked in, I followed him in, and he said, "About Mr Hunt," she said, "Who is this chap behind you?"

40:30 I said, "I'm the Mr Hunt that you're going to be talking about," she said, "Well, what's your problem?" And I told her, and she said, "You're in the Education Department. We have the right to send you where you are, because Manpower said we can keep whatever teachers we need to keep during the war years, and you're one, and we want you to go to the tech [technical] school to teach." I said, "Well, I'm not going, Miss Flynn." She said, "Well, you have to go, you're in the Education Department, you have got to go."

41:00 On the spur of the moment, I had a flash of intuition, I said, "Have you got my sheet of paper there, Miss Flynn?" She said, "Yes," she foolishly handed it over to me, I sat down, took my pen out, and I wrote, "I hereby resign from the Education Department," and I handed it back to her and said, "I am no longer in the Education Department, I'm going to join the AIF." She had the decency, I will say this for her, she looked at me and said,

41:30 "Well, Jack," she called me Jack, she said, "Jack, you are determined to join the AIF, okay. I hope you come back, and if you do, I hope you come back to the Education Department, because your teaching record is excellent, and we would hate to lose you." She tore up the resignation I had, and threw it in the rubbish bin, and I said, "Thanks," and she stood up and shook my hand and said, "Good luck," and off I went.

Tape 4

00:30 ...was in '41, '42, when I was in Darley, went up to Bonegilla in '42, and I came back. I went into the army in '42, again, full-time army. When I joined up then on the permanent army force.

01:00 I went to get a job in the machine guns, and of course, they couldn't fit me in the machine guns. I was a corporal machine gunner, but no other unit is going to put their corporal out of a job to give it to me, a foreigner, or somebody coming in. nobody would take me, rang about six places, but no, they didn't want corporal machine gunners. So anyhow, he said, "Oh, here's a list from the survey corps,

01:30 they're asking for anybody with matriculation maths, they'd welcome them." Of course, I had three matriculation maths, plus geology, plus geography, all right in the lap of what they wanted, so they sent me off, I went down to their unit. .When I went down to the survey unit, I went in there,

02:00 to interview, and when I went in there, there was about four other MUR chaps there also, couple of them were corporals, still got their stripes on. They were infantry chaps, they weren't machine gunners. Anyhow, I go in, they introduce me, and it was a Captain Behan, "Oh yes, you're Mr Hunt,

02:30 what are you subjects?" And I showed him, "Oh yes, very good, very nice," he said, "You've got your papers with you?" I said, "Yes," I pulled out my paybook and my AB83 [soldier's record of service book]. He opened my paybook, opened it to the first page, it had my name, and it had my religion, Methodist. He leaned back and he said, "I'm sorry, Mr Hunt. I can't take you in as a corporal. You'll have to come in as a sapper."

03:00 I said, "How's that? You've got two corporals out there now," and I said, "There's another one out there, and they tell me he's a sergeant," I said, "Admittedly, he's your son," and he was too. He said, "Oh yes, but he's going to do a training group." I said, "But there's dozens of better trained ones. " I knew him, he was from the MUR. He said, "Yes, but he's the one we wanted at the moment."

03:30 He was made a sergeant straight away. He said, "We'll sign you up as a sapper," I said, "No, no," I said, "I'll see if I can get into a unit that will take me as a corporal." I said, "I don't want to give up a stripe," but at this particular, my wife was ill, Margaret, who I'd married, or I was going with her, I was helping

them out at her house.

04:00 He said, "All right, I'll see you at one o' clock this afternoon." I went out, it was only about eleven o' clock, I suppose. I went out, and as I was going out, Jim Watson, the staff sergeant, he said, "Don't come back at one o' clock, corporal, come back about two." I didn't ask him why, "Just come back at two o' clock," he said.

04:30 "Captain Behan doesn't know it, but he's booked to go on a train to Adelaide at one o' clock." So at half past two I came back and walked in, and Jim, all innocent, said, "Oh, yes, you're back again," I said, "Yes, I couldn't get a job anywhere else. I thought I better come back to the survey." He said, "You can go in, you can see Major Roser." I go in, Major Roser is sitting there.

05:00 "Oh, MUR, eh?" I said, "Yes," he said, "That's great, that was my old university too." He had the list of qualifications. He said, "Oh, I see you've got maths, and geography, and geology," and he yelled out, "Jim," he just shouted it out. He said, "In here quickly, get this chap signed up quickly before he gets away." I got out, get signed up, go on.

05:30 As I was going out, I said, "Corporal, you know?" He said, "Oh yes, definitely a corporal, no worries at all. With those qualifications," he said, "we'll find a place for you." Now I went as a corporal surveyor now. I go out, they said, "How did you get on?" I said, "I'm hoping for the best, he said I can keep my stripes, so I hope that's right."

06:00 **What was the unit called, and where are they based at this point?**

The unit was 6th Australian Topographical Survey Company, their headquarters was actually up at Kooyong, in an old mansion that they had taken over as their headquarters. I did this interview where they had rooms on the corner of Flinders Street, and Elizabeth Street.

06:30 The old Williamson Building it was called then, and that was where they were doing the interviewing then, there. I hadn't been to headquarter then, but when I reported for work, I went out to the place out at Kooyong. I went around there the next Monday morning to report for duty. When I got there they signed me up on the 6AA [Australian Auxiliary] Topographical Survey Company, and my first job

07:00 was to actually survey the evacuation routes from Bass Strait over the Divide [Great Dividing Range] into. Northern Victoria, or Central Australia if need be, because the Japs, and Germans, were very active in Bass Strait at that time. I started off at Dandenong, and I used to go and see the shire engineer at the various shire camps…They would give me a map of the roads

07:30 that go from the coast right down to Phillip Island, Western Port, up to Seaspray, and along to Mallacoota. Each of the shires along there, I will just summarise those, and they would give me the route, and I would then go along and drive over the road and actually see the width of the road, what sort of surface was on it, bridges I would get from the shire engineer, their carrying capacity, also their width, and also whether they could carry heavy vehicles.

08:00 I kept a record of each trip, say from Yarram, right over the Gippsland Hills, up over the highway, up onto. used to get onto the SEC [State Electricity Commission] power lines, because they always had a road beside their thing. These were possible evacuation routes either on foot maybe, or by car, or by four wheel drive,

08:30 or by army vehicles. It was delineated according to their actual, what I considered to be their carrying capacity. And so, I got up as far as Eureka, finally got to the Eureka there, met Warrant Officer Steele, he was on a similar job, he had done another section to what I had to do, and then I went down further and did the section down from August, to Malacoota.

09:00 Then up the Snowy River, up along the river, then up over into. (Sten?UNCLEAR). waters there, and did this right through. Of course, when I came back after the first week, went into headquarters out at Kooyong, and Major Roser was there and he said, "Oh, you're back are you, corporal?" I said, "Yes," he said, "Corporal? We can't allow corporals to be going down there to shire engineers, we'll make you a sergeant."

09:30 So I became an acting sergeant then. The dress we had then was the same as the dispatch riders were using, the britches, the wide britches and the leggings. I was a sergeant then, I finished off as sergeant on that. I did that for about a month, or six weeks I would say, I'm a little bit vague how many.

10:00 When I came back then, I got appointed to Colac. No, no, I didn't get appointed to Colac. After I finished that, they appointed me to the permanent army, the Geodetic Survey Company, which was stationed at Traralgon, so I went down to Traralgon, and of course the couple of other corporals that I had seen,

10:30 one was Joe Dowling, marvellous chap, a very, very strict Roman Catholic, but a marvellous fellow. I tented with him for five years, and he and I got on, and we had a marvellous time. Of course the next morning, the chap running the camp there said, "We've got to do military training. You, Sergeant Hunt. " I was the only sergeant actually, the other sergeant

11:00 had turned up there on the Sunday morning, I went down on the Saturday. On the Sunday morning, which was dark, I looked around, and I yelled out to him, "Where is everybody?" I said, "My, gee, this

unit starts early." He said, "Wake up, there's only three of us left. They've all gone to church. They've all gone to Mass." It was almost completely a ninety percent Roman Catholic unit.

11:30 Not uncommon, they told me afterwards.

Like you said, the drinkers stuck together, the Catholics stuck together.

…and the Proddies [Protestants] would stick together. They said some of the units that were Protestants, didn't take Catholics in. I don't know whether that was true, about the Proddies one, because I wasn't in a unit, but I can swear this was true with the Catholics. But they were marvellous, it was a marvellous unit, I wouldn't fault them at all, I couldn't fault them.

12:00 And Joe Dowling was one of the strictest Catholics that you could imagine, he was a great fellow.

With the evacuation routes, you covered half the state.

There was four of us actually. There was myself, WO Steele, and WO Walsh, they were all warrant officers of course. I only got as high as sergeant, they were WOs. We actually covered right from

12:30 the western. Victorian border, they did the Western Districts. One of the last jobs I did with them was to go down to Mortlake, because WO Walsh had missed a narrow strip, and there was one road that went up through Mortlake that he hadn't covered for some reason or another, so they sent me down to look at that one. That was my last job there before I came back. I finished that, then I went into the Geodetic Survey Company which was permanent army, they suspended them after

13:00 about a month, or six weeks. I did go out and do work with them up along to Mount Eureka, and down the promontory. they were shining lights, and doing observations across Victoria.

Was that the guerrilla warfare school at that time?

No, no. they used to listen to the broadcasts from Tokyo Rose [Japanese propagandist on Radio Tokyo],

13:30 asking, “How the boys down at Yarram were going?” Unbelievable, it was just unbelievable the sabotage and methods that were going on.

With those evacuation routes, were there particular congregation points on the other side of the Dividing Range?

No, they were virtually only up into the country itself. That was being done on the other end, which I knew nothing about, I wasn't.

14:00 I had to see them over the top of the divide, and that was the end of my job. Get the road over the top, see that it was safe for them, I used to up one, and come down another one, to save time. It was worse coming down than going up, coming down some of those SEC roads and the old timber roads. we used to cut our way through some of the fallen trees.

14:30 **And if roads were in a bad state, would they bring out crews?**

We had to make a note of all that, that they were unserviceable, especially in wet weather and things like that, anything that I could anticipate could be. Being a country boy, I had a pretty fair idea of what a good and bad road, and what the road surface. There was virtually no sealed roads, very few of them were even metal.

15:00 They were all trafficable in dry weather you might say, but it was just amazing the importance they put upon it. They didn't advertise it for the simple reason that people would have just panicked. They would have started using the roads there and then, I'm quite sure, to get out, if an invasion was imminent from Bass Strait. I played golf with a chap from down Apollo Bay, and he was on one of the mine sweepers.

15:30 He spent the whole four years sweeping Bass Strait. I said, "It was just a pleasure trip?" He said, "Oh God, if you see them bouncing beside you, there's no pleasure about it," he said, "We got plenty." More than there was ever recorded, he said, it was unbelievable, and they'd just explode them, that was the cheapest and easiest way. He said there was an enormous amount of German and Japanese

16:00 ships along there, in the Bass Strait.

How vulnerable do you think Melbournians felt?

They felt vulnerable, but in actual fact. there's a Royal Navy map in which you'd have all the verbal material all translated into Japanese. It was taken by the,

16:30 I wasn't there with that, with Rabaul camp, a Japanese map depot at Rabaul, and it shows all the Victorian Bass Strait places, all up the east coast also, which had been translated into Japanese, and it had marked all the vulnerable points down along the coast. Now they learnt afterwards that Melbourne weren't vulnerable

17:00 because Japanese submarines couldn't manoeuvre in Port Phillip, too shallow. Even now, we see it is shallow in lots of places. If they came in, they couldn't manoeuvre to get out, whereas Sydney Harbour, they could turn anywhere, and get down the depth. They couldn't get down the depth in Port Phillip,

either.

17:30 So it was less vulnerable, and the same with Adelaide, they couldn't get up to Adelaide because they'd have to come up the Gulf [Gulf of Carpentaria], even Fremantle had the same problem, but Sydney didn't. Sydney had the open harbour, they had good maps of it, they had no problems there at all.

That's interesting, if they could have, they would have.

Oh yes, they definitely would have.

18:00 You see, they wouldn't have even got through the rip in those days. It's only got thirteen point five metres even now, and that's not very deep. When you get a submarine and you see height of it, and the periscope, and the whole works, you're getting pretty high, fifty or sixty feet I would say, at least twenty metres.

18:30 So that was sort of natural protection, the rip was, and they've deepened it since the war.

So, you've got us to the Geodesics.

That's right, I lasted there about a month. I took two days compassionate leave, and I married Margaret. I went to little Colac with the knowledge that that was going to be the final preparation to go north.

19:00 They brought in practically all the survey units from New South Wales, South Australia, and Victoria, and they picked out then, seventy five to go up into northern New South Wales to do elementary training in a complete mapping program, of doing the actual astronomical fixes, from photos,

19:30 aerial photo reading, the actual joining up of the maps, and we had to do all aspects of it, the computing itself was a laborious business. They didn't have computers in those days, the only computers they had, you had to set up. we were using nine figure logarithms, they had to set them up on two sets of things, and then you had to turn the handle in order to do the multiplication and the division,

20:00 and that would read out across the top, about that long. That was the computers people used, the elementary, very raw, turning a handle, type of computers. We learnt all aspects of that. We did the Kendall Map, was based at Kendall, which was inland from Port Macquarie. After we finished that, we moved up to Wauchope, did the Wauchope Map, and Wauchope,

20:30 and that was the time then that I learned that Margaret had been pregnant and that she had had the baby aborted. She didn't consult me, she wrote and said, "I didn't want to worry you, you've got enough to worry about. It was a, ‘must do,’ thing, the specialist said it had to be done." I wrote back and told her,

21:00 "You did the right thing," and she did do. We got word then to say we were going north, we didn't know where. We came down to Sydney, we got rid of our winter clothing, we were issued with all the summer clothing, and tropical stuff, and put on a train. We didn't even know then where we were going, then they told us we were going to Darwin. So we came down through Melbourne, across to Adelaide, up to Taralee.

21:30 We got to Taralee, and slept in the sand there at Taralee…We boarded the Ghan [train from South Australia to the Northern Territory], we had the whole train to ourselves, we had all our own trucks, and equipment, and tentage, and everything, for a camp site in the Northern Territory. We went up through Alice Springs, switched over at Alice Springs. our drivers all went in our trucks, ten drivers, I think we had five trucks at that stage.

22:00 They loaded all their gear on board, we went on the ordinary troop convoys up through the bulldust [thick red dust], it was unbelievable. There was no road at all of course, at that stage, the beginning of '43 it was. They used to make a separate track every now and again, up the old north-south road. The bulldust used to be three hundred metres behind the truck in front of you.

22:30 Went to Larrimah, at Larrimah we got into cattle trucks. There was no seats, or nothing in them, just cattle trucks. Larrimah to Adelaide River, at Adelaide River, the bulk of our unit was unloaded, and twenty of us went onto Darwin. We went onto Darwin, and we camped

23:00 in the Larrakeyah Barracks, which was the army barracks, absolutely beautiful barracks. They had never been occupied by the army before the war, they had been built in preparation. Some other units had used them before us apparently, but we had just one complete hut, or camp, which would hold a hundred

23:30 personnel per barracks. Where we were, there were six of them, and we were out in Larrakeyah, out there, and that is where we got our initial bombing experience, about a week later.

Although you had your background, you had done geography, geology, I imagine that period

24:00 **after joining Geodesics, was quite a learning curve.**

The learning curve was at Colac. When I went down to Colac, we had an intensive course, you might

say. The ignorant was teaching the chaps who had no knowledge at all. They were surveyors, they weren't mapping people, all they were interested in doing was surveying,

24:30 town surveying, and country surveying, they weren't doing mapping. The only one who was doing mapping, was probably Captain Tate, and he became our CO [Commanding Officer]. He was the one who had the knowledge, he was actually a New Zealander originally, and he had infinite knowledge about surveying of all sorts. In fact, Captain Tate, and Sergeant Torzillo, who was our draftsman

25:00 and did the drawing of the maps in our drafting section, both of their names are on the high court building in Canberra. They were the ones who did the survey work, and the architecture, Torzillo did, and they did the work for the high court building in Canberra. It was a feather in their caps, they were particularly good men.

25:30 At Colac we learned about using epidioscopes, and using. to read maps, and. I've forgotten the term, where you look through the glasses to see, bring the photos up into three dimensions. By the time we finished Colac, we didn't even read those,

26:00 we just used to use them with our own eyes. I can read any. give me two aerial photographs, and I can give you the actual topography of it straight away. We used to draw all the contours just by using our eyes. It must have done our eyes good, because I've got good eyesight still.

26:30 **Was that a stereoscope?**

A stereoscope.

Can you tell us a bit more, because this afternoon I imagine we're going to hear a bit more about the work you were doing up in the Northern Territory. Can you describe to us some of the gear, and how.

A stereoscope consists of two eyepieces which are actually focused on the two photos, it brings them together, and as they come together, it highlights the peaks, and the valleys,

27:00 and from those, others in the units, the fighting units, they could use them too, and they did use them. But you had to have the aerial photos to do it, and of course an aerial photo. You can't draw maps from aerial photos. You can draw a map, but you've got to know where the map is, and the only way you can know where a map is, is to get a latitude, and longitude of some spot on the map.

27:30 If you've got one, it's okay. In Australia, Victoria particularly, every railway station throughout Victoria has the height above sea level, and also its distance from Melbourne, and most towns now, strangely enough, have latitudes and longitudes, I don't know whether you noticed. Down at Apollo Bay, in the shopping centre there, it's going across the street, the latitude and longitude of Apollo Bay.

28:00 Other towns are using it now, it's a great, valuable asset, you have the relationship with the time zones, which was another thing that came in. down there we learned all about the time zones across Australia, and the difference between. one of the assets we had to learn about, we were issued with portable wireless sets,

28:30 which we could receive on, but we couldn't transmit. As soon as we got to Taralee, we were stripped of anything at all that was going to give any indication. any letters we sent from Darwin were censored that heavily it was hardly worth sending. You weren't allowed to give any indication whatever.

29:00 Despite what people think, we were on a hostile coast, this is what people don't realise, and we were warned about it, when we were going around the coastline of Northern Australia, that we were open to hostile action at any particular time. We learned later it was amazing how many times the Japanese landed on that north coast.

29:30 They've got relics of where they left. Now they were probably taken to Japan, and beheaded, for leaving those behind I would think, the Japanese Army. Goodness, how many other places they landed at, we don't know, but they were certainly landing, and they certainly had an indication where the airstrips were too. They were bombing too accurately. They weren't doing it from maps because they had none, they didn't have any maps. People say they travelled the whole of Northern Australia. Maps,

30:00 but they didn't have, they just went on word of mouth, and the map they bombed Darwin from, was a 1937 sketch map, which just showed an approximate location of the layout of the town. In actual fact, the map that they used later, the first map of Darwin, the control point they had, which was the east coast, east cliff tower. Now WO McMahon, his first observation

30:30 he did, he reckoned it was thirty or forty metres out, which was quite a big discrepancy if you were doing contours, or gunnery, or that sort of business, anyhow, he fixed all that up. All our mapping was done from a particular spot where we had latitude and longitude. The first longitude they had, and I've got a map also of the replacement can, also, showing you in Darwin,

31:00 which was in hours, minutes and seconds, not in degrees, because they were working on the difference of the time between Greenwich to Darwin. All our work was done from a chronometer [a type of watch made to meet very high standards set by Swiss Official Chronometer Control], which we took our sign signals…Chronometers were used,

31:30 mostly if we could get them, old shipping chronometers, which were in their gimbals still, and would ride quite well on the back of trucks, or on board ships. we used to do that. As long as we could before the time signals, I used to make a point of getting there at least an hour or two hours before sunset.

32:00 This wasn't done by some of the other. well, frowned upon, put it that way. Their times weren't as good as they could have been. Once we set it up, we'd wait then for the time signals that came from the Melbourne Observatory, which was on BIM4 [single frequency bioimpedance instrument], was the station, and our portable sets were set on BIM4.

32:30 We carried one of those, but we also carried a console set that we got from the Darwin homes, from the canteen services actually. Captain Tate virtually took it off. they didn't want to give it up, he produced the authority. and that was it. So my unit, my little five, we had this console one, and we were able to listen when we finished.

33:00 at half past one in the morning, mind you, to the BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation], in England, and of course, the chief one we used to listen to was Vera Lynn. She used to go to the canteens in London, and to other services around the world actually. All the ones she sang during the war years,

33:30 of course they were sung then, she was a young singer in those days, and we used to listen to that. Then a couple of the younger chaps that I had, Laurie McNamara, and Johnny Whealey, of course they had only just left university. Johnny Whealey had to wait until he was eighteen before he could go into a war zone, he came up. They used to listen to all the jive stations

34:00 from America and South East Asia. They could listen for a while, as long they turned it down, and it wasn't too loud. They were quite a marvellous group, but Laurie. it gets down to personalities here, and you have to be rather modest about it, but other sergeants

34:30 used to find difficulties getting chaps to go out with them. It was a bloody tough life, you didn't go to bed until after half past one in the morning. You had to get up at sunrise because you couldn't sleep it was so hot. You were lying under the sand fly nets. which means each hole you have in an ordinary mosquito net is divided into four, to keep the sand flies out,

35:00 and the sand flies were worse than the. you could get a mosquito bite, but the sand fly bite, I would say, were ten times worse. Laurie got hospitalised with it, at least two other chaps. two with me, I warned them about it. They gave us this army repellent, it was in a bottle, we all had our bottle each. We used to put it on our arms and so forth,

35:30 absolutely useless. We used to put it on our. I was doing the observation, and I had to have my face out enough to read the OB light [observation light], I had to have fingers enough to turn the screws, and. The booker had to have a pencil in his hand, so he was able to write, keeping the times and readings from the field light and so forth. This was all at night-time, he was using a little kerosene lamp.

36:00 We didn't use big lights because we were right on the coast. We would get a warning occasionally, to stop observations over night because of Japanese subs [submarines] offshore. So we had to stop for that night, another night gone. We used to do three nights at each station, actually.

36:30 on land of course, I was in charge of the party, the two trucks, and two drivers, and so forth, and this was where you get the. I won't mention his name. Anyhow, I think the first time he went out into the bush with us, we were going from Mataranka, out to the Gulf, along the river, through Open Valley police station,

37:00 then onto Urapunga, which was right on the Gulf. We had to do observations about every fifty miles, where you would stop and do an astros on that, along there, getting the latitudes. Went across to Roper river, at the Elsie Station, which was the famous one from Never Never [We of the Never Never]. "No, no-one's ever crossed the river."

37:30 We had to go up into Arnhem Land. We sent the two drivers, and they came from up the Mallee, John Hoffmeyer, and Jim Lyons, and they were driving the two trucks. They go down, they said, "We'll pick it up at low tide." We were sixty miles inland, but was still tidal. "We get it at low tide, we should be able to make it." I said, "I want to make sure we can get across,"

38:00 and Hoffy said, "We'll get you across, Hunty," he said, "No worries." No sergeant, they were all gone, didn't worry about that stuff for those jobs, it was just Hunty, and Hoffy, and Lyons, and so forth. They said, "We'll get you across Hunty." So they went down and looked at it, there was a rock bar, and they took the fan belts off of course, covered over the inlets that go in for the air and everything else, put a bag over the radiator in front.

38:30 I said, "Well, what are you going to do? Are you going to send the truck across, the four wheel drive across, or Blitzwagon, or the four tonner?" "No, we'll send the Blitzwagon across first, we can always pull it out with the tonner backwards if we have to. If we put it the other way around, we might be stranded." So, we went across, we got through. Their feet was on the pedals, they were still driving the trucks, and the water was right in.

39:00 they were still going! That was the law of the land, you kept your engines going, as you know. They kept

them going, we got through, hooked the other one in, got through, up into Arnhem Land we went, to do our observations. But we had to go where the photo strips were flown, they were flown in strips by the RAAF [Royal Australian Air Force],

39:30 by the RAF [Royal Air Force] and by the USAF [United States Air Force], that was the United States one, and also by the Dutch. Of course, as the planes went along, planes never flew. and of course, up there in the turbulence, they never flew in a straight line, they always flew like that, so any photos underneath, it was just by sheer luck if they were verticals,

40:00 straight above. Strangely enough, I went over to America, I went to the Smithsonian Institute, and they had the actual cameras they used during the war in Australia, the triametrical cameras, which took a vertical photo, 10 x 10, ten thousand feet, and then they had obliques that went out to infinity, and they covered one third of the vertical,

40:30 plus infinity out further, but you could only go a little bit distant, off the vertical because infinity, just like the stupid video reports they put in football, which are completely erroneous, because the distance nearer you is always shorter than the distance on the other side. They can't tell how far those injuries. Anyway, my football team, Carlton, Geelong, the chap got off,

41:00 he was supposed to have kneed the chap in the back. ewhen it went up, the chap who got kneed didn't turn up at the tribunal. ethe last thing the coach, he has been moaning about.

Tape 5

00:30 **On the last tape, you started talking about the trekking involved in your work, and it's an extensive area, very difficult terrain.**

Very difficult terrain, and this was the problem all the time. There was only five of us left, and the main

01:00 thing we've got left all the time is the stress, and the strain, all the time, because we didn’t know what was going to happen at any time. Whether we could do it, or get there. They gave us a photo, that was all, they didn't tell us where it was. We had to go and find the area in the Northern Territory, find the photo area, and then actually do our observations on that photo, and identify a spot on the ground, the smaller the better, because it was more accurate, then we'd do our

01:30 three nights observations, and then we recorded. We were on the land, two drivers, two trucks, and they generally boiled the billy for us, had supper ready for us when we finished up at night. We had a time signal before, and after. The first time signal, we had to wait until it got dark enough to see the stars, we couldn't just start at any time, and that used

02:00 to be about half past seven, eight o' clock. Then we would go through, and we'd have to wait for the next time signal which was either half past twelve or half past one, generally it was half past one. Then we would check the chronometer, three of us would have three stopwatches. The pips used to come over at fifty seven, if we were doing it at say six o' clock, it would be

02:30 five fifty-seven minutes, fifty-seven seconds, then we would get fifty-eight, fifty-seven seconds, and we would wait for one, two, bingo, then we would check that against the chronometer, and then we would get back and take the next time signal. That means we would have nine time signals, which we would check the chronometer against the correct time, which was sent from Melbourne, VIM4 was the station, down at the observatory building in Melbourne, and we'd check our chronometers against that.

03:00 If you had a good chronometer, it meant the results were good, so if the chronometer wasn't any good, you would be in trouble, but they were good chronometers, no question about it. The time signals were then checked beforehand, for three minutes, that was nine checks beforehand, and then nine checks at half past one, when we finished. We had to stay up until half past one to do it. Then in the morning we'd get up,

03:30 because it was too hot to stay. We slept with nothing on virtually, air flight used to reckon, sand fly nets. They had waterproof tops on them, which was the only good thing about them. If it rained, the water didn't come on you, it stayed on these special covers as long as you didn't touch them and push them up, then the water would. that was just the fun of it.

04:00 **I also read that you were doing astro fixes at specific places.**

See the map there with the diagram drawn on it. now each of them you'll see here, there was another on the other end of it. The flight that planes did, they flew from here across to there,

04:30 and our job was to get astro fixes across that strip because the strip would only be about twenty miles wide.

Just how would you do the astro fixes along the photo strip?

The photo strips, those photos were runs provided to the unit.

05:00 This was where the two officers. they did never go out, for one, they didn't have time, but they used to take the strips, and they would sort out along the run. They only had one run of photos, that was the problem. They couldn't risk us taking the whole run, and going along the run, because you wouldn't get along the run because of the rivers and the gorges. You had to attack them either from, generally from a north, and south position. Sometimes you were lucky,

05:30 and you might be able to move east, and west along where the run was, but most cases you couldn't. Most of those places we went to, you would find a track that you could traverse along, and there was a bush track from Katherine out to, say, Wyndham. It used to take practically all day to get there, there was no main road, very sandy, bogging in the sand was very common.

06:00 But when we got the photo you could tell, you could actually, if you were near the sea, you had the bridge to go on, you know it was over there. If it was near the north, south road, then you could pick it up then, but very few of them were, they were mostly in. so we would go, then we would have to go north, and south, from the track where we were, and this was the major problem. We had to take

06:30 all our petrol, all our drinking water had to go in. One truck took the forty four gallon drum of water, the other one took a forty four gallon drum of petrol. There were extra tanks on both trucks, so they could hold extra petrol. The drivers had to tell you when the petrol was getting low, because you couldn't go any further. You either had to go back to a depot or somewhere, where a supply truck

07:00 would bring it out. We could send, one of the major places you could send was the Timber Creek police station. Actually, the springs on the vehicles was one of the big losses that we used to have, breaking springs, it wasn't the driver's fault, a spring would break, and we would carry two separate main leafs

07:30 for both of the trucks that we had, that was four extra springs, rear springs, not the front ones, rear springs. If we broke one, which was not uncommon, then the drivers would have to get down, undo the spring, take the new main spring in, and do it up again. Now that was time consuming, and in the temperature, it was very, very hard work. The four of us were all involved in that.

08:00 The actual astro fixing when we got to a spot, we had to decide a suitable spot because we would then have to measure, or chain, a distance of about half a mile or longer in order to get the scale of the photo. Now that was the important thing because the planes were supposed to be at ten thousand feet, but they varied anything from nine to twelve. As you can understand, if they came closer to the ground, it meant

08:30 they covered a smaller area. The higher they went, they covered a larger area, which meant it was harder to find the objects on the ground because they were much smaller in size, and so forth. You'd pick what you identified on the ground, on the beach, they had to be there before we got there because they had already been flown, it could have been a month before, it could have been twelve months before. It wasn't twelve months, at least three to four months before, and they had to be still there, and this was another problem.

09:00 You might see footprints in an area, but they weren't there when they were flown, they weren't showing up on the photos. So you had to identify a spot, and then where you did your astro fix, you had a latitude and longitude at that particular point, and where they crossed, was where they were. You then had to measure from where your latitude was, across to the point that you identified. It was always hammered into us, and this was one of the big worries

09:30 that you had on your mind all the time, there was never any chance to go back. The captain always said, "There's only chance of doing this observation at this particular point. We can't afford to send you back to have a second go at it, you've got to do it at that particular time, and make sure that all the details are required," that I just shown you, and we'd draw a sketch off them of where the actual spot was on the field books we were using,

10:00 and the recorder, he would make a note of anything of particular notice in the vicinity. We didn't actually mark trees, we couldn't scar the trees in the Territory, it just wasn’t done.

So was it just elevations, or were you mapping actual features, describing features?

We were describing any features, on the field notes the recorder would put down areas that we went over,

10:30 he would keep a note of any particular features that we went across. It came from our skill, not mine, the ones in the mapping section. Like, looking at the stereos, you could identify objects, almost faultlessly you could tell what they were, whether they were streams, gullies, whether they rocks, or just hillocks of sand.

11:00 But they showed up different on the photos, so this became the technique of being able to do this and so forth. From those then, the drivers I met up. The point about those rivers that I mentioned, anywhere in the Northern Territory, they're all U-shaped valleys.

11:30 They don’t go down in a V-shaped as you would expect. They were all just like. ice, like glacial valleys,

they were square on the side…Quite often you would have to get out with a pick and shovel and actually level off a sufficient, in order to take the vehicles down into it, then they had to go down into it, and up the other side, and this became. This was on all the time. The onus then, was on me to say to the drivers.

12:00 I took their advice always, because. I would say, "What do you reckon? Do you think we could do it?" And they would say, "Oh yes, I think we could, Jack," or, "I'm sure we could do it," "Now are you sure?" "Oh, the other side looks a bit steep, I think you better dig it out a bit," and you had to take notice of them. If not, you had to say, "Right, we'll make a go with it," because it means taking up another half a day to do it, and time wasn't a thing we had.

12:30 The back of that book that I wrote, the directive we got from McCarthur, which was dated June the 3rd, or June the 13th. in actual fact, we arrived in the Territory in April. So that's where these official documents are often useless, because he's ordered us to do the mapping as far south as the Tropic of Capricorn, and from Broome across to the Gulf of Carpentaria,

13:00 came on June the 3rd, that was the official notification, but in actual fact, we knew when we left New South Wales that we were going up to Darwin, and we were going to do a mapping program.

So you were already doing it?

We were doing it when the actual direction came from the Allied Headquarters. That was in the plan, because at that time,

13:30 Northern Australia had been under attack from out. Northern Queensland, Townsville, and those places, from the Battle of. out in the Gulf. The Coral Sea Battle, yeah.

Were you given specific instructions

14:00 **about locating and getting co-ordinates for military sites?**

No, I'll tell you how much instruction we got, we thought it was amusing. Sergeant Noonan, he was then, the acting captain called up, and Kevin came back down to where. into the lines to tell us. Kevin was a good surveyor,

14:30 but I think he lacked initiative, that's only a personal opinion, don't put that in the book. He came back, and he said, "Captain Tate, when I went and saw him, he had to Champagnie," which was an island off the coast of North Western Australia, and it was going to be an RDF, a radio directional finding point, in which they.

15:00 I wasn't involved in it. Kevin did one, he did the centre one. the station out at Dysdale. and Sergeant Bradburn, he did one down further. Sergeant Downing, he did one up on Bathurst Island, and those three observations that we did for latitude and longitude

15:30 were all in a line, and that line then extended right through there, right up into the East India, East India it was in those days, islands, right up, and met one that came down from the Aleutian Islands. Where they intersected then, meant the planes, bombers, coming back from bombing raids in Indonesia, would get onto this RDF, which was a form of radar, it wasn't what became the later radar,

16:00 which is why I'm giving it the correct name. I called it radar, and it was really. radio, it gave us the signals in a sort of, “Blip, blip, blip,” and when you were flying the plane, this, “Blip, blip, blip,” would show up on the wireless in your plane. Once you got onto that, you were home and hosed [safely home], because you came in on the RDF, and that brought you right in over those three spots I told you about, one on Bathurst Island, and these two islands off the coast. By that time,

16:30 you could look out and almost see your home 'drome [aerodrome], which was. and that was one of the biggest values that we contributed to the war in the North. We did one in the middle of Milligimbi Island, which was the last fuelling spots for planes bombing into New Guinea, and into Bismarck Peninsula and all that, and they would come over Milligimbi, and they would set their navigators.

17:00 because we used to talk to them, when we were at the air strips. They said the biggest humbug [difficulty] that they had was that they had no actual navigation point to come home to.

You were setting up this RDF at these particular places?

All we did, from our computer people,

17:30 they were actually working out a latitude and longitude for those spots, and that was all the navigators needed, because they could then take their directions from the stars as they were coming home, and then they would work out a route to get to that latitude and longitude of their home base. Now before we were giving them that, on those air strips, they didn't know where they were coming. They were landing on the north south road,

18:00 they were landing in bare spots, because they were running out of petrol.

So, once the latitude and longitude was fixed, the RDF was able to work with that?

There was only one RDF that went up, and they came home on the RDF. The Americans even wrote to us and thanked us, even their submarines were coming home from up in Indonesia

18:30 and South East Asia. Before that they were just wandering amongst the islands in the general direction of Australia until they saw land, and hoped it was Australia. Then they'd go down to Freemantle, which was the home base of their submarines. They would come out, and they would pick those up, and then they could go along

19:00 and actually know exactly their direction. Before that, in the ocean, unless you actually had something to give you your direction, you've got to wait until night-time, until you got stars, to work out the latitude and longitude, the navigator would, of where they were, but they were very vague, they had to be. The time signals were a problem, getting the time when you wanted to. Unless you get the time signal right, it was very difficult to navigate, in the Sahara, or anywhere at all.

19:30 You worked out. you could do a latitude and longitude from a formula that they gave you. Once you got a reading onto certain stars. and at one stage, I would say that I was able to identify and give you the degree of magnitude, whether they were alpha, that was the brightest. Like the Southern Cross has

20:00 alpha crux, beta crux, and delta crux, and the little one in the middle, was the faintest of the five stars of the Southern Cross, but I could name. After all, I did about two hundred odd observations of latitude and longitude in the four years that I. I was doing it up in New South Wales for practice, then I went up the Territory, I did nothing else virtually.

20:30 I was one of the ones who had a bit of a knack to do it. Jack McMahon, he was the WO [warrant officer], we were the ones to do it first in the Northern Territory. We did the gun sites around the harbour, located them. We did the tie-up with. the anti-aircraft guns, and the searchlights, we chained between each one of them.

21:00 And Jack Johnswood, our draftsman, he drew a plan of where each of them was, because the idea in the searchlights was, you'd have one leading searchlight. You've read the stories in England, it was the same thing. They had one perpendicular one, and it was generally blue, and then the other searchlights would focus onto it, and then the one that picked up a plane first would notify the other searchlights that were on it, and then once they got on it,

21:30 the other searchlights could turn onto it, and they knew the angle and everything, because we had actually given them a location of their distance apart, and where they actually were on the ground. We did that for searchlights, and we did it also for the anti-aircraft because they had to rely on the angle and everything else, and we did the plan for them to. That was our first job. Jack McDermott and I.

Was this in Darwin?

Yes.

22:00 See, when you think of it. When you think of fifty eight, I think fifty eight was the final count, that was between April, May, June, July, August, September, that was two air raids a day on average, sometimes you would get three. Observation planes weren't count, or reconnaissance planes, these were bombing raids that they actually recorded. No-one knew anything about it down south.

22:30 **But you were in Darwin during that period?**

I was actually right in Darwin at Larrakeyah Barracks for the first month, and the rest of the time I was around the coast. We used to watch them go over and hope that they wouldn't see us. When I was out at sea on the lugger, doing from Darwin around the Coburg Peninsula on the north coast, as far as the East Alligator river. Jack McMahon had done from

23:00 Gove, over on the eastern point of Arnhem Land, and he did the coast from there around to East Alligator river. He cracked up, actually speaking, he had a drunken skipper on the boat, who used to. Anyhow, they sent a Corporal Herron, he might have been the one who put me in actually, he's down at Taralgon. Have you been down there? Who was the chap. Watts, was it?

23:30 It doesn't matter. He said there was a crowd there from the archives, and I thought, “Good luck to him,” I thought he might have been the one who passed the word on. When he cracked up, they immediately sent me out then, to get a new crew,

24:00 there was a new crew on the boat, and I went around as far as. three or four places, East Alligator river. Then of course, I had to get into Arnhem Land to pick up the ones across. We went down the East Alligator river. An eighteen foot launch, towing a ten foot dinghy. When we got into the mouth of the estuary of the Alligator river,

24:30 we put the gear out of the motor boat into the dinghy. The first night we kept the motor boat, the motor boat unloaded us, put us through. We actually then camped in the mangroves, and we never ever gave alligators a second thought. I think I'm more worried now. No-one is allowed to shoot them, there are no predators and so forth, and therefore,

25:00 they're just hungry.

Did you see any?

Oh, hundred, thousands. You'd see them swimming around there at night in the mouth of the Northern, and the mouth of the Daly, and you'd see these two red eyes swimming around. You'd throw out a tin of bully beef. And the thrashing in the water was unbelievable. Any injured one they would eat, they're actually cannibals.

25:30 If one got injured, the others would all eat it. They'd thrash the water, you'd see them, you'd look out, and you'd see these purplish-reddish eyes just swimming around the boat. Sharks were another one. We had five sharks hauled up on the davits [large hooks / crane on the side of a ship], where we had the motor boat, on the two davits. At one stage, on the north west coast, we had five sharks.

26:00 You used to just put a bit of bully beef on a hook about that big, and the hook used to come around, this huge thing, and you'd throw it in, and before it even hit the water I'd reckon, a shark would be up to grab it, and you would have it on the davit, and then the ship's crew would pull it up and so forth. That was the best meal that we had, cutlets off the sharks.

So how were you getting these. your transportation for example, the lugger?

26:30 A small ship's company controlled the lugger. They had a captain, on the whole, badly selected because anybody who had any travel at all on shipping, like running boats, and he actually had a launch down at Lake's Entrance, and his main

27:00 sailing experience was sailing his motorboat out through Lake's Entrance and back again. He knew nothing about navigation, nothing about running a ship, nothing about running a crew for that matter. When we came down to. Hanson Bay, they put us ashore, and put ashore, I told you how that was done, we went ashore on a motor boat

27:30 with our gear, towing the dinghy, and when we got about a hundred metres, it always looked about half a mile, it was a hundred metres, they put the gear or half the gear out of the motor boat into the dinghy, then the dinghy would go in on the waves, and of course, the point about it all, and this was where the stress and everything came in, we had to get ashore because it had ourselves, we weren't in it, because I said.

28:00 as soon as the motor boat, throw the gear in it, two of us would hop out, and two of us would hold each side of the dinghy, and the bowman …

28:30 …he used to let that rope out, it would be about a hundred metres long, and of course we couldn't wait. I think this was the biggest effort, or one of the big efforts of it, we couldn't wait; (1) because the lugger didn't want to stay there, open to Japanese planes that were coming over, and still coming over, and they had to get back or get somewhere where they were sheltered. They would then take off, say goodbye, "We'll back in three days time."

29:00 Of course in three days time, they quite often didn't come back. Sometimes it was four days, one day it was seven days. We only took ashore enough food and water, and you had to take your own water ashore too, don't forget. food, and water for three days. We didn't take any tents, we just had a tent fly that we would put on the ground, and the four of us would just sleep on it. This was after half past one at night. Sometimes, and I often did, one of us would take turns and keep a watch out for the rest of the night.

29:30 It wasn't very long, I can tell you, from about two o' clock in the morning until sun-up, which was about half past four. You didn't know who was there, or even if they were hostile natives as a matter of fact. We were over on the Fitzroy river, and over on the far north west coast, there wasn't any white people there. There was no-one there.

Did the Aboriginal people give you any assistance?

Yes, they did.

30:00 The main and the best I saw of the use of the Aboriginal people, was way up on a station, Lajunda, which was up on the Victoria River, near its mouth, Wyndham comes in on the Cambridge Gulf down here. You go up there,

30:30 you go up to the Victoria river. The furthest station up there was Lajunda, and he had a brother down here in the Western Districts actually, and he actually never spoke to the Aboriginal workmen and women there, anything but the ordinary Australian language. Pidgin English was out, he said, "No, you don't need to do that, they can learn the language just as well as we can."

31:00 He said, "We can talk to them like that." They were actually mixed blood, and when I say mixed blood, I'm talking about they were mixed with Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian, Burmese, Indian, Portuguese. Because they used to all come into the coastline up there, fishing, and they'd go ashore, and the greatest

31:30 gift that the Aboriginal tribe can give you, give the men, was one of their 'lubras' [Aboriginal woman], and we struck this immediately when we went out…The first trip I did on the land, I went down to Katherine, and I went out on the track towards Wyndham, and the first stop was Limestone Rock, we

were camped there. The drivers orders were

32:00 to stop every fifty five minutes, check their petrol, check their water, that was written in rock really, they had to do this, and any sergeant who was in charge of a party that didn't do it, was only looking for trouble. Anyhow, when we got there, Jim Lyons, he was one of my drivers, he always wanted to come with me. He was checking the truck and so forth,

32:30 and one of these Aboriginal elders, big beard, elderly chap. when Jim finished, he came over to him, put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a packet of cigarettes, and gave him a cigarette. The first thing the elder said was, "You wantem free lubra tonight?" Of course, Jim. I had warned him to stay away.

33:00 They knew quite well, and I told them about any visitation with the Aboriginals, it would be back to base, and you're on a charge seat [waiting to be charged/punished for misbehaviour in the military]. I said, "I won't hesitate, it's just not on." We were offered. that was one particular one. The next night, the same thing happened again, we were there, they came around the camp, and the first thing they did was come and ask if we wanted lubras.

33:30 Now whether this was a pattern from other army chaps that were there before, or not, I'm not prepared to say, but I gathered it was. I said, "It's just not on." Out on the station I was telling you about, Lajunda, the main thing we wanted from them was where the water was, where we could get water. So when we got to Lajunda, we're way out beyond, there was no-one there then,

34:00 and there is virtually no-one even there now. We went upstream, up the Victoria river, back into the Northern Territory again, we were in Western Australia, back along a strip there that was running along you see, the river was stopping us from going across, at that particular time. The guide that we got there, we got him from the station, they said, "He will probably help you out, all right." When we got there, he came up to me,

34:30 "Can I sleep in camp?" I said, "Of course you can sleep in camp," and we had a tent fly, a big English tent fly, and there was four of us, so we put him in the middle. He was quite happy. "No, other Aboriginals hate us," he said, "Tribe up on the hill, they can see us, they come down and they kill me, if they catch me near you, helping you."

35:00 I said, "No, you don't need to worry about them," we were all armed. I had a revolver, I couldn't carry a rifle because I had to carry. I carried a revolver.

So why was there a hostile tribe, do you think?

There wasn't hostilities amongst the tribes, I'm going back to my history now,

35:30 and I've done a lot of it, a lot more than these people who are ignorant of the tribal customs. But in the Aboriginal tribe, the custom was, their only way of stopping the inter – the generation of the actual tribe, of intercourse between tribal people themselves, the only thing was, they used to fight each other. They never used to hurt anybody, the idea was to put on a bit of a battle.

36:00 The men went out with shields, and. no-one ever got killed I don't think. The main object was, they told us, and I talked to quite a number of them, all they wanted to do was go and steal the lubras. The idea was to stop the lubras running out to join them because as soon as they saw them coming from another tribe, they used to tear out they told us, to get into another tribe, and the other tribe of women, they used to come back to the others. So they inter-married between the tribes

36:30 and this kept them pure, kept them good. If they hadn't, they would have degenerated, because of the inter-marriage within the tribal unit, just by nature that is not on, as we all know. So the tribal fighting and so forth they talked about, was really just a gesture. I don't know if they sat down afterwards and had a dinner like the footballers.

I'm just interested in your personal reasons

37:00 **for being disapproving of your men mixing with the lubras? What your personal reason was for that? You said you would put them on a charge sheet if they – ?**

The main reason was…even when we got back, it was. from other servicemen we might have met at the pictures and so forth, would say,

37:30 "How did you get on with the lubras?" And so forth, and we just said, "It's just not on in our unit," and it wasn't. Whether it was a personal reason or not, it was my responsibility to see that it didn't happen, because it was a direction from Captain Tate. It was just laid down, not to have anything to do with allowing the men to mix with the lubras and I think it was right too. What were we going to do? It was a responsibility, isn't it?

38:00 **I was just curious what your actual reasons was?**

I didn't want our men to have any responsibilities. They could have become pregnant, and then they would blame our unit and so forth. So it just wasn't permissible. I didn't disapprove of inter-marriage, I still don't – even in those days, I was open-minded about it.

38:30 When you're dealing with the Aboriginal men yourself, the full-blooded Aboriginal, which we had a lot to do with, they were the most respectful, courteous, genuine person you are ever likely to meet. I found them very, very co-operative, helpful, and very genuine in their dealings with anything I wanted done, or help, and it was always done with the fullest co-operation. The worst offenders of course,

39:00 were the ones of mixed blood. Unfortunately, they seemed to get all the worst habits of the non-Aboriginals in their behaviour.

So were they co-opted in any way to the unit?

We had nothing to do with it, but they tell me they were, in the history of the Australians in the Northern Territory, there are a lot of examples where they were co-opted.

39:30 In what they called the Australian Observers Unit, the AOU, they were the mobile crowd who actually policed the coastline, more or less, in a very fragmented way, because they couldn't cover it, it was so vast. We're talking about thousands of miles, from the Gulf of Carpentaria, around to Broome. But there is one particular good example,

40:00 the navy, who were on Melville Island, and they had a base up at Snake Bay, which was right on the northern strip of it, and they took it on themselves to train a crew to sail a small boat from Snake Bay, and on air-raids that were coming over, and one big one there I'm thinking of at the moment, there were ten of our Spitfires [Supermarine Spitfire Fighting Plane]. they didn't crash,

40:30 they had to come down because they ran out of petrol. That was one of the biggest raids we had in the beginning, when we first got there. Actually speaking, we were there afterwards on the mainland, seeking the location of them, but that was just by the way. But on Snake Bay, the navy chap had this boat, the Amity it was, and he trained a crew on the Amity

41:00 to sail this small boat, and they used to go out and pick up any pilots that crashed north of Australia, Arnhem Land, around Melville Island or Bathurst Island in the north. Actually, they came down and picked us up off. we were on Bathurst Island, and Melville Island, too, and they brought us off the island,

41:30 to meet up with the Southern Cross, which was a naval supply vessel, which brought us back to Darwin actually. That's when we were mapping Bathurst and Melville Island. One of the ones that I know of, and can vouch for, they were all Aboriginals on that boat. When I went up through Apsley Strait, which is between Bathurst Island and Melville Island, and the tide changes direction during the day, from high and low tide, it changes.

Tape 6

00:30 **I'd like to continue with your involvement with the Aboriginal people, and who you had assisting you, and how they assisted you?**

The particular incident, and probably the most valuable one, was the one from Lajunda, into that area. It was mostly salt pans there, from the Victoria river flooding,

01:00 and water was very, very scarce. In that particular station. I can't remember his name, but he had them skilled, or trained, and they used to look after the windmills and everything on the station, and go around, and this was before they had the award wage, and everything for Aboriginals, and all this brought in, in 1975, with Mr Whitlam [Prime Minister 1972-75],

01:30 they worked on the stations, the Aboriginals did, horse-breaking, and mustering, and all that sort of business.

What about tracking?

No, I never had any experience with that. All they told us was that to find the way from one place to another. talking about tracking, I suppose this comes under what you wish to know.

02:00 they'd sit on the front of the Blitzwagon, stand on the front of the Blitzwagon, and wave their hands in the direction, over, where to go, to the drivers and so forth. If you asked them what they are actually following. it was tracking, that's come back to me now, they said, "Well, it's not very difficult, all you've got to look at when you want to track anything is the way the grass is bent,"

02:30 and that was the chief guide they said, in order to find out whether there has been vehicles over before. The way that the vehicles went, is the way that the grass has been laid down, the same with footsteps. When they're treading on them, the tracks are shown that they're going down. they did it for a living. They said, "You would probably be just the same, just as good, after you've done it for a length of time." Which I believe would be true, too.

03:00 **You talked before about coming across rivers and other features, did they assist you in finding your way through?**

Yes they did, in the sense that they would be able to tell you where there were shallow crossings, and the two or three times when we asked for their assistance, the men wouldn't do any work at all. They used to send back to camp,

03:30 and get the lubras, and the lubras used to come out and carry. And they did this in about three places that I can remember. They would carry the stones, and put them in the bottom of the water course in order to build it up enough so the trucks could go through. The men didn't do it, the lubras, they went and got them. Ten or fifteen lubras would come out from the camp, and they would actually do it for us. There were certain places there.

04:00 and the other one I mentioned in the book I think, the caves that were around there, and the paintings in the caves…Now I don't subscribe to any great architectural achievement, because the elders told me, that I spoke to about the drawings in the caves, I asked them about them. They said,

04:30 "During the wet season, we camp here. We have the fires at the mouth of the cave, and we camp here. We're here for a long time, and we just amuse ourselves scratching these things," I said, "Well, do they have a meaning?" He said, "Oh, not really, no." He said, "We just draw a chap running, or walking." They're all stick figures, mainly stick figures.

05:00 I said, "Do you have any actual drawings? What about paintings?" He said, "All we use is the clay around where we are," so it's either yellow, or red, which is the iron stone ones, or the white, which is the chalk type of clay. "They're the only three colours," he said, "That we've got to use." He said, "We use those to decorate the figures," he said, "They don't last long." But that's just what I found out myself.

05:30 That's what I found about the paintings in the caves. I saw nothing of these huge paintings. they could have been there, but I didn't see them. They weren't around Kakadu, I was around Kakadu. I walked into Kakadu from off the north coast. I came down the East Alligator river by motorboat, doing observations, and then went by dinghy for the next run,

06:00 did some observations there, and we carried the so and so stuff down to the next run where we went across, we were right down to Kakadu by that stage. We walked through the swamps down there, through the undergrowth and the weeds, it was quite shallow. We'd go ashore and do our observations. You'd see crocodiles, but they were taking off faster than we were

06:30 because there weren't any predators about in those days. We shot a lot of crocodiles, but as soon as we shot them, you'd see the Aboriginals come out of the scrub nearby and they'd cut off the tails, and drag the tail back to camp. That was the chief eating part. We tried it, we ate it, it was very, very greasy, we didn't take to it very much.

07:00 We had snakes, they used to kill the snakes, and we tried eating snake.

When you said then, that the local Aboriginal people would come out of the scrub, were you encountering pockets of – ?

Yes, we were meeting them occasionally, groups and so forth. They were all very friendly. We were friendly, I think that was the main thing about it.

Were they curious about what you were doing?

07:30 No, they weren't. I can't remember any actually asking particularly what we were doing. They didn't understand mapping. they did understand drawing it on the sand, to show us where to go to. They would draw with a stick in the sand, and show us where the streams were, and when we got to a stream, we had to go to a crossing up here, that happened in two or three places.

08:00 **So like if you wanted to get into Kakadu, find Kakadu. ?**

We went down the river, so we didn't actually go in by land. We walked the last bit up the valley. I think it was the Mary river. I was up there last year as a matter of fact.

08:30 Anyhow. that was their main assistance to us, telling us where we could get fresh water. In the dry streams there, in the dry season, you could dig deep down, and the water would seep in overnight. That was what they used for water too. That is how they still exist in those dry areas, through those areas.

09:00 Overall we didn't actually have to rely upon them for any particular instance of. necessity. Except, as I said, in those particular cases, getting the lubras to put rocks in the bottom of the gully, that did help. It was too steep at the bottom for the trucks to go down and up the other side.

09:30 By putting rocks in, the trucks could bash their way over the top of the rocks, and then climb up the other side. They were very useful in that respect, but that was all done by lubras, not by the Aboriginal men themselves. You would meet them out in the bush, the Aboriginal leader, man, in the front, carrying his spears and so forth, and then he would have a whole string behind him,

10:00 the whole tribal family would be spread out behind him, that was their culture, in those days. Of course, they would have hardly white people at all around doing things. Another time, we struck. they were bringing cattle, way over from Wyndham, Argyle Station, across the northern part,

10:30 across to Queensland, in order to supply meat to the railways over there. They had Aboriginal stockmen there, riding the horses. There would only be one white man, he would be the drover, and he'd have probably half a dozen to a dozen Aboriginal stockmen with him, and they would do all the riding. They were great horsemen, great riders.

11:00 In the mornings, I used to enjoy rounding up the horses in the morning, in the cold and the wet, and the horses would start jumping, and they would think that was great fun. They were very good riders and so forth, but they took all that away from them, when they had to pay them award wages, they preferred to employ white stockmen on the stations.

11:30 **Did you have training in bushcraft before you went out there?**

No, I was brought up going out in the bush. I used to go fishing in the Golden river on a Friday night, spend Friday night camped out there with Ron McPherson, spend Saturday camped out there, Saturday night, drive home on Sunday. All those skills, lighting camp fires and so forth, finding my way around. Direction is a natural gift I think.

12:00 I always knew. Even now, driving a car around the city, without a road map, say going from Essendon to Oakleigh, it doesn't matter what road I take, I'll always end up at Oakleigh. It may not be the direct route, but I always knew the direction I was going. The compasses in the truck were no use because the magnetic effect of all the metal

12:30 and all the electrical equipment on the truck meant that they were no good, the compasses. So then we had a. we were able to make up a paper plan of a. or a compass chart I guess you would call it, based on the position of the sun in the sky at the time of the day, and so forth, by arranging the chart.

13:00 working out the declination as it was called, we could work out actually where north, south, east, and west was, on these charts. We always had those in our trucks. The grass used to be as high as this roof, you couldn't see out of it. If you wanted to see out of it, you had to stand up on the bonnet, way up in the air, to see where you were going.

13:30 It was the easiest thing in the world to get lost. You've got no idea how easy it was to lose your direction. We took a lieutenant out with us to Roper River. (UNCLEAR). decided to camp, it was getting late. My plan always was, when I was with the trucks, I always made sure we stopped an hour before sunset so we could settle down,

14:00 have our tea in daylight, then set up if we wanted to any observations that night. But some of them. the lieutenant we had with us, didn't believe in that, he believed in driving until dark, then it's too dark to do anything. This particular night, we weren't observing, we were just camping, on our way out to the Roper river police station, which was close to the Gulf of Carpentaria,

14:30 and we'd been there, and he said, "I'll go for a bit of a walk." Of course, Laurie who was with me, and the two drivers, and Jack Fitzpatrick, who was my corporal, an excellent man. (UNCLEAR). said, "No, you tell him," so I said to him,

15:00 "Look out, keep the camp in sight, because if you don't," I said, "It's very easy to lose your direction because everything looks the same, for thousands of miles." So anyway, he went off, he said, "I'll only be away for an hour," I said, "Okay, I'll see you at eight o' clock." Eight o' clock came and he didn't turn up, I said, "He's probably just taking his time." Nine o' clock turned up, and he didn't turn up. I said, "It looks as though we'll have to go and find him."

15:30 It was getting late then, it was really dark. Anyhow, I said. "One of you stay here I want to blow the horn on the truck once every minute, so we can find our way back." Anyhow, it turned out he went out. and the funny thing about it, it was Hoffmeyer, the truck driver, who had a blue with lieutenant during the day,

16:00 as a matter of fact, because he was going along, and I was in the second truck with Jim Lyons, and the first truck pulled up, and I look at my watch, it was about five minutes to the hour, and I said, "Hoffy is having his hourly stop." The next minute Hoffmeyer and the lieutenant were outside the truck having a ding-dong argument. Jim said, "I don't know what's up now," I said, "I better go and see what they're arguing about now."

16:30 So I go up there, and the lieutenant there was really giving him the works, and charging him, and God knows what he was doing, because he had stopped without telling him, and Hoffy was trying to explain to him that the driving orders were, "I have to stop at five minutes to the hour to check the truck." The lieutenant said, "No, you will stop when I tell you," and Hoffmeyer was in his right, he said, "No, I'm in charge of the truck.

17:00 I stop when I'm supposed to stop." I got there about that time, and they were still having a go and I said, "Lieutenant. can I see you a moment?" And he came over to me, and I said, "Hoffy's right you know. The orders for the drivers are that they stop at five minutes to the hour. They have to check their truck. If anything happens, if the oil runs out, and it runs dry,

17:30 or it runs hot, out of water or fuel. If anything like that happens, or if one of the tyres has got a

puncture or something, he is responsible, he's got to answer for it," I said, "If he doesn't stop, he's had it," I said, "Just let him go, and I can assure you that Hoffmyer won't let you down." He went back to him and he said, "I'm sorry, I didn't know that regulation," but that's what I was getting at, you see,

18:00 they were surveyors, shire engineers, these two lieutenants were, and they didn't know the army etiquette or regulations of this nature, but you couldn't blame them, they were good fellows. I got on well with them, and so did most people. They were good chaps, no question about it. They were used to a shire engineer's job, which is a very responsible job, but they knew nothing about doing astro observation or any of this type of work that we had been trained to do. Anyhow, he did say to Hoffy,

18:30 "I'm sorry I did it." Anyway, I was going to tell you. after this big search, who should find the lieutenant? It was Hoffmeyer, he was out there for hours, and they met up with each other. He was good natured, he said, "It just shows you, doesn't it? Good can come out of it." That's what he said to Hoffy, "I'm sorry about this afternoon," he said, "It's just as well somebody could find me, I was totally lost.

19:00 I've been wandering around in circles for the last hour, and I always keep coming back to this log," and that's the sense you get, you've got no idea how easy it is to lose your sense of direction and so forth. This is what I'm trying to convey to people, that on those jobs that we were in, the strain came to me, and to the other chaps in charge of the party.

19:30 We were responsible for the directions we went, whether we got lost, or whether we got there, and whether we got back. It was our responsibility for the two trucks, the gear that was on them, it was worth thousands of dollars, irreplaceable of course, the. (idda?UNCLEAR). lights, and everything else we had on board. Now talking about finding your way and so forth, I was going to tell you about Sergeant Noonan, he wouldn't mind about that. He said. I went up to Captain Tate, and Captain Tate gave him the orders.

20:00 He had to go out to Champagnie Island, which was out past Point Keats, which was almost due west of Katherine. They flew him out by plane, out to Point Keats, they dropped him off. I didn't go by plane, I wasn't lucky enough, I didn't go by plane, they did. He went out to Point Keats, went out to the mission station

20:30 which was nearby, and he had to get from the mission station to Champagnie Island, and of course Captain Tate said, "Go to the mission station Kevin, and then you go out to Champagnie Island." Of course, Kevin in his innocence, naivety. really he was very naïve really. He said, "Ah, yes, that's okay, Captain Tate. Now how do I get from the mission station out to the island?" Captain Tate looked at him and he said, "You can drop out of the plane if you like, if you want to."

21:00 Of course there was no parachutes. He said, "He wouldn't tell me, he said, 'You'll find out when you get there.'" He left it to us, wherever we went, to find our way from one place to another, and you just had to use your nose in order to do so. You didn't know until you got there. You could worry yourself to death if you wanted to. When you got there, you asked around at the mission station.

21:30 Coming down the coast, from Darwin, down to Wyndham, that's down the whole of the north west coast, I went ashore at about five or six different places, and one of them, actually Hanson Bay, that I was telling you about, I went up the Daly River. Now the Daly comes out there, and it's coming out at a pretty far bat [fast pace], and we had to go up there to find a survey spot

22:00 up about ten or fifteen miles. Of course, they had the engine going, we had a big diesel engine on the lugger. We only used it when we had to. We went up river, and in the boat, there was Jim, he knew all about boats. He came from Portland, or Port Fairy, one of the other, a fishing family. He didn't last long either.

22:30 I tried to get in touch with him when I was writing the book in '96, and his. family told me he had died about ten or fifteen years before. He was typical. he said, "Well, one of you climb up the mast," it was about forty feet, there was no chair or anything up there, like they have on the racing yachts, just a bare mast.

23:00 You're up there standing on the wires that go down, and as you went up, they'd hit the sand bars, and of course as soon as they hit the sand bar the whole of the ship goes over like that. You're up the mast, which is forty feet high, fifty feet altogether, and you're looking down over the sea. That was quite a thrilling experience. They would wait there about five or ten minutes, and the tide was so strong going out, it would wash all the sand away that you had run onto. Once you'd cleared the thing, the boat would then sway back the other way, and you'd go right over the other side.

23:30 That was just an interesting little side that I had on the river. We had no cook, we all had to cook our own meals and so forth. The ship had no cook either, it had only had a crew of a captain, boson, a crewman, and an engineer, who was also the telephonist. He looked after the engine, and looked after all the signals that came in, which were few and far between, but he looked after those.

24:00 **Were you ever worried for your life?**

I was going to say all the time, we all were. One thing that came out, only this year strangely enough, Anzac Day, last year. Laurie McNamara,

24:30 who was with me, most of those trips, he was a sapper. He had just come from university, he'd done first year law actually, he was one of the law students. We had about four law students, actually, and they all decided they would leave the uni and join up, he was a law student. He said, "I'll tell you what, Jack," he said, "You won't believe this," he said, "When we used to go ashore," which was quite a number of times, "And you'd jump off the blooming thing and into the water,

25:00 the first time I saw you do it," he said, "And all the sharks and alligators we'd see," he said, "I was absolutely so and so frightened," he said, "I saw you jump in, and all I could do was jump in after you," he said, "If you hadn't jumped in, I don't think I would have jumped." That was the sort of thing that you were up against all the time, that feeling of uncertainty, and when you're on the shore up there, the sounds that you would hear, you don't know what they are.

25:30 It's unknown to you, but you're thinking all the time of what it might be. On the coast up there, we found elements, and remains of several Japanese relics and so forth that were on shore. A radio set, and radio valves, and these sorts of things, and other stuff that was made in Japan.

26:00 Of course, as I said, 'Made in Japan,' wasn't common like it is now. Where they'd landed. In an extract from The Australian, the girl who wrote that, she had done her research very thoroughly and she found a copy by a Japanese lecturer in Tokyo, where he outlined the fact that he himself had

26:30 made one of the trips from the north of Darwin, onto the north west coast of Australia, on a reconnaissance trip, at that particular time. By that time, there were about seventy thousand troops in the north there, and that was a big deterrent. Before, at the beginning, there was virtually no-one, the number of bombs that they used, they just didn't use those.

27:00 As some later historians claim, they did that to keep Darwin neutral, but it wasn't so. The chap that bombed Darwin, the captain of the fleet, or the commander of the fleet, Tojo, he was the same one that bombed Hawaii, Honolulu, and it was the same fleet that he had to bomb Darwin.

27:30 They did anticipate then that would come. They had seventy thousand troops on Timor Island alone, they don't keep seventy thousand troops there for nothing, there is no point in it.

So what you said before about remnants of Japanese equipment on the beach there. Do you mean that there coastal landings. ?

Oh, definitely, it's supported now, later on.

28:00 that it did happen, they did land there, along the north coast, Arnhem Land, also. In actual fact, not myself, Jack McMahon, he found the remnants of one of the ships that the Japanese had sunk off the north coast of Australia there.

28:30 The same thing…The natives on the island…near Gove, Millingimbi, the natives there said they came ashore there, too. There was quite a number along the coast line, it was so vast. A boat could land, and people wouldn't know.

29:00 The only way they had was to land on Mindel Beach, one of the main beaches that they would land on, and we had a block house, a bunker, one of the bunkers. and also behind our bunkers, and were only about less from here to the front fence from the high tide, from the water, and behind us, they had actually cleared a hundred metres wide of jungle,

29:30 which was behind us, and they had four Vickers [Vicker machine gun], two on each end, of the strip behind, under the bridge, for Japanese landings. That was where they expected it to be, on this Mindel Beach, and bunkers were put up along there, and we had one of them, the survey unit had occupied one of them up in Darwin, used this bunker.

30:00 There would be alerts, and you would have to get down and man your bunker. That happened two or three times. They would race you around in the trap, and put you in your bunker, lock the door and you had to stay there and hope there would be no landings, and that was the strain you were in. That was the strain with everybody. It's not the actual happening, even doing anything, it's before it happens, that's when you worry. Once it happens,

30:30 you're involved, and so the worry is over then. We didn't know what was going to happen, and neither did any of the other thousands of troops that were there. My younger brother was in the 6th Division, in an infantry group, he was up there and it was the same with them. They used to do route marches, and land, and so forth, but they always had to have their rifle ready, they had to always be prepared. It was the same with everybody.

31:00 **Bathurst Island, and Melville Island, you were going to talk about those? They hadn't been mapped before?**

They hadn't been mapped before, no.

Did you have. on the top of mainland Australia, were you really beginning from scratch? I know you had the photo strips, but was that all you had?

31:30 That was all we had. We didn't have any maps at all, there was absolutely nothing, it was unmapped. You see, you had the early explorers, Gregory was one of them, Leichardt. Leichardt never came back. He went into the area there and he got lost. Gregory went up through Timber Creek where we went. This was remarked by one of the chaps.

32:00 just last year, I think it was in Darwin, he said, "You're actually following the path that Gregory went on, through Timber Creek," he said, "And he had no maps, and you had none either," I said, "That's true." We went over the Timber Creek crossing, and went up. You know that lady, Mrs Henderson, who wrote that book about Bulla Bulla Station.

32:30 I actually went there. She claimed that there was never any white people through there before. She wasn't right because we'd been through the area and actually mapped it. We crossed the Victoria River, and over the other side, and down that area there. I just smiled to myself, as far as she knew, she was telling what she thought was right, so I let her go on with it. But we had been. I knew the area she was talking about.

33:00 **The reaction to you by the Aboriginal people, you were living very remotely.**

They were very good.

But did you suspect that some of them hadn't come across white people before?

I would say so, yes. Some of the younger ones would never have seen. Some of the older ones might have seen. What was the name of the family that went up there?

33:30 That did the cattle station up there?

Vestey?

No, Vestey's had the meatworks up one end of the strip that had been cleared. That was where two of the machine guns were, up on the Vestey's end of the strip, behind Mindel Beach. The Japs never bombed Vestey's you know, they were going to use it themselves. We were in the barracks at Larrakeyah, they never bombed there.

34:00 Not the actual barracks themselves. They bombed the gully next door, where the naval people were camped, but they didn't bomb us. They bombed the other side of us, which was between us and the town, but the actual Larrakeyah Barracks, which was a golden target, they were standing out, as plain as could be. The big huts and the provisions…They actually intended to land there, and use the…And Vestey's

34:30 had the cool rooms, and all our meat was stored up there, and kept up there. As far as the Aboriginal people were concerned. I said, when we met them, we found them very friendly. We were told to be very wary. It was pretty early times, we're going back to '40 now, which was sixty years ago now, more than that. There was very little

35:00 penetration of the whites there in those areas. Bathurst and Melville Islands were even more remote. I was on Melville Island, I made three stops on Melville Island. One stop was at a mission station in the centre, and when I went ashore I found a Priest there. I forget his name. To get out on a high tide,

35:30 we had to cart our gear in about half a kilometre, so we got some of the boys from the mission to come down. There were no girls there, the girls had all been sent south down to Adelaide, so they were away from the area in the north, because that was the first proclamation that the Japanese got, was to shoot the Aborigines first. That was all that was there, they thought.

36:00 So that was one of the things that they did, they moved all the girls. So when we went there, the boys carted all our gear up, we did our observations, and so on. When we were finished we were waiting for the Amity to come and pick us up, and while we were there, the father said to us, I forget his name, "Would you mind mapping out a little township for us? Survey us out a road, and divide off a number of little allotments along the roadside on both sides for us?"

36:30 So we did that. The road down the middle, then marked out, pegged out allotments down the side for him. He had a very good home brew, as a matter of fact, he was very, very good, very friendly, and then the Amity came across, we had to cart everything down, put it on board. When we got to the next stop, which was the most northerly point, almost, of Australia,

37:00 which was right up on Cape Farewell. I think Flinders named it Cape Farewell, when he was saying goodbye to Australia, and I don't blame him either. But anyhow, the Amity went down the strait, Apsley Strait, and then to go ashore, they had arranged for an Aboriginal to come along in a dugout canoe. Now the canoe would have been thirty feet long, easily thirty feet long.

37:30 one little Aboriginal, with a paddle sitting in it. We were in the Southern Cross then, I think. They put us down into the. Two loads it took him to take us in.

38:00 We only had about half an inch of freeboard, and he was sitting in the other end, myself, there were four of us. He had to go backwards, and forwards, took me ashore with the gear to start with, put me ashore, then he went back and picked up Jack Fitzpatrick and the rest of the gear, then he had to go back and

pick up the other two of our party. We had to wait down the beach, and the radar station,

38:30 which was there then, which was the first signal they were giving to the incoming Japanese bombers, coming into the Darwin area, they always came in over this Cape Farewell radar station. Their idea was to send a message down to the mainland, "Air raid coming in, so many planes, so many bombers, or so many fighters." They generally had fighters with them when they were coming over Darwin.

39:00 I waited on the beach, and while we were waiting there, we had. We had turtles eggs, and turtles eggs, you can't cook the white of the eggs, the white won't cook, it just remained as whites, the fluid around the yellow, you can't make it any other colour, it won't go white, no matter how much you cook it.

39:30 you could only cook the yoke in the middle of it, but you could eat all of it. They'd lay about two hundred eggs, these turtles, just coming out like sausages, out of a sausage machine. They would come out on the beach, then they'd cover them over, and then they'd go off to sea, then the poor little so and so's would have to look after themselves. They were in the hot sand, then they would break open the shell.

40:00 While we were there, we were watching them down on the beach…we were watching the beginning… you'd see them all opening up, and the little turtles coming out of them. Of course everything used to eat them. All the birds would come down and eat these poor little turtles, but we waited there, and waited there, and the lieutenant came down from the radar station,

40:30 picked us up and so forth, and he took a great pleasure in. you don't know what to say to them. You're talking to them. they're all officers and so forth, and I'm only a poor old sergeant in the army. Anyhow, they're taking you off, and they're saying. They've got their radar station up on the point there, "We've got it camouflaged," he said, "No-one knows where we are."

41:00 He was going on about how well they had done it. I said, "I'm sorry to tell you, sir, somebody knows, I could tell you where it is exactly." I pulled out the photos, and I said, "That's where your radar station is." He said, "How do you know?" I said, "You're camouflaging it with evergreen plants, aren't you?" He said, "Yes." I said, "The worst thing in the world you can do," I said, "What happens the first day? The blooming plants dry out and the leaves are a different colour to the rest of the area.

41:30 I said, "And that's your radar station," he said, "We'll get that fixed tomorrow," he said, "We've got camouflage nets, and we didn't even put them on." He said, "We thought we were doing a better job. They told us in the camouflage stage, just cover it in natural vegetation." That's all right for the next half day, I said, "That's perfect, probably better than nets." I said, "But after the first half day, you'll end up doing that everyday."

Tape 7

00:30 **All right, your brother was up in.**

Yes, he was in the 6th Battalion, he had been over in West Australia, he'd been up the east coast, and so forth, they moved up there. He had a broken arm, he broke it over in Western Australia, and he was a fortnight or so late in getting up there. He was going to

01:00 cross the road to go down and see the battalion football match, he couldn't play, he had a broken arm. He got a broken arm playing football, as a matter of fact, they broke it for him. He kicked ten goals in the match the week before, the battalion wanted vengeance. He said the next thing he woke up, and he was looking at the white ceiling in the hospital, that's how long he lasted, it wouldn't have been more than five seconds.

01:30 Anyhow, he had a broken arm. They put in plaster, and when we went up there, the plaster wasn't any good, he used to sweat underneath it, and it took longer than it should have. Eventually he was actually sent down to Ballarat for recuperation. The only good thing about that, was he met his wife there, she was a VAD [Voluntary Aid Detachment]. She also reckoned she killed him, because she used to bring around the cigarettes and beer, he never smoked before then. They used to bring around free cigarettes virtually.

02:00 He died of cancer, he was only sixty four I think he was. That was one of the sad things, it was too easy for them. We couldn't get cigarettes, so the only cigarettes were the ones you took out in the field with you. Of course, the chaps that smoked only brought enough. We didn't know how long we were going to be. Only had enough for a week. They were pretty hard to live with, sometimes.

02:30 They got used to it, too. It cured a few of them as a matter of fact.

You were going to tell us how you bumped into him?

I bumped into him. I was going up the north south road to go out contouring. All the contouring that we did was via trapaising up the thing, and marking off the changes in longitude as we went along the traverse line, or we used barometers.

03:00 There was a base barometer, and as the barometer changed in its reading throughout the day, or half

day, then it was brought back to camp, where we were, and it was adjusted throughout the day, and we got the contour heights…We were doing it through the. stereoscope.

03:30 They were drawn in on the photos, which were then transferred onto the maps, and the maps were sent down. They all wanted maps as soon as we started working. Every unit in the navy, army and air force all wanted maps. So we couldn't get them out quickly enough, so we introduced the method of using the sun, using dye lines,

04:00 drawn out on a perspex sheet, then they put a sun sensitive paper behind it, and they were about three feet, about the size of a military map, behind them, then they exposed them to the sun for so many seconds, depending on how bright the sun was. Then two or three of the chaps who were doing the drafting,

04:30 they would spend the whole day doing nothing else but putting these dye lines behind the perspex sheet, and shining the sun on them, laying them out like this and so forth, and then the people were coming in from all the units wanting hundreds of copies. They had to limit the copies, so they could distribute to all the units that wanted maps of the Darwin area that we were doing in particular.

05:00 Just around Darwin itself, and the coastline along north, and this was one of the first jobs that they did at the base camp, these dye lines of the Darwin area, done with the use of the sun on the dye lines and so forth, and that was that. Contouring was done with barometers, or done with traverses along the line and marking them off, and then once you got the one spot height, you could transfer that spot. Say a hundred and fifty feet, it wasn't very hard

05:30 to put fifty foot contours from there down to the base, as long as you knew the height of the base. If you knew the height of the base, well that. Darwin has a base spot, with a base height above high tide… They've got one down here near the light house, which is a base point. The one for the whole of Victoria is out at Williamstown, and every railway station in Victoria has a height

06:00 based on that, the height there at high tide, at Williamstown there. That was the contouring, it was done by contour, I can't explain it much more than that. A party of two chaps, carrying two barometers, and they took a reading on the barometer, as you did your spot height, and you marked that on the photo, where you did the. And what the barometer reading was on that. You used to prick it through with a pin, and you used to write it on the back of the photo,

06:30 because it was almost impossible to keep the location of where you were unless you pricked it through on the photo, and wrote it on the back of the photo what the reading on the barometer was. You could put A, B, C or 1, 2, 3, 4, if you liked, as long as you fixed the spot on the photo. It was no good marking with a chinagraph, we used to use on the photos, because that would rub off, it wasn't accurate enough either, because you were changing heights,

07:00 from up the top, down into the valleys, and so forth. So that was the barometing part of it. Also, in the last stage of it, I did a, along with others, I did a traverse from Birdham, which was where the railway started. All the loading was done at Larrimah, which was about another ten miles up the line,

07:30 but Birdham was the actual end of the line from Darwin, and it had a height point there, and a latitude, which was brought down from Darwin, it wasn't accurate, but it was. all the readings in between were, so all you had to do was find out where the inaccuracy was, it was either at the beginning, or the end, and I spent a week there doing astro fixes, I think I did about thirty or forty over the five nights,

08:00 in order to get a mean reading for that particular location. Then later on, Jack McMahon and I did a traverse down the north south road, from Birdham down to the entry to the Newcastle Waters Station, which is owned now privately by Mr Packer. We set a camp up near the waterhole, which is just in from the main road,

08:30 and it was where the cattle used to come in to drink. They only came in every second night, and they'd graze over a twelve mile radius of the waterhole or the windmill, and the windmill had a good forty foot long tank, about ten feet deep, a marvellous swimming pool. Every night when we came back to camp, we used to get in. the cattle didn't seem to mind.

09:00 Also, it was done in mid-summer. It was that hot you couldn't pick up anything, you had to use a crowbar to hold a chain tight. You had to have a twenty pound pressure on it, which was done on a scale, a weight scale, and you'd get twenty pounds on it, you had to keep it at twenty pound, and there were three conteneries, as we called them,

09:30 on the chain, and that then maintained the level. You took the temperatures at the height of the chain, and the temperature on the ground, you kept the barometric pressure also on the chain, and we also then used an invar tape, that was a tape that didn't alter its – because it was invariable tape, it was made up of different metals which actually countered each other so the expansion was at the absolute minimum.

10:00 We put that along the road just beside, and the main purpose of it was to make sure you didn't forget to add your hundred metres on your [UNCLEAR contenery] one. Accurate one. At the end of every bend in the road, we used to use a star shot at night, in order to get a latitude and longitude of that point. We did that all the way from Birdham down to Newcastle Waters. There's now a can at that point, at

Newcastle Waters,

10:30 which marked the end of the traverse, it also marks the entry to Newcastle Waters Station, but nowadays of course, they came right down to Adelaide, right down the centre. They've got the Tennant's Creek now, and from Tennant's Creek across to Queensland, and they've joined up with the. a geodetic survey line, which goes right around Australia now.

11:00 That's all been done since the war, but in our own part, that was the last big job we did, was the traverse down to Newcastle Waters, after that, we went back to camp. We were then told then we were packing up. So we packed up there. The trucks were to be driven over to Queensland, the personnel were to go down by truck to. we had to drive the trucks down

11:30 as far as Central Australia, Alice Springs, we had to drive a truck down to Alice Springs. Anybody who was going down, had to drive a truck down. I ended up driving the worst truck down, it used more oil than petrol. So they put me at the back of the convoy then, because it was nearest to the oil truck that used to fill up every time we stopped. We got to Alice Springs, then

12:00 we got aboard the train, and we went by train then down to Adelaide, and Adelaide, we were staying in the showgrounds. While were there, the Hollywood canteens, the Servicemen's Club there, and dances and things. Army, the navy, air force, WAAFs [Women's Auxiliary Air Force] and AWAS's [Australian Women's Army Service], and AAMWS [Australian Army Medical Women's Service], the naval girls, the whole lot used to go there.

12:30 It was on every night, it was not just one night a week. So I went the first night there, and so forth, dancing, and all sorts and going on, army boots, you know. About the second last dance, there was one WAAF there I had taken to, I asked her to dance. Then I asked if I could see her back to the barracks. She said, "I'm sorry," she said,

13:00 "I've already promised to go back with another sergeant." I said, "Oh well, good luck to him," and I went and met up with another. WAAF. Of course, she had to live out at Port Adelaide. That was as far as you could get away from Adelaide. anyhow, that was all right. Next morning was Sunday morning, and I was going to get some breakfast. I heard a shout behind me, and it was Jack Pickett, one of our drivers.

13:30 He yelled out, "Hunty, can you do me a favour?" I said, "Yeah," he said, "Did you meet the girl I took home last night?" I didn't know who it was. He said, "When you go, just tell her I can't meet her," I said, "Hey, what's up?" He said, "I was supposed to meet her at one o' clock," I said, "What am I supposed to tell her?" He said, "Just tell her I'm on guard duty." I said, "Pickett," I said, "You know me from five years I've been with you, I'll do you any favour you like, but I won't tell lies for you, or anybody else.

14:00 I'll just tell her you can't come. If she asks me why, I'll just tell her why, that you're going out for a drinking pub crawl with the boys. " They would only give you one glass at every pub. They weren't allowed to serve more than one glass, there was such a shortage of beer. So off I went, got down there about ten to one, the WAAFs, all come around. they were all over in the cathedral rooms,

14:30 that was their barracks, in the Sunday school rooms and so forth. So after they've all gone through, there was one WAAF left there, walking very impatiently up and down across the road. I waited, and waited, and waited, then I walked across there and I said, "I gather you're waiting for somebody." She said, "I'm waiting for somebody all right." I said, "He's not going to turn up,"

15:00 She said, "I'm not surprised, " she said, "Oh, the day's wasted now, my only day off," she said. She was a teleprinter operator on the RAAF [Royal Australian Air Force] station, in Adelaide. I said, "I'm doing nothing this afternoon, if you like, we'll go for a walk around and have a look at Adelaide." I married her eighteen months later, so good came out of that.

15:30 We didn't get married straight away, eighteen months was after the war, but then she got appointed, shifted from Adelaide over to Frogmore, which was the WAAF Information Centre in Melbourne, the chief one actually. They sent all the messages from there to the islands, right up to the Northern Territory, all over Australia.

16:00 Everything was in codes, it was only a five letter code. She said, "I didn't have a clue what they were sending," but, she said, "It had to be absolutely foolproof." She said, "They must have thought I was pretty good," and she was good, she was a touch typist, and she could type, I can tell you, as fast as you could talk, she could type. Anyhow she said, "That was my job, typing these code messages," and they were sent all over Australia,

16:30 all over the world virtually speaking, from Frogmore, which was the big centre.

So when did you come down to Adelaide?

April of 1945. They reformed the survey units, and formed them all into the basic 6AA Topical Survey,

17:00 and most of us that were in Darwin weren't selected. The others that were selected, was mainly the underlings as we called them, to go up into the islands, and they filled up the whole unit with headquarter troops, so they could have overseas experience in a war zone, and that's saying something that may be incorrect, but may not, I can't vouch for that.

17:30 Myself, Sergeant Noonan, and all of us, Sergeant Lowe, we were all the ones from up the Northern Territory that had been doing it for years, we were reasonably good. They're still using the maps of the Northern Territory that we did, in the survey section, and the planning section.

18:00 **So you were talking about how the unit was going to head off to.**

…went up to Brisbane and reformed up there. They made a. the best way to put it, they actually then formed the actual 6AA Topical Survey Company, made up of all the personnel they gathered from all over.

18:30 They went up. they didn't actually do much, because the war was almost over, it was the middle of '45 by the time they got going. They went up to Wewak, I think it was, and Rabaul. As I say, that was just about the end of hostilities then.

So what was your theory though, as to why certain people were not chosen?

I don't know what their idea was at all.

19:00 I can't understand it, they weren't actually chosen because of competency, because the. Jack McMahon, who was our WO, he didn't go either, and he was a very good everything else. I just couldn't tell you, I wouldn't like to say. I know chaps from Western Australia that I knew, a couple of the teachers that I knew from the teachers' college days. Jack Bishop was one, he didn't go either.

19:30 Quite a number of the ones that were in the Territory with me, I would say there would have been twelve or fifteen of them who didn't go. They were all good, excellent. they were experts. I have no idea of their idea at all, how they worked it out.

20:00 They probably had some idea at headquarters, I don't know what it was.

But how did you react to that, it must have been.

We were all very upset, the whole lot of us, Kevin Noonan, the WO I was telling about, Kevin. actually offered to give up his WO, and go back to a corporal, even lose his stripes completely, in order to go. He didn't have to go, because he was already in a war zone in the Territory.

20:30 and his brother, he was actually a lieutenant, he didn't go either, and he just resigned and left. Captain Tate didn't go, he left the unit too. There was some reasoning behind their selection, that even those higher up than me couldn't stomach either.

21:00 But that's the way it went. I went up there, and all the dirty jobs up there, too. The first thing, they put us into one of old camps, which we had to clean up before it was fit to used by human beings, it was in a disgraceful condition…

Where was this?

Up in Rocky Creek, just out from Cairns. After we'd settled in there, they decided then they would continue mapping, so we then continued, and went

21:30 right up to Daintree, up to Northern Australia, we mapped all up through there. We did another three or four maps up there, doing the same sort of thing up the coast there. Probably doing something that became useful afterwards, I suppose. Talking about after the war, I went back to the university,

22:00 and finished my Bachelor of Arts. They wouldn't let me do me commerce, which I was very hostile about, very bitter about that, and yet there were other chaps who started on nothing, who went right through three year or four year university courses. They wouldn't even let me continue my commerce course, which meant I had to double up on some of my arts subjects

22:30 because they were overlapping already, and they didn't count in the arts, and therefore, I had to do some others to make up for. During that period of time, I was living in Parkville, with my first wife's mother. My wife had died, of course, during the war. I came down, and then.

23:00 Linda, she was out at Frognore, until the end of the war. When I came back, she got discharged also. Shortly afterwards, as I say, we were married then, early '46 actually. (UNCLEAR). went with all servicemen, you see, my first wife, I had to say goodbye to her,

23:30 and go off to war, and she died, which happened to many other chaps, too. Stresses and strains and other things affected them, too. Then the second time, I was engaged to Linda, and I had to go off to Western Australia. The war wasn't over then. They didn't know when it was going to be over, until the bomb was dropped, that was another farewell that had to take place.

24:00 After I came back, as I said, I went back to the university to finish my Arts degree, and Bachelor of Education. I went teaching then, down to University High School. I had to finish my degree, and my Bachelor of Education part-time,

24:30 because they didn't say I had enough to do to occupy full-time. They wouldn't let me do my commerce subjects. I started off to do it, and they stopped it, they wouldn't let me do it. There were others, as I

say, who started off on nothing, and they gave them enough to do it for four years, and they were actually paid too. So that was good luck to them,

So you were treated differently because you had started prior to the war,

25:00 **whereas the rest of these guys were returned servicemen, and they perhaps gave them more lurks?**

They gave them the lot. Wheels within wheels, but that's only my personal opinion, anyhow, it didn't affect me. While I was away in the war, I got promotion to Rutherglen School. Of course, when I came back, I didn't go to Rutherglen School, I went to University High School, and taught geography, and history,

25:30 and some English there, for four years. I coached the football team there. They still invite me back to the reunion of the 1951 football team, which had players like Alan Aylett in it, and Greg Sewell, all the top footballers that eventually went into the league. I go to a reunion they have on the first week of the league finals.

26:00 They have it in the North Melbourne Club rooms as a matter of fact. I've been the last two or three years, “I'll go again this year,” I told them. But then, Lin and I, we went out to Essendon there, and her brother decided they would build a house for their parents, one of these kit houses, and Ron, that was Linda's brother, and I,

26:30 we built the house over at Essendon. After we finished that, Lin and I decided we would build ours across the road from them, so we did that. We had the stumps put in, and got as far as the roof. Linda and I built the rest of the house. I drew up the plans for them, I had done drafting in the army, and I was a draftsman in that sense. I was able to draw up the plans and everything

27:00 good enough for the council anyhow, that was at Essendon. We lived in that for about twelve years, a boy, and a girl, Lester, and Julie, that was their home, they were born when we were there, in 1951, and '53, and not long after that, we shifted down to a house on the Moonee Ponds Creek,

27:30 on the road that goes out to the munitions works, actually. We bought a block of land there, when the. (nursulem?UNCLEAR). was getting some liquidity, and then we finished, we paid it off, we decided to build there, we built there, and I drew the plans for that one, too. We got a builder to build that one, we moved in there in 1964.

28:00 In the meantime, I taught at University High School, and then went out to Northcote High School, then I went back to Strathmore High School, all in about three and four year periods. Then I got promotion to principal, and I started at Hadfield High School, out near Coburg, between Coburg and Glenroy. I had two years there,

28:30 then I went off and started the Upfield High School, which was up past Broadmeadows. I was there for a couple of years, then I got promotion then to a senior high school, which was Flemington High School, down in the Flemington racecourse area. They had taken an acre of land from the racecourse, temporarily, the Education Department, and they built a beautiful new school there,

29:00 and I had the luck to go over and occupy it for the first time. It had everything that you could imagine. It was a solid brick building, three stories, and so forth. In the last year, they put another seventeen classrooms onto it, and had eleven hundred students. It was the second biggest one in Victoria I think, at that stage. It was very good. I was president of the Western Suburbs Association, and the Principals Association.

29:30 I didn't mind it, the kids were good. Talking about the Greek culture, they were all migrants, all the Housing Commission were all out there in that part of Melbourne, Holland Park, and North Melbourne, high rise flats. But the kids were good. It was amazing how good they were.

30:00 Admittedly, I had a good relationship with the Flemington police, and I was very strict on uniforms in those days. The parents were right behind me, they knew when they left their kids at home to go to work. I started school when I went to my first place at Hadfield High School, I introduced the first call at quarter past eight. Everybody said, "How can you start school at –it says nine o' clock," and they were all ringing up, the other principals of high schools at that level.

30:30 I said, "Well, I'm running this school. If the parents want to object, they can come and see me." Anyhow, I had a meeting with parents, and they were quite happy, because they said, "We can drop our kids off going to work. We know where they are during the day." I said, "No one leaves the school during the school hours, at all. They don't go home for lunch." "Oh, no." I said, "You know they're still at school, I know they're still at school."

31:00 Lunch hour was only thirty five minutes, enough time for them to eat their lunch, and to go to the toilet, and have a walk around, and so forth. Not enough time to get into fights, and arguments. I said, "That means they'll finish up at twenty past three. They can have their football practice, and their basketball practice, and do all that after school," which they did do. The teachers were quite happy with it. It meant that they could come to school early,

31:30 and they left early in the afternoons. That started a trend then. All schools started then at half past

eight. I think they all do now in the high schools, and so forth. Anyhow, it was a great success. Also I ran a canteen, I had the mothers in the canteen, from the mothers' club, and she was under award wages. I had that much money, I didn't know what to do with it.

32:00 Just from the canteen. You cannot run a business without making a profit, if you've got a good manager. Because it means you get the cost price comes in, you've got to charge something extra, you can't split a cent. It's either got to be cent more, and you sell a hundred donut, and you're making a cent on each one, then you've got a hundred cents. When you've got a hundred kids or something, and they're all having lunch,

32:30 and they're all buying pies. We actually controlled the food, the manageress. There was no junk food sold at all. They had to buy dried fruits of various sorts, or actual fruit itself. We got our pies from Four'n'Twenty, which had its factory down the road from Flemington High School. We used to send the kids down so they could have a look at what they were eating.

33:00 We were pretty strict on it too, they weren't allowed to put any rubbish in. There was no gristle, or anything. It had to be the top of the line. The canteen manageress was very good, she used to look after it all. We were the first school with computers. We had the Wang computers.

33:30 …the whole of the one form. One of the math teachers put it to me, "Why not get computers for the teaching of maths," which they were ideally suited to teach. We had a language laboratory for French, and Indonesian. That was fully equipped.

What year did the computers come in?

Well, I went there in, '64, and the computers.

34:00 It's actually been recorded that it was the first school with them. It would have been around about. it would have been in the late '60's when we had them. '66, to '68, somewhere. In the office we had the laser copying machine.

34:30 You'd put the copy in, and it would run the laser beam. and transfer it onto wax sheets, and then the wax sheets went into the electric duplicator. The girls in the office, the two girls I had, were experienced, they came from the country. they were both married, they married brothers as a matter of fact, they weren't sisters, and they ran the office for me.

35:00 They did all the work, they didn't let me interfere with them, it was an ideal situation. You got used to that sort of thing, experience, I suppose. I used to have an assembly every morning, which was an unusual thing in those days, too. The whole school used to assemble in the morning, the main purpose of that, was to see whether the staff was there, not to see that the kids were there.

35:30 Having an assembly, they had to be there, to take their students into the classroom. That meant you had no problems in the classroom.

What sort of association did you keep up with the fellows that worked alongside?

36:00 In the army? I always go to the Anzac Day march in Melbourne. That's with the Survey Association, and that was all the Survey personnel, they formed one group, and marched behind the Survey badge.

36:30 We meet there, and we have a dinner, or luncheon, and I've been to. Ever since the war, I've gone to practically every march, I see them all there.

37:00 And Joe Dowling, the chap I tented with, whenever I went to Melbourne, I always went out to see Joe, because he was gradually going blind, he's officially blind now, and under Veterans Affairs, he's treated as a blind returned soldier, he's in his own home.

37:30 Unfortunately, his wife died, just picking out the winners of a race out at Flemington one day, about twenty years ago now, she died. He lived on his own then, out at Toorak Road, until about last year, then his family talked him into, and he told me this the other day, talked him into leaving that place,

38:00 because he was nearly blind. He could actually see a bit out of one eye, and he could find himself in his own home, around the house, and cook his own meals, and so forth, and his son, who only lived about a mile away, used to bring him meals, or pick him up, and take him for dinner a couple of nights a week, and bring him back home afterwards. He had his own television,

38:30 and everything else to watch, he had quite a big family, and his daughter, Patricia, who lives at Maffra, she eventually talked him into going into an old people's home, just out of Maffra, she's only a few miles away, and she goes over and sees him a couple of days a week. I was talking to him last week.

39:00 He said he was sorry he agreed to it, he was still doing all right at home. He's older than I am, I don't know whether he's hit the ninety yet, or not, but he would be eighty nine, plus. His hearing is all right, but his eyes. what caused it,

39:30 I blame, he doesn't agree with me, but he should. on our jobs, with the astro fix, besides doing the actual star observations, the latitude and longitude, we also had to chain about half a mile to a mile, to

get the scale of the photo. We also had to do a north, south line, also.

40:00 We also had to check the plum line. Everybody reckoned plum lines are vertical, but they're not because the mass of the earth will affect the mass of the plum bob. This is one thing they've got to take precaution against. The only thing you can check it with, is from star observations. a lot of them did it in the day time, by sun observations. The sun is very hard to observe, because it is not a very fixed image,

40:30 on the outside, and it is also very difficult to line up the odd light on it. On the odd light, there was three stages of coloured glass, to look through. In the night time, you don't need any, but in the day time, you often have to use one, to stop the refraction…Now the refraction is when you are sighting through the odd light, and the object is dazzling, going up, and down, or sideways,

41:00 or in circles, all sorts of things, and you have to counteract that to some extent. So normally speaking, we weren't supposed to do any observations until an hour after sunrise, and not an hour before sunrise, because of the refractions occurred on the – as stars do at night. So we had to wait until it was properly dark before we did it, to do star observations.

41:30 I did all my north, south lines, and all my. which I had to actually do on this mile, or half mile, traverse, you had to get a direction on that too, because you had to see where the photo was pointing so that when they were plotting it off, they were plotting it on the correct direction that was on it. I did mine from star observations at night, and I fixed my north, south line from star observations.

Tape 8

00:30 **Can you say that again?**

The Aboriginals. We could be so white, they used to come up to feel my white hair. I was white since I was eighteen, even in high school, my hair was turning white then. Actually, when I was Wallace Bay, they could all see me from the town, they could see my white hair they reckoned, walking around the paddocks up there.

01:00 Thank goodness it kept white, and not bare. They used to come up and run their fingers through your hair, the Aboriginal people, they couldn't believe it was real I don't think, they probably hadn't seen it.

Was sunburn a bit of a problem up there, in the early stages?

No, I was never worried about sunburn, never have been. Even when I was working at home,

01:30 bumping wheat and so forth, I never chased sun bathing, or anything like that. I never wore sunglasses at all, and I don't wear them now either. I only wear them when I'm driving westwards, in the afternoon, I wear sunglasses then, that's mainly for safety reasons, I think they distort vision a bit, but they are necessary when you're driving into the sun.

02:00 **At the end of the last tape, you were getting back into a bit more of the technicalities of the work. Can you describe what an astro fix is, how you would get an astro fix?**

Yes, an astro fix actually consists of using a (flood?UNCLEAR)light, or you can use a sexton,

02:30 a much more cruder form. What you actually do, is you get your altitude, you want zero on your level, on your fiord light, and your reading on it, gives you a longitude above level.

03:00 That is in degrees, and minutes, and in the light we were using, you went right down to seconds. Now when you go down to seconds, it's a three thousandth six hundredth part of a degree, so you're getting down into pretty accurate work. That's why the fiord lights [?UNCLEAR] we were using. I used a Tavistock, which was an English make, others liked to use the Zeiss one, others used a Wild, which was another Swiss one.

03:30 So you had the Swiss, German and the English one. I liked the Tavistock, because the case that it was in, was very much like that case, only it had two straps that go over the top, two straps that went over your shoulders, and you carried it on our back. The Wild didn't, the Wild was in a round cylinder, like that, and it had a carrying handle on the top of it. You couldn't carry it on your back in any way at all,

04:00 and you would have to carry it. and this was another thing I didn't mention, which I should have, on an astro fix, at night-time, you had to have light. Each of these fiord lights, the reading on them, the vertical, and the horizontal, had a little light in them, so you could read the actual reading. when you did your north, south line,

04:30 you had a spot, and you had the angle, and that gave you the angle of your sight up, and it gave you the altitude angle up, they were the two readings you got, and as you did them, when you sighted on them, and so forth, and when you were right on them, you'd tell your booker, "Right." As soon as you said, "Right," he would take the time

05:00 off your watch, or your. in order to get the time it was taken, and you did a star in each the four sections of the sky. Now theoretically what you were doing, you were getting four lines coming from the heavens, down to a spot on the Earth, and then from the computers, by using the nautical tables,

05:30 they were able to actually bring it down to the Earth, and give you the actual angle it came down, and the point, and they should all meet at the point, from those four observations. Of course they rarely did, because of pollution, because of refraction….it gave you eventually a little triangle shape spot on the Earth,

06:00 where you are, and from that spot, they actually worked out the length of the side, which was the biggest error, then they fixed a spot in the middle, and that was the longitude point there. Now latitude is easy, latitude is only the height of the sun above the horizon. Four times a year, it's easy,

06:30 at each of the solstices, at the four times of the year, you are able to know that the sun is either over the Tropic of Cancer, therefore it's twenty three and a half degrees. in our summer it's over. then. but in between time is where you have to work it out. Actually, it's not very difficult,

07:00 and this is why sailing ships, and sailors, were able to give their latitude around the earth, but they didn't have any idea about longitude, and this is where all the crashes came, why ran into Australia, because they didn't know how far they had come from Africa. Normally speaking, they could get into Bass Strait, which you know of course is the roughest sea in the world.

07:30 They didn't know that King Island was in the road, and of course there are more wrecks around King Island than the coast of Southern Australia, it's just littered with wrecks, it's only a narrow island anyhow, it's eight kilometres long, and only forty kilometres wide, now that's not much when you're coming from South Africa.

08:00 and you had to get between Cape Otway, and there were a lot of crashes around there for the same reason, wrecks, and so forth, and even though later there was a light there, they were still finding it difficult getting an accurate reading from it, but they should. They did pretty well actually, but latitude was pretty easy, because they used their astro lobes, the angle beam, get angle of the sun,

08:30 they only had to take that away from where it is on the. between the equator, and Cancer, and the equator and. and during the intervening period, it wasn't very difficult to work out where the sun would be in between September, and December, so they were able to subtract those degrees from their reading of their altitude, and that gave them their latitude. With our working, we were able to give them accurate latitude,

09:00 than longitude. The longitude that we were giving, we reckoned, would be a maximum of ten metres, a lot less. Normally by the time you did sixteen observations over six nights, in each of the heavens, there would – for three nights there would be twelve sets of observations, and that would give you a pretty accurate location.

09:30 It was so accurate, even, as I said to you before, the planning and survey in Darwin council now, are still using our maps, they couldn't improve on them. The surveyor general up there, I met him a couple of times last year, and he said, "It's just amazing how accurate you people got, way back in 1940."

10:00 He said, "We're not doing much better now, and we've got everything GPS [Global Positioning System], and the whole deal." Of course, GPS isn't perfect either. You can't have a ray or anything coming from outer space which is going to be accurate by the time it gets here, by the time it hits all the meteorites, and refractions, and all the impurities in the air, but yes, it's pretty good. You hear the waves, you're too close to the shore,

10:30 that's the old sailor's motto.

You must be pretty pleased that that work which was important for its time, has had a lasting effect?

The Institute of Surveyors Darwin section, all the surveyors in that region,

11:00 got together, and sponsored putting a memorial plaque behind the cenotaph in Darwin, along with other memorial plaques for air force units, and so forth, and Spitfire units, and so forth. We've got one there now, sponsored by them, in commemoration, and commendation to the survey units that did the work around Darwin

11:30 of which has now become the basics for their survey work, actually. That was great, I've got some photos addressing the audience during which they dedicated the plaque last year actually. They asked me would I come up and say a few words. It wasn't even advertised, about eighty people turned up.

12:00 It's mainly Darwin people that appreciated the maps and so forth. The president of the Institute, he was there, and shouted us for lunch. As you said, it is very – and all the chaps that are still alive, they appreciated the fact that I went up and got photos and showed them at the reunion, that the work that we had done had been appreciated by. everybody.

12:30 The Darwin people, and so forth. Actually, their town is laid out using our basic work. No, that is quite good.

How well did you get to know the night sky?

Oh, I didn't finish that sentence actually. I reckon I actually identified about forty to fifty constellations, and give the order of magnitude for at least twenty of them, in running down, alpha, beta, gamma, delta, epsilon,

13:00 which was the smallest one. We never used alpha or beta, if we could avoid it, they were too bright. You couldn't split them with your cross hairs on your light, because any error that you made up there was an error on the longitude. So you tried to get hold of about delta, that was the easiest one to do on the constellation.

13:30 I used to know them all, I can still name them. I look out the sky here. In fact I brought a planisphere just the other day, just to refresh my memory about some of them, a bit of nostalgic foolishness I suppose. The duplication you see in the stars is actually caused by the refraction you see. you think you're seeing two, but you're not,

14:00 you're only see one. The constellations. Andromeda, the Seven Sisters as they're called, there's actually about thirty two of them, we can only see six, we can't even see the seventh, but there are actually thirty two in that group of stars. I admire the sky, I still think it's beautiful.

14:30 The old saying, the diamond studded sky, it's the truest words that's ever written, they just look like diamonds glistening in the heavens. And the course of the stars was fascinating to all of us, rising in the east, they look as though they're moving, and the point was to convince people, when I was teaching, was to convince them that they're not moving at all, it's you're moving,

15:00 you're rotating from west, to east, and you're going into the stars. as they're coming up from the east, you're actually rotating into them, and so forth. That's an interesting business, and this is where the geography came in good form. The mapping. The shape of the Earth comes into it too, because when we were drawing the maps, as you go from the equator to the poles,

15:30 it flattens out. It's an oblate spheroid, that's the true definition of the Earth. Of course, that alters the distance between the bars of latitude, not longitude, latitude, because as you get near the poles, you're getting into the flattening part about it. I think I'm right, it gets closer, the bars of latitude get closer as you get down to the poles, and of course, there is no.

16:00 We're unfortunate in the Southern Hemisphere, we have no polar star, whereas in the Northern Hemisphere, they've got the North Polar star, which is over the. Then of course you've got the two poles, you've got the true pole, and you've got the magnetic pole. The magnetic pole is not the same as the north pole, it's a separate point away from it, and that is caused by the – in the earth body itself.

16:30 So you have the two separate poles. but we were only interested in the southern stars. We did get some northern stars when we were up in – we were only twelve degrees from the equator, eleven degrees Cape Farewell was, up in Northern Australia, so we were getting some of the northern stars, which was quite useful, because over in that area they were much easier to see, in that particular time.

17:00 **I'm just wondering what you enjoyed most about that work?**

To be quite honest, I enjoyed all of it. It was challenging, it was actually informative, if you like to use the word, and the more you did, the more you learnt about the heavens, and the work, and so forth.

17:30 Everything had to be accurate. When doing chaining, we used to work to a third degree of accuracy, a second degree of accuracy, and a first degree. Third degree is when you were just doing a quick one, an error of say, one in. I don't know whether I'm right about these, but let's use these for an example. There would be

18:00 one in say twenty thousand, that would be one yard out in twenty thousand yards, or one mile. Or you could have second degree, which would be only one in say fifty thousand, and then you had first degree accuracy, which only allowed you one degree in a hundred thousand. They're only examples. I know the invar tape that we were using

18:30 only had an error of one in five noughts, point five nought six, so that's getting pretty accurate. They were very, very treasured items, invar tapes, you had to be very careful the way you handled them, because they were what you used for the most accurate traversing from one point to the other. The geodetic survey, which I did originally, they were observing from one peak.

19:00 which started from one mile traverse over in South Australia, and that was done as accurately as they could possibly do it, from A, to B, and then with the odd lights, they would take sightings from each of that mile, up onto the peaks in the surrounding countryside, which were showing generally a beacon which you see erected.

19:30 We used to use bullets in the ground to mark the spot in the concrete, or they used a light, or they used a helio. now helios [heliograph: signalling apparatus reflecting sunlight] were going back to the north west frontier stories now, where they used helios for signalling, up on the north west frontier and it's amazing how accurate they were. We used to use them up in the Territory, to actually show from one spot to another, sixty or seventy miles we could be, and you'd see one of those lights anything up to.

20:00 well, seventy miles without any problem at all, the actual hellion. The hellion was only a four inch mirror, it had a little dot in the middle of it, which you used to line it up with the sighting, it was on a tripod, you used to set it up. show it, if you had a somebody. Barometer. Comps you were using, and so forth, and then you have like a Morse code one on it,

20:30 and you'd go like that, and it used to change the light, and you could send. We all had to know Morse code, so we could signal with either hellions or with signal lamps. If you done any night work, you used signal lamps, daytime, we just used hellions. On top of all that of course, when you got into areas. you see, that country up there was all made of table top mountains, and these table top mountains were the biggest nuisance that we had,

21:00 because you couldn't see, you were looking out over the table top and it was all the same level. You had to get some point onto the edge of it, where you wanted to see to, in order to sight down into the valleys, or further on, if you wanted to use them at all. But of course, the other problem that we had, the planes when they flew along the coast, particularly

21:30 when they cross the estuaries. now the estuary on Victoria river would be about two miles wide, or wider. Of course, your photos weren't covering two miles, the vertical would only cover probably half a mile, and then you had the oblique, but it still didn't cover the whole of the estuary that you were dealing with up there, and Hanson Bay was another one, where you had the Daly river coming up,

22:00 and you would go from one point of the bay across to another, across there you've only got waves, unfortunately, the waves don't keep still. When the next photo came along. see, they were going through the triametrical camera, and they were taking the three photos, the vertical. certain. I've forgotten the speed, they were going through the camera, the plane was flying probably down as low as a hundred miles an hour.

22:30 I don't think they ever went any slower, but for some of them, when they were dealing with difficult situations. of course, they were using Mosquitoes [de Havilland Mosquito Bomber / reconnaissance plane], and they were going at two hundred and fifty, and they were taking photos, so the photos were covering a large area, often a rather doubtful definition underneath, but still, you had to make use of. sometimes when we'd get back to camp, if the weather was dirty,

23:00 it was getting towards the wet season, we'd all go in and do computers, start computing the latitudes and longitudes, all these north, south. or we'd go into the drafting section and start helping them draw the maps and identifying different features. You became a sort of person for all different jobs, and we were all involved in it, but there was a base camp group who were confined to the drafting hut,

23:30 or to the computing section. the sergeant in charge of them, the mapping section and so forth, then we had the camp running itself, the cooks and so forth, and the transport, was run by a sergeant, and he looked after the supplies and everything else, and the camp was looked after. And this chap, Sergeant Piggott, he enjoyed being the camp supervisor,

24:00 and he used to supervise all the clearing up, and everything else. You can put this in, it's funny, he had the funny situation, he used to go down to the camp, transport, he was a driver himself, he used to go down there, get a bucket. and get a drum of kerosene, and go to the toilets, which were all just the five, six, or seven holes,

24:30 the pits, and he would tip it into the pit and so forth, and as he went, he would light a thing with a match, and he would throw it into the pit, and it would burn off everything in the toilet down there, and of course, Piggott went down there, he picks up the drum. (UNCLEAR). as he's been doing each day, up he goes, and puts it in, and so forth. Goes in,

25:00 fortunately for him, he put it in the last. threw the wafer into the last hole. of course, he put in petrol. It blew the whole thing to smithereens, I wasn't in camp. They tell me it was the biggest mess that you can ever believe. Of course, poor old Captain Tate was telling the others, "I don't know what I'm going to tell the Pioneers, because they've got to come out and dig me another one." Everything then became a key point, everything that happened in the camp

25:30 before, and after Piggott blew up the toilet. It was three months before, or the six months afterwards, that was the key point for everybody, that was a milestone in the life of the base camp. They had to build our own drafting hut too, there wasn't one there. They had to build that themselves, it was all done with the opening up shovels, and so forth. I wasn't in camp, I was out in the field all the time.

26:00 **What would you do if there was time for recreation?**

There wasn't any recreation, we worked seven days a week, fifty two weeks of the year. There was no such thing as Sundays.

No leave?

No leave, I came down to see my wife, that time, I didn't class that as leave. That was bit of a torrid time, no, no leave at all.

26:30 **You mentioned before how someone cracked up.**

They did, three went troppo [mad]. I went down with Captain Tate to visit one chap down at the ward in Katherine. It was absolutely pathetic, to see this chap that I know, up in New South Wales, had gone up there with, Corporal Sharp was his name, he then got sent south, and he recovered.

27:00 He was one of the better ones actually, we caught him early enough, in order to go down. Captain Tate said, "No, get him down there for treatment straight away," he never came back to the unit though, he went down south. I don't know what happened to him to tell you the truth, I haven't seen him at any reunions.

How would that sort of display itself in the field. when someone was going troppo. ?

27:30 Unreliable. raving on about home, and going to walk home. That was the biggest worry that you had with him, Jack Sharp, we caught him walking out of camp one night, that was the end of that, we couldn't allow that anymore. The unit had to find him, as it happened, we caught him getting out. Somebody at the Q-Store [Quartermasters Store - military supply store], which was on the road out, they said,

28:00 "Oh, Jack Sharp's taking a walk up the road," they let him go, they thought he would just go up the road, and come back, but he didn't. I wasn't there, they said they just followed him out, up the road, and he was heading off down South road. He had a long way to go, it was a thousand miles, but we laugh about it. They actually caught up with him, and. Captain said, "Tomorrow we'll take him down to the base hospital

28:30 at Katherine, and have him treated," which they did do, which was a good thing. He was one, we had a couple of others, they'd have minor attacks too. They'd get over to the hospital, the VAD [voluntary aid detachment], over at Adelaide river itself, the AGH [Australian General Hospital] there, or the other one was up in Darwin itself, and that's where my brother went to, he went to the one up in Darwin.

29:00 That was where Pat Bradman – was up there with a bullet through his thigh, and they reckoned he was a deserter. The matron accused him of desertion. He said, "Who's going to desert? Where are you going to go if you do desert?"

For you, what was the most demanding or challenging part of the job, of your time up there?

29:30 The most challenging? I'm saying this now, and I'm meaning it, the most challenging part was all the time. I don't think there was a moment when you were outside of base camp, that wasn't a challenge. The whole of the responsibility for every trip that was made came back to the NCO in charge. He was only a corporal, he was only a sergeant, or there was WO [warrant officer], WO McMahon, who was a very good man.

30:00 But the other WO that we had there, was absolutely useless, never ever give them the job of going out, he only lasted six months. they sent him back to headquarters, I gather they sent him back. He wasn't there when I came back one trip after I'd been out. he was one of the snags amongst the WO's. He was one of the most irresponsible.

30:30 On one particular job we did, we went up a river, and I was in a truck, he was in another truck, he was WO, he was senior to me, and I said to the lieut [lieutenant] that was there, I said, "Who's in charge of this party?" He said, "You are, they're your men, they're your party," I said, "What about this WO?" He said, "Oh, he's going along for the ride," I said, "Well, does he know that?" He said, "He should know."

31:00 Before we even got started, he said to. my driver was Hoffmyer, and I said to Hoffy, "What do you reckon?" He said, "Oh, we'll go up the creek bed," we set off up the creek bed. The next minute we see this WO that I'm not naming, up on top of the river bank, going along the top, and Hoffy said, "He won't a hundred metres." I said, "I know that, you can't tell him," I said, "I told him to follow you

31:30 along the creek bed," I said, "You pre-pave the way," he said, "No, he's just ordered Jim to go along the top," I said, "He can't get through the. " All the tributaries that were coming in, they were all V-shaped, see, whereas as the main one was a U-shaped one with a worn bed, and reasonably dry, bit of water didn't worry us very much, but every time he got to a tributary, he had to go up the tributary to find a place to cross.

32:00 Of course, we were waiting for him all the time. Of course, Hoffy was getting mad having to wait, He said to Jim, "Don't go along. " he said, "He's telling me I have to go up." Anyhow, eventually he got up there, and he got stuck, and we had to go up and get him out. I said to – "I think you better follow us, down in bottom." Anyhow, he reluctantly did, but that was only the start of it.

32:30 The first night we did the observations, we were doing the observations and so forth, and my booker was Jack Fitzpatrick, an excellent booker and mathematician and everything else, and very, very good. He should have been a sergeant, but anyhow, he wasn't. After we'd done it this way, he said, "I'll do a set of observations, too, just to check up." He did a set of observations, and Fitz, who had been with me the whole time, a couple of years,

33:00 he said to me, "Hunty? They're absolutely bloody useless," I said, "Are they?" He said, "Yes," I said, "I couldn't say anything," I said, "How are mine?" He'd done a rough one on it and he said, "They're okay,

they'll do." For Fitz to say that, that was giving it the okay, when he said, "That'll do," because he knew through to the actual second whether it was right or not. But anyhow.

33:30 This particular night we had finished and so forth, and anyhow, you had to sign your observations. You did your observations in your field book, then you signed it, and you went over and signed the bookers work too. That was on your work that he'd done, so you signed it as the observer. Anyhow, when it came to the end, Fitz says to me,

34:00 "What about the others?" I said, "I'm not signing them," not in his innocence, he knew if he'd screwed up, because he had worked for the Forestry Commission before, and been on his own out in the bush for years, he'd been up there. He took them over to the WO, and said, "You've got to sign these observations," he said, "I'm not signing them," he said, "This is Hunty's party," he said, "Well, Hunty said he's not signing them," he said, "Did he?" He said, "No."

34:30 So he came over to me then. I sort of heard the – he said, "Sign these observations," I said, "No, I'm not signing them," I said, "They're your observations. I don't know whether they're good, bad, or indifferent. I don't care," I said, "I've done my observations, and I'm happy with them, Fitz is happy with them," I said, "If he's happy with yours, okay, you sign them." He said, "No, I'm not signing them," I said, "Well, I'm not, that is all there is about it." He said, "I'll put you on a charge sheet for disobedience."

35:00 I said, "I hope that you do." He said, "I'll report you to Captain Tate," I said, "I'm looking forward to it," because I was in with Captain Tate, I'd known him. Every time I came in I'd go up to see Captain Tate, and we'd have a chat about the trip, and any problems, any improvements, or anything that we wanted. He'd do this with Jack McMahon, the WO, too, because we were the original workers in observation. I said, "I'd be quite happy to see the captain."

35:30 He said, "No, he'll charge you for disobedience out in the field," I said, "Okay, you do that," I said, "But I'm not signing your observations, you can do what you like," and I told him a few other things too, we were out in the bush, away from everyone else, so there were no witnesses. I said, "That's the end of the story," I said, "You can do what you like with them." Anyhow, he went back, and he reported me to the WO,

36:00 at Tennant Creek, he said, "He refused to sign them," and so on, and Noonan said to me, he was the lieutenant, he said, "What do you reckon?" I said, "I'm not signing them. I don't know what they're like, I'm not making any opinion about them at all." I said, "They're not my observations. You know as well as I do that it is the observer who signs the observations full stop." He said, "That's correct," I said, "That's all I want to hear," It was the end of the story as far as I'm concerned, anyhow, I never heard any more about it, he wasn't game to report it.

36:30 **When you were working from seven to one thirty in the morning with the astro, what about during the day? You had to get up at the crack of dawn because of the heat, what did you do during the day?**

After we got it, we had to do this traverse for a mile, and that often included clearing.

37:00 Rarely did you get a distance through the bush, where you could go for half a mile, without having to clear trees and bushes and scrub in order to sight. You see, you had to sight along your traverse to get the other end, and you had the chain along it, and that always took up at least a full day. The first day after we'd done observations, we generally rested ourselves, because we just had to, we had just come off the boat, got ashore,

37:30 we had carted our gear up. It's not flat out there, along that north west coast and Arnhem Land, they're actually a hundred and fifty feet high, the actual cliff faces, where the shore ends, where the waves end, and we had to cart our gear up the top each time, and so forth. By the time we'd done that, we were ready for bed. Often I tried to get a set of observations in the first night, because you didn't know whether the second night.

38:00 This was the other problem, if it was cloudy, you might only see one or two stars, and you had to pick out the stars which you were using the night before preferably, because it was better to have two sets of observations on one star, then to have a different set of stars each night, because it gave you a check on whether your first night's observations and timing and everything was correct, and it helped the computers to actually do it. If you couldn't recognise the stars,

38:30 you didn't actually lie down and cry, although you might have wanted to. Because if you got the observations done, you take it back to the computers, they then sent those by telegraph down to Melbourne, to the observatory, and the observatory would then send back what the stars were, from the readings we were giving. We didn't know what they were, we didn't have any readings on them, we only had our own ones that we took. They would send back, and give the computers the name of the star, and once they got the name of the star

39:00 they were able to then work out the latitude and longitude from the known stars, and so forth, and they had been worked in conjunction with down here. When we finished the observations, the draftsmen had done their map, and located the places, taken all the material off the photos, and put it onto the perspex sheets, and then they were then sent down. There were either dye lines made for sun shots, sun prints, or they were sent down to Bendigo.

39:30 Bendigo was where the maps were printed. That was the cartographic centre, was Bendigo, and they printed all the maps that were done for the army in those days. They did all the military maps there, and the big mistake they made. When the war ended, and later on afterwards, they switched to the metric system, the order went out to everybody, down to the cartographic.

40:00 The sergeant down there told me the story, he said it broke his heart, when they got the order, they had to destroy all the Imperial measure maps, and they couldn't even get a set of maps to send to each of the capital cities. They burnt the lot, he said that was the tragedy, it should never have happened. They were trying to get maps that people had saved, in order to make copies off, in order to send six copies to each capital city centre,

40:30 so they would have a permanent record of the military maps in the Imperial scale. They're still available, but they're not used. They converted the lot to metric, and now all the maps are in metric. You don't have inch to the mile, you have so many centimetres to the metre, that's how they're all worked out now.

41:00 **So how did your health fare, post that experience?**

I came back with stomach troubles, and that was what they told me. it was the nerves, and the stress, and strain. As I said, I was very crook, very ill, and I reported it when I was being demobbed. They said, "Do you want to go to hospital?" I said, "Yes," they said, "You'll have to wait because

41:30 the prisoners of war are all coming back," I said, "Well, I think their need is greater than mine, I'm still alive." Fortunately, I struck a war-time doctor down at Frankston. I couldn't get a house of course after the war, they were all taken up by the people who were still doing war work in the capital cities, and they brought all the houses up for nothing. A lot of the soldiers, and the soldiers wives' sold their houses to get money, because we were only paid a pittance.

INTERVIEW ENDS