

# Australians at War Film Archive

## Ernest Dunkley (Ern) - Transcript of interview

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### Tape 1

- 00:53 **Thanks for talking to us, Ern. Perhaps if we could just start with a summary of, you know just where you were born**
- 01:00 **and when?**
- Oh yeh, right. Yeh, well I was born at Parramatta, New South Wales in 1920. Grew up, actually my entire pre-war life was in Parramatta too. Went to the local public or infant school primary school, intermediate high school and did three months in the high school.
- Brothers and sisters?**
- Yeah, brother, one brother and two sisters. Mum and Dad had the local general store,
- 01:30 you know what used to be the corner shop, which there aren't many around these days. Had three months at the high school and then got meself a job and that was in May 1934 at the height of the Depression and getting a job was a very important thing to do, to help the family along a bit. I know I worked six days a week for 10 hours a day for 25 bob a week. Anyway, it was, I was the door swinger at the Embassy Theatre in Castlereagh Street when it first
- 02:00 opened. Only there a few months and got meself a job at the Sydney City Council Electricity Department. That was before the County Council was formed, which dates me a bit and I was employed as a junior messenger and you had to get a job as a junior clerk within six months or they put you out on the streets with a broom. They called it sparrow starving, so I cracked the
- 02:30 clerk's job in about five and a half months with a great deal of sweat around me and was in their clerical administrative sort of jobs till the war came along.
- Was your dad in the First World War?**
- No he wasn't, no.
- When did you enlist?**
- Sorry?
- When did you enlist?**
- Well, I went into the army in strangely enough, into an anti-aircraft unit search light unit
- 03:00 the month the war broke out or the month after I think it oh, September, October anyway '39 but that was in what they call the chocos, the militia and you were in camp for two months and out for a month or something like that. It was, oh it was difficult to get used to the fact that a) we were in a war and b) we were doing anything about it too, so after about 18 months or less than that, no early '41 I decided it wasn't for me and just went in and joined
- 03:30 the air force. I had to get a clearance from the search light bloke and when I went up there to the barrack room the CO stood me up on the platform and said, "This is what we don't want in the anti-aircraft bloke, a fellow who will run out on us and join another service and blah, blah, blah." Anyway, I just wore that hoping I would get lost while he was talking about it but then a short while after I got called up for the -
- 04:00 quite a while after we had to do maths and stuff at night school for a couple of months waiting to be called up and then I was called up about August '41, I think. Went into Bradfield, what'd they call it No 2 Initial Training School to learn Morse code and polish up on your maths and anything that you could do, anything else that you could do in the class room. We were there about three months and I went
- 04:30 to Narromine Tiger Moth training Elementary Flying School, I was there for about three months and

then went to Wagga to the Service Flying Training School in Wirraways but they split our course there in two and half of us went to Uranquinty when that was just opened. The other half went to Deniliquin. That was about another three months, so by the middle of '42 we were ready to be

05:00 posted somewhere and I was commissioned off course by the way. I think they just dragged names out of a hat and gave about one third of your commissions and the other two thirds weren't, so it was a bit of a lucky dip but I

**As a flying officer?**

Pilot officer.

**Pilot officer?**

Yeh, the lowest commissioned rank. Anyway, went to England then and

**When did you leave for England?**

When I left for England? July '42, the day me twins were born.

05:30 I had to jump the bus at Crows Nest go down and see my wife and the new born kids in the Mater Hospital and then get a bus down - just caught the bloody Melbourne Express to go to get there.

**Had you been married before you enlisted?**

No. In between, let me see in between the initial training. Married in November '42 between initial training at Bradfield and Tiger Moth training at Narromine, yeh. Anyhow, we

06:00 we joined the Empire Star in Mel, no we joined the Waipawa in Melbourne and went round the bottom of Tassie cause the Japs were s'posed to be or German U-boats, not U-boats, raiders and that were supposed to be around, so we went the bottom of Tassie to Auckland. The boat broke down, they took us by train to Wellington by boat down to Christchurch, had a couple of days there and joined the Empire Star then. Empire Star was later lost in the landings at North Africa but

06:30 we went from there through the Panama Canal and got to England about, oh about the end of August '42. Righto from then, yeh

**How long did you do some, go into initial more training there or?**

Oh yeah, well they had too many aircrews, so they had to find something to do. They caught, they sent us to what the Poms called an Advanced Flying Unit, which was

07:00 on something faster than the Wirraway but not as fast as the things gonna fly in action and I've did a, oh a few hours on a thing called a Miles Master. Quite a nice little aircraft, a bit heavier, a bit faster and a few more guns than it would have been an operational aircraft but it wasn't but we had, I don't know a couple of months on that then went to an Operational Training Unit on Mustang 1s at Hawarden near

07:30 Chester in Cheshire just in Northern Wales. We had a couple of months on that learning how to fly an operational aircraft then got posted to the squadron. Went to 4 Squadron RAF, which was on army cooperation work or it's supposed to be under army cooperation work but there being at 1942 there was no army to cooperate with, so we just did, oh well photographic runs up and down the coast

08:00 right from France away up to Holland trying to tell the Germans where we weren't landing you know, take photographs of everywhere and they don't know where and also did a bit of train busting. Go into France or wherever and shoot up whatever trains you could find and that squadron was disbanded at the end of '43. Tony Tuck and myself had done training all the way through together. He's still a mate by the

08:30 way lives in Bowral see him every Anzac Day and other times and we wrote to the COs [Commanding Officer] of three Australian squadrons tell 'em we were unemployed pilots lookin' for a job. One bloke said, "Well you know, put your application through the usual channels and I'll deal with it." And the other fellow said, "Oh well, one bloke didn't reply to us at all." and Bob Iredale, who was CO of 464 Australian Squadron rang us up and said "Well

09:00 look, I've told your CO down there you're finishing up on Frid'y night, have the weekend in London and report to me up here on Mond'y morning, I'll fix the paper work" and that's how we got to 464. Only single engine experience by the way. The Mosquitos were twins, so we had to be taught how to fly them couple of hours in an Air Speed Oxford. Forget how many hours in a Mosquito but probably eight or 10 or something like that dual control Mosquito - not many of them around. We went solo in the Mosquito, we found a navigator or

09:30 navigators who were unemployed as well and then went on our first operations with Mozzies. I only did 10 operations in Mustangs by the way in the nearly a year I was on 4 Squadron. Well I developed a glandular fever and had three months off work and that was the busiest three months that they had, so hence only 10 ops in about 11 months I think it was, yeah. Anyhow, let me see the Mosquito work

10:00 was lasted then from about Christmas '43 to the end of the war. Then about 18 months and that was mostly night work: intruders around enemy airfields while the heavy bombers were attacking at night

and our job was to get around the night fighter aerodromes and keep 'em quiet. If those showed any signs of movement at all we were

10:30 stuck with the job of trying to belt 'em up or shoot 'em or alternatively if you found the airport aerodrome but no action, just bomb the intersection of the runways if they had such a thing.

**This was are there any other pilots except Australians in this squadron?**

Oh yeah, I'd say that gee I'm getting a bit rough here but they're probably half were about, half were Aussies maybe a bit more but gee it was

11:00 a real bloomin' legion of nations job. We had I can recall a, one Jamaican bloke, one Norwegian. He was a navigator but he and he was a lieutenant in the Norwegian Navy. We had two Yanks in their own uniforms but they flew with the Australian squadron and then oh some Kiwis, some Poms and they made up the

11:30 non Australian lot. I'd say half to two thirds were Australian. I'd have to have a look at a photograph, which I haven't got at the moment but it's something like that.

**Where was that based out of again?**

When we joined it was Hunsdon in oh northeast of London. I s'pose it'd be either Essex or Norfolk.

**And you were with the squadron till the end of the war. Where were you, was it still there at the end of the war?**

Sorry?

**Were you still at based there at the end of the war?**

12:00 No. We moved from Hunsdon down to near London Gravesend in Kent only 20 mile from London too by the way. Five minutes down to the Railway Station 20 minutes and you're in town it was great and we were there until just after D day when the Germans started operating those V1 buzz bombs and because they were all aimed at London and we were in the firing line they reckoned that it'd be better off with,

12:30 the air force'd be better off if they moved us, so we moved down to Thorney Island near Portsmouth and we spent say about six months there, I s'pose something like that and that was a good base too. It was right on the coast and only a channel crossing to get to France where most of the action was at the time.

**Did you support the D-day landings?**

Oh yeah. We were there, we were briefed about that a day or so before

13:00 and the base was closed too. Nobody allowed out to the booze or anything to spread the word and on D-day itself we had a maximum effort of aircraft going to just behind the beachhead to stop German reinforcements coming up. I remember on the way back on D-day on the morning it was the 5th, the 6th, the night of the 5th and

13:30 the morning of the 6th June and going on the way over of course we saw nothin' but it was dreadful weather too. On the way back I was below cloud just long enough to see this huge armada of ships underneath us but the cloud was getting down and down and down, so we decided to go up through it and we broke cloud at about, oh I don't know how many thousand feet but here am I going this way from France back to England and Fortress is going this way only about 100 feet above us and God knows how many of 'em but

14:00 I got the shock of me life to see these bloody things so close and the next day, very next day I think it was we got back from our first, from our normal op and usually our doctor, who was Vern Odlam from Adelaide, he used to be in charge of the rum issue, which was all very, very popular thing. We, you got back he'd give you a double OP [over proof] rum and you'd,

14:30 what you could throw in your cup of coffee and really enjoyed and when we got back from the second on the second night Oddie was around there but there was no rum and coffee and I said, "Hey, where's me where's me little hand out?" He said, "Oh, you'll get it in a few hours mate." He said, "They're arming and refuelling your aircraft. As soon as they're finished that you're off again, do the same job as you did before, when you come back, I'll have something for ya".

**We'll come back and discuss that**

15:00 **in more detail I think but so main general operations up till the end of the war after the D-day landings?**

Oh yes, support of the army. The squadron was in 464 Squadron with 21 RAF [Royal Air Force] and 487 New Zealand made up 140 Wing of 2 Group Tactical Air Force. There were four wings in it, which made about 12 squadrons and they'd all sorts of aircrafts Bostons and what's a name but they were

15:30 mainly Mosquitos and Basil Embry was Air Vice Marshall Air Officer Commanding this, a very smart bloke who'd been a prisoner of war himself and when he escaped, he killed a couple of Huns, so he

wasn't allowed to fly ops anymore but he used to come out with us in a wing commander's battle dress and he was known as wing commander Smith. He did a lot of operations with us especially the special ones in

16:00 like special daylight raids that were on just single houses or single buildings in a built up area and Basil came to most of those. He survived the war and came out to Australia and settled on a little sheep farm in Western Australia. Matter of fact, I wrote to him and got a phone call from him only a few weeks before he died and he was a bloke with a terrific memory though too with

16:30 12 Squadron say underneath, I don't know how he did this but whenever he came to our place for a de-brief, our squadron for a de-briefing and you walk into the OP [operational] room and he'd say, "Oh, how are you Dunkley?" Who'd you go and knew everybody by name and

**Why wasn't he allowed to fly again?**

Well, he was a wanted man over there and as an air vice mashall he would have had a lot of knowledge that our side would have liked the opposition

17:00 to have and so he was he was really warned off flying for that reason but he didn't ask anybody, he just went.

**And he'd, you said he'd killed a couple of people escaping or?**

Yeah, he killed a couple of blokes when he was escaping but being a POW after being shot down early in the war.

**Interesting. Anyway, we'll, we can come back talk about him also later. Do you remember the day the war ended?**

Oh yeah. Yeah matter of fact I'd just finished me second tour and

17:30 I was given a weeks' leave down on the Riviera, the French Riviera and oh not far from Monte Carlo, Cannes. The Yanks of course had the waterfront hotels and we were one street back naturally enough but I was there with a Canadian, a French Canadian which was very handy too seeing as though we were in France and we had a week down there. Oh lovely holiday in May too with summer just coming on or spring

18:00 just coming on. It was all very nice. Went back to Brussels Melsbroek where we were. Oh I'm a bit ahead of me story. From Thorney Island we went over to France about January '45 from memory and we were at a place called Rosieres en Santerres not far from Amiens and we were there for a couple of months and then went up to Brussels Melsbroek aerodrome at Brussels which was the, no it was a German air force base. There were two airports

18:30 there and Melsbroek had been built by the Germans. It was, looked like farm with houses all over the place but the runways were quite distinguishable but again that was a very nice place to be cause the tram stop was about 200 yards walk from our mess and again you're a quarter an hour on the tram into Brussels city, which was a pretty nice place to be just after the or towards the end of the war.

19:00 **After you, after the war how long was the squadron, was it disbanded at that time or did it keep going or?**

Kept going until, well I finished up just a couple of days after VE [Victory in Europe] Day and got, was posted back to England and to wait for a ship back home but the Squadron went on too, they stayed at Rosier at Brussels but they went on until September '45 when they were disbanded

19:30 I think according to the books that I've read.

**How long did you stay in England before you were sent home?**

Oh only a few weeks. Matter of fact I was, I got a posting to the Air Accidents Investigation Committee and I didn't like the idea of that after three years away and I'd got to the CO of the of the place where we were at Brighton, oh south coast somewhere yeah I think it was Brighton and said well for you know, the

20:00 oh the CO of the place was Lex Rentell who became general manager of the Australia Hotel just after the war and I put my case to him of having done a couple of tours over there and been there three years, I'd like to go home and only seen me kids for five minutes you know and they'll be three years old now and gave him a sob story anyway and he got me on the next boat home. Got home about oh middle of '45 July or something like that.

**The war was still on in Japan at the time?**

War was still on in Japan,

20:30 yeah. Matter of fact I came home on the same boat as a fellow named Peter Lake who's been through this interview series in Melbourne recently and we were going to crew up out here and join an Australian squadron up north somewhere but the war finished and in August before we could get organised to get posted anywhere, so I just hung around then until for a few weeks until I got, was

demobbed.

21:00 **And after that briefly?**

Went back to me job with the Sydney County Council then pushing a pen in the Bunnerong Power Station I think for in the first place then Pyrmont Power Station. Head office for a while, fact stayed in head office for the rest of my time and retired in 1980, so that was a 44 years less the war service with the County Council.

21:30 **Any more children?**

No more kids, no well my first wife said "Well, that's enough for us". They're 60 now my twins. They'll be 61 in July and but our first, my first marriage broke up in 1964 and I was five years on me own and then I remarried again in 1968, hang on '63 to '68, yeah

22:00 five years.

**That's great.**

We were married for 30 just on 32 years when Pat died, my second wife died of Alzheimer's only three years ago, July.

**Thanks Ern, that's a very good summary.**

You're very welcome.

**We might go back to the beginning now. That will allow us to explore some of those things, we'll talk about some of those things in detail.**

Right.

**Can you talk a little bit about your early memories in Parramatta and you know sort of a,**

22:30 **your memories of your family life?**

Yep, oh well yeah, we grew up in Church Street, Parramatta actually, Church Street, Granville, we were only four houses from the boundary of Parramatta and Granville, and Parramatta was closer as a town and we went to Parramatta schools too so and so always considered ourselves as Parramatta people rather than Granville. Yeah the, all of us went to the local schools. My elder sister

23:00 was first captain of the Parramatta, well they used to call them Domestic Science School but they moved across the river to North Parramatta or northeast Parramatta and it was McArthur High School there and she was first skipper of that. She died a few years ago of cancer. Let me see oh

**Did you play a lot of sport?**

Sorry?

**You were playing a lot of sport?**

Oh yeah, I was just going to touch on that as a matter of fact. Naturally enough, joined the local or one of the local, many local

23:30 junior cricket teams and Parramatta Rugby Union for which I never starred. The highest grade I got was, I think I played one grade reserve grade, one game reserve grade. I was only about 19 at the time and not that quick and not that heavy either, so there was no real job for me, I was just making up the number of the team. In the cricket thing I could never bat much but could bowl a bit. Matter of fact we started

24:00 a team in the county council pre-war called the County Council Juniors. I've got a photo of it here somewhere too and I met two of the blokes only last week for Christmas from that too. That was about 1936, 1937 or so. Not for Christmas for lunch, so I played a bit of cricket both at Parramatta and at Moore Park in Sydney and in fact one day that we were, it was mentioned last week at lunch was Black Friday,

24:30 the 13 January 1939, bushfire day and we played a game in the morning at Moore Park and I'd rid my motorbike in to play it and everything was so hot that I got a bloomin' puncture on the way back and you don't carry a spare wheel on a motor bike, I had to fix it in the middle of Parramatta, well not in the middle but on the footpath in Parramatta Road, get home and have a quick lunch and went down to play in Parramatta Park in the afternoon. And I remember me, my mother saying "You were silly enough to go

25:00 and play this morning in the heat, it's worse this afternoon, why don't you give it away?" And I said something just as silly by saying, "Well you know, the blokes will be depending on me." That was only talk because I was only an ordinary cricketer but anyway I went out and played, was absolutely stuffed by the end of the day as you can well imagine too. I was only 19, oh not quite 19.

**What was, how did your family fair during the Depression, your dad and the shop business and?**

Not very well.

25:30 My father was a wholesale grocery traveller when the war came. He was quite a bit older than Mum too and he got the bullet, he got a week's notice or something or a week's pay. No such things as redundancies or anything in those days and he was out of a job.

**Who was he working for?**

He was working for a grocery firm in Parramatta, ah name it was Hendersons, Andersons or Hendersons,

26:00 Hendersons, I think. Anyway, when he got the sack we had no other income. We owned our own home, so I think they borrowed a bit from the bank, brought the local corner store and brought the goodwill of it and started earning bread and butter that way and they were in that until, well until my father died.

**Did you work in the corner store?**

No, I used to, I had me motorbike. I used to deliver grocery orders

26:30 on when, whenever I could. I was usually trying to dodge 'em because it was a Saturday when the orders had to be delivered usually but if I couldn't deliver 'em because I was playing cricket or footy as soon as I got home, the old man would get me by the collar and say "Half a dozen orders to go, they're all down there waiting for you mate, so away you go" and it'd oh that would only take an hour or so but it was my small, not very

27:00 voluntary contribution to the household income at the time.

**Was it common for people to have adolescents to have a motorbike in those days?**

Oh yeah I think so, yeah it was, I remember I had to buy it on terms, I didn't have the cash for it but oh there were a lot a lot of fellers had bikes.

**What sort of bike was it?**

It was a Triumph Tiger 90 - go like the clappers for those days. It was a good bike, oh the first one I had was a

27:30 Royal Enfield two and a half horse power hand change side valve. Oh God, it'd be battling to get up a 10-degree hill.

**How old were you when you got that?**

Oh I was 18 when I got that and 19 when I got the Tiger. That only lasted a little while too 'cause I pranged that and broke me hand and broke me bloomin' ankle and finished up in hospital. No more motorbike. Oh we just had it repaired and sold it.

**What subject did you enjoy most at school?**

28:00 Oh French I think, yeah quite surprisingly. I didn't get much of a pass in the intermediate. From memory it was oh only five pass subjects anyway: English, French, Maths two, Geography, something else.

**French is not, was that a standard subject in those days?**

French, oh yeah. So was Latin too. Matter of fact I got in the Latin class. What the hell for I'll never know

28:30 but in the Latin class, oh at the intermediate I was disqualified, that it was a bloke sitting you know just over there from me and he was a red hot Latin feller and he finished at, oh in about half the time and when he was shuffling his papers together and ready to go, I said, "Christ, finished already." And anyway the supervising teacher said, "Dunkley, you're talking in the exams, out." So I was out, so I finished up with only about

29:00 six subjects, failed in one of them, I forget what it was but passed the other five.

**Did you go on?**

No, well I was just going to say when we got to France during the war, I thought well, you know I was pretty good at French at school, I'll have a go at this. We went into one of these estaminet little bar things not a real pub but just a, what do you call it out 'ere, it doesn't matter anyway, a little bar and bowled up to the bar and

29:30 just had a beer or something like that then turned around and somebody next to me in the bar said, "Comment allez-vous?" Like they, like you'd learn in at school, how do you carry yourself is the way to talk to people and the whole of the bar just stood back on their heels and laughed their heads off and pointed at me and I said, "Well righto, well I'm all, I'm asking you is - how are you mate?" And he said, "Well that's what we say too, "Ca va", "How are you, how're you going?" That was a very quick lesson in

30:00 local French anyway.

**How did you come, become so interested in French at such an early age?**

Wouldn't have a clue. I think just well when I looked around the subjects I got this hankering for languages and that's how I went for Latin and French. Didn't like Latin so much although looking at back on it now, just about everywhere you see in medicine, in birds particularly the,

30:30 in the local birdo group, their scientific names are all in Latin and if you know what the Latin things mean you can see why the common name of a bird is such and such a thing. But I really wouldn't have a clue, it was just something that appealed.

**You got to choose your own subjects at that stage?**

Ah yes, yeah well you, it not entirely. Certain classes like, think the A and B classes were purely commercial.

31:00 You did business principles and bookkeeping and so on. The C class I forget what it was and we were in the D or E class with the, I think French was in several of the other classes but Latin was only in the D or E class of which I was part of. There was at Parramatta Intermediate High School 1933.

**Do you remember the earliest book you ever read?**

Not the, I

31:30 couldn't say it was the earliest but my brother gave me a book for a very early birthday, it was Henry Lawson's, On the Track and Over the Slip Rails, which was a lot of short stories and poems and things from memory. Haven't got it still but it was a lovely little thing and it engenders in one a spirit of the outback a bit, which I've never ever lost.

**Is that the book, that's the first book that ever really influenced you do you think?**

Yeh, yep.

32:00 **Did you read any other stories from the First World War or know of the First World War?**

Ah well, oh well the thing that was in the, there, the two boys magazines of the time were the Triumph and the Champion. You blokes are too young to remember those but there was a serial in that called the "War Hawks of Flanders" and these were the

32:30 airmen of the First World War and that pretty good stuff. I never missed me Triumph and Champion every week to have a read of those.

**How old were you when you were reading those?**

Oh probably, I don't know 10 to early teens.

**Did your dad buy you those or did you buy them yourself?**

I, oh they were probably gifts. I didn't have any money to buy books really.

**Didn't have pocket money?**

Well, very little.

33:00 I think I used to get sixpence for me bloomin' delivery of the grocery orders, it wasn't a lot but still sixpence could buy a bit at that at the time considering as I just mentioned 25 bob a week was me first wage.

**Did you have any real specific interest in those stories from those air stories from the First World War?**

Yeah, as a matter of fact I, they were very interesting things and to, I remember particularly

33:30 one was where a bloke got a VC [Victorian Cross]. I think it might have been a Mick Mannock. I know he'd been in the RAF who, with his mate had been doing some sort of a sortie over enemy lines and his mate got shot up and he had to land in no man's land and Mick Mannock landed next to him or near him, picked him up and gave him a knee double back home on the sittin' on his lap for which he got a VC. And then

34:00 others like, oh there's Billy Bishop and a number of the First World War blokes. McCuddin Ball, I'm reading about long before I joined the, well long before there was a war and that was pretty good stuff, yeah.

**Do you, were you interested in the infantry or were you particularly looking at stories from the air force at that time?**

No, the infantry, gee those stories were

34:30 horrible things. Like Gallipoli for starters and in the trenches in France and matter of fact some friends,

some relatives and friends came home rather badly scarred from that.

**Who were they, do you remember?**

Yeah, there was an Uncle Stan who enlisted at 16 enlisted and he came home a bit of a wreck.

35:00 And one of me cricketing mates and school boy mates had an uncle who lived with them and who'd been gassed and he, all he did was cough his head off for, oh all day and I s'pose half the night too. But whenever I was around at their place, which was not far from us in Parramatta, poor old Frank was, he was in a mess.

**Would, did you really associate that with the horrors of war at the time or did you?**

Oh God yeah, I did. Was, well it was the only reason it happened, so

35:30 yeah you think gawd why, you know, why?

**At, in those, what were the names of those comic books again, I?**

Triumph and Champion.

**In those comics were there stories of Gallipoli as well?**

Stories of?

**Gallipoli?**

No, I don't think there were no.

**Were they British comics or Australian?**

36:00 Triumph and Champion - English I think, yeah I think, wouldn't be sure.

**Did you hear many stories of Gallipoli at the time?**

No, not many but well, not at the time I was reading those comic books. Heard later from oh, not directly from people, I don't know if I knew anybody directly that was involved in Gallipoli but when stories started to come out, well I don't just don't remember, I

36:30 imagine they were well and truly there because that was 1915 and I'm talking about 1930 now, 15 years later so there would have had to have been a lot of stories about it but because I was, didn't know anybody directly involved in it, I didn't get much into the story business of Gallipoli. But when it did, it was just amazed at what the story was.

**When did you first hear about that?**

Oh, probably about

37:00 oh mid '30s when I would have been mid teens myself.

**Were you going to Anzac Day ceremonies?**

Oh yeh, ah when then?

**Yes.**

No, well hang on. Mum used to go into the, to the dawn service herself, Dad didn't go.

**Your mum? Why did your mum go into the dawn service?**

I think she just, she was English,

37:30 perhaps she felt that she should go, I don't know but I don't, Dad didn't go and we didn't go as kids either.

**Your mum was English?**

Yeah that's right.

**How did she meet your dad?**

Hey?

**How did she meet your dad?**

Mum came out here as on a, with a girlfriend on a holiday trip in 1910 or 11 and she

38:00 didn't go back at all. The girlfriend didn't either. They both got jobs in Sydney. I think they were in domestic service for a while and then they worked at David Jones or somewhere that for a while counter jumping. How she met Dad? I don't know, don't really know. I think, well I didn't know but Mum was married about that time about 1910 or 11, not long after she got here. Oh here's the reason why

- 38:30 she went to the dawn service too. Her first husband went to the World War I and left her with me brother Harold, brother Harold's me half brother and he didn't come back and so she was left with a very young child to bring up herself and single mums weren't very well supported in those days either. She
- 39:00 just worked her little butt off to keep him. Now Dad's first wife had died and how they got together I'm blessed if I know but they must have met up around Parramatta somewhere because Dad lived all his life in Granville and Parramatta and well where Mum worked or apart from in DJs [David Jones] and in service, domestic service at the time I wouldn't know but presumably
- 39:30 she was up that way too and they got together. Actually, Dad was a lot older than Mum. I always knew that but didn't realise till I started family history and my father was 25 years older than me mother and he was 56 when he sired me, so he was a pretty good colt or colt mightn't be the word but pretty good stallion.

**Did he want to go to the First World War,**

- 40:00 **is there any particular reason he didn't go?**

No, he didn't no, well he was born in 1864, that's a long time before he was 50 when the First World War started and he was 56 as I say when 1920 came along and I came along too.

**Did he have any strong opinions about the First World War?**

Did?

**Did he have, hold strong opinions about the First World War, do you know?**

Oh I think so yeah, it was always them and us the baddies and the goodies stuff.

**Did you grow up believing or thinking you were English**

- 40:30 **or Australian?**

Oh no, Australian yeah. Never thought I was English, although Mum used to have, get this stream of correspondence from her family in England who I met when I went over there too by the way but her father was a very old bloke at the time. He was in the Coldstream Guards in the olden days. Just a private or whatever they call them in the guards and I met one of her brothers as well and one of her sisters. We used to stay

- 41:00 with one of her sisters, Aunty Nell in Surrey for always a couple of days after me, out of my leaves, my various leaves. Never go over without calling in and saying good day and

**Was do you remember seeing an aeroplane for the first time?**

I wouldn't say for the first time but I just, I watched a re-run of Ron Randall in "Smithy" only last night when the bloody programs on telly get so crook that you just can't

- 41:30 wear 'em and I brought that at the archives in Canberra, the sound and film archive I think, Sound and Screen Australia [ScreenSound Australia National Screen and Sound Archive] now and it's a, oh it's a dreadful old bloody film but they showed the crowd at Mascot when Smithy landed there after his Pacific flight. I didn't pick meself out but I was there, I was eight years old or something and I was amongst them.

## Tape 2

- 00:34 **Can you just tell us about your memory of seeing Kingsford-Smith arrive in Sydney?**

Oh God yeah, well I was in the crowd that greeted him at Mascot, all grass at the time by the way and people just ran towards the bloomin' aircraft and I was amongst them and I thought Christ, you know if this thing ploughs into us or we keep on running, this is going to be a lot of people hurt. But

- 01:00 he stopped anyway and we just crowded around the aircraft, I can recall that. It's in seeing the thing circling for, before it landed too, oh lovely, lovely sight.

**How did you come to go out there?**

Oh interest, now who took me? I think Mum took me too, ah yeah I think my brother and myself were itching to get there and Mum probably reluctantly agreed although she was interested in

- 01:30 travel, well had to be interested in travel I s'pose come out here from England but I suspect that we must have probably pressured her enough to say, come on Mum, come on Mum please take us, you know, it's a, we wouldn't have said a big historic thing 'cause it wasn't at the time but it was just something of interest to us.

**Was it the biggest thing in your life up to that time?**

Oh probably yeah, well when was that, 1928 wasn't it, I think?

**Think so, I'm not sure.**

02:00 Yeah, probably was.

**Do you think it sparked the, your interest in flying?**

Did what?

**Did that make you want to go on to learn more about flying?**

It probably contributed, yeah. I followed every move of Bert Hinkler's too. I think he was one of the greatest you know, he was, well what was Bert Hinkler? He was a mechanic in World War I and an observer for somebody too but he didn't learn to fly 'til after the war but the things he did like when something

02:30 went sour with his engine, well he'd spend all bloody night fixing it, so he could take off the next morning and break his record and that. I've been to Bundaberg. He used to work at the foundry in Bundaberg, which is just over the river from the town and he landed in the street near the foundry and taxied down the bloody road to Mum's house, which is not there anymore. It's a part of a little shopping centre now but I've followed that route too of Hinkler's and

03:00 his original home. Like he lived in England for a long while and he built a house in South Hampton, double storey house and when the local council had given permission for that to be knocked off to put a, some sort of a development up, the people of Bundaberg took the hat around and collected enough money to go over there, dismantle the house brick by brick, put it in bloody crates and bring it out here and now it is in the grounds of the Bundaberg

03:30 Botanical Gardens and the Hinkler Museum is all Bert Hinkler's stuff.

**You said, at your mum's house in Bundaberg?**

No, his mum's house.

**Oh, his mum's house?**

Yeah.

**Ok. Do you remember in Parramatta the sort of images of the Depression and?**

Oh God yeah, well we were one of the fortunate families that had an income but Mum was in all sorts of bloomin' charity things as well

04:00 and one was a soup kitchen, which was held down near the Parramatta baths, near the river not far from where David Jones is now and that used to on every, I think it was Sunday morning there'd be a free meal for whoever needed it in Parramatta and I used to go my sister, my elder sister and myself used to go with Mum down there and just help out with whatever

04:30 but I can recall a number of blokes I was in the same class with at school come along to get a feed too.

**After you'd left school?**

No, this is at school yeah.

**And you were helping your mum dish out the meals or?**

Yeah oh, what do you mean after we left school? This is after school hours, yeah.

**Your mum did a lot of charity work?**

Yeah, she was the first thing, I remember her being involved in, was when we were in the infant school and she was treasurer of the Mother's Club of all the

05:00 bloody things and we moved from there into the primary school and I think she stayed as treasurer of the Mother's Club 'til like me brother was quite a bit older, he was born 1912 and my elder sister in '18, me in 1920, me younger sister in '22. The three of us with a different father of course but me elder brother was too old to be knocking around with us little kids and so he was not in much of it. Me younger sister

05:30 seemed to be a little young for company with the two older ones, so my older sister and myself seemed to do things with Mum more than the other two.

**Was your brother a big influence on your life? Did you look up to him?**

Yeah I did too but God he had a, he was very conscious of the fact that he wasn't me full brother and he's

- 06:00 died now. He died when, God when we were doing a round Oz trip in '95. I was up in Port Headland at the time he died but I can remember him coming up to our place at Wyoming only a few years before a year or two before that say and he got a bit, they used to come up and stay with us for a weekend or couple of days or whatever and he used to get very sentimental about the fact that you know I'd say, "Goodo, righto brother what about so and so."
- 06:30 "Look, I'm not your real brother, I'm not your real brother", he'd say and he'd get real teary about this too and I used to put my arm around him and said, "Look mate to me you're me brother, that's all there is to it." But it was funny that me younger sister and me brother never got on. Me younger sister died of cancer in Wodonga Hospital, matter of fact it was 1980. Gladys and I were on our first round Australia trip and we flew down from Darwin when we heard that she was in Wodonga Hospital with
- 07:00 a cancer and we stayed down there for three weeks. Now, we were in a local motel or for a while and then when they booted us out because there was something on we had to move and that. But I can remember ringing about every second or third day to round the family and telling them how me sister, me younger sister was progressing and my brother said "This second or third day is not good enough. I want a daily report from you",
- 07:30 I said "For Christ sake" but then when he wanted to go down to see her and we were down there and the nurse came in and said "Your brother just rang and he wants to come down and see you", she said, "I've only got one brother and he's already here", which oh gee that, that it hurt me more than anybody else, I think and then me elder sister wanted to go down and see her too and she said "Don't let her come near me. All she'll do is sit in the corner and bawl",
- 08:00 well eventually she agreed and me elder sister did go down and I said, so I briefed her about it. I said, "Now when you go down, you'll find your younger sister sittin' up in bed she's got her hair done like her mum used to do it." I said, "But she'll sound alright too." But anyway what did me elder sister do? She walked in, took one look at her, sat in the bloody corner and bawled. Me eldest sister's eldest one wanted to go down and see her. Actually, they went down after we went back,
- 08:30 well first of all me younger sister left hospital on the day, when the day she left we went back to Darwin and picked up our round Oz trip. She was to go back to Falls Creek ski place where they, she was a director of the alpine developments. Ran ski things in Falls Creek in the winter time and had huge blocks of flats in St Kilda in the summer time and Lorna was
- 09:00 my younger sister. Lorna was manager of everything, bar engineering stuff for the alpine developments. Anyway me, her eldest nephew Peter and Polly are over in Canada right now, they actually went down to the hospital on the way down somewhere else and my young sister refused to see them, which was, again shook hell out of me. She was such a bloody ice cold little so and so
- 09:30 from time to time, yet I loved her, got on well with her. Me elder sister and I got on well with both of them but me elder brother, me brother and me younger sister, shh they were just battles.

**Back in the Depression times were there other - how was your dad coping with things the, with business and with the grocery in the store?**

Well not real, well. A lot of unemployed people and gees I remember our bloomin',

- 10:00 our book with the credit in it you know, unpaid bills was Christ was that long. I used to look after it part time with him but a lot of people had food coupons too that they could, that Jack Lang organised at the time I think or somebody did anyway in then parliament and these food coupons'd come in and they were for from memory a certain value of food and people could choose what they wanted to

- 10:30 out but it had to be spent on food and nothing else.

**Did you feel that you could have gone on at school or you had to leave?**

Virtually had to leave, yeah. I was in fourth year. I did three years of fourth year at Parramatta High School but really I don't think that with a younger sister aged 12 that the family was coping too well financially and when I left I felt that it was the

- 11:00 right thing to do.

**Did you feel under pressure to leave? Did you want to go on to further education?**

No, not really no, I was, I wasn't really academic type. Haven't got enough up here for that.

**Were you given a choice or it was just happened?**

No, I think it, well I think the choice was I had the offer of a job and so I just grabbed it. Like there was very few jobs available at the time to teenagers.

**Was it a feeling of desperation in the air?**

Probably yep, glad to have a bloomin' job and be a little bit independent.

- 11:30 **Did you leave home at the time?**

Oh no, oh gawd no, couldn't afford to have left home. I leave home on 25 bob a week mate.

**Do you remember hearing of the political tensions in Europe at the time?**

Not till later in the decade, in the say later in the '30s. I do recall it then and I remember following Hitler's path through annexing this and taken over

12:00 that back to the what is it, the bloomin', oh some area that was in argument between France and Germany, oh had a particular name for, which I forget down in the southern area of Germany where it bordered France anyway [Alsace-Lorraine] and then when the Austrian thing came along and then Czechoslovakia, a bit of that as well and

12:30 remember following this up and thinking well, it's can only lead to bloomin' war.

**Did you think you'd be involved in that war?**

I didn't think of it at the time but I s'pose it was pretty obvious to, it had to be obvious that I was goin' to be at my age.

**You joined the CMF [Citizens Military Force] first up. Was that just a natural thing, you would have joined anyway even if there wasn't hostilities in Europe?**

Oh no, I think not. No, I don't think I would have worried

13:00 about it then but a few, well how did I get in the air the, I think there were three or four of us from work who said "Well, what are we going to get into?" and we had a think about it and came up with this bloody search light unit. The 52nd Anti-Aircraft Brigade Royal Australian Engineers we were, yep.

**Was that before war broke out or after?**

Oh no, that was about a month after war broke out.

**Right.**

October '39.

**When the announcement of war came along was it entirely unexpected for you?**

13:30 No, no it wasn't. Well we, I think we all wondered just how far Chamberlain was goin' to go or let Hitler go before he did anything about it cause he kept on coming back with a piece of paper or peace in our time and

**Do you remember seeing those news reels?**

Oh God yeah. I thought he'd done a wonderful job when he came back with a piece of paper too, but didn't realise just how silly it was.

14:00 **Was it, reflecting back on that was it a, was the discussions about the war a sort of impassioned as perhaps some of the discussions young people are engaged in the recent war in Iraq?**

No, I think not. I think we just sort of went along, well it was inevitable and we just accepted the fact that the brass were doing what they thought was right for us and didn't worry too much about it. It certainly wasn't anything like

14:30 say went on with Vietnam or the you know protests against war or the how the ones are, the ones were recently against the war in Iraq.

**You were enjoying yourself as a young man then. Were there other things you got interested in at that time?**

Oh I think not. Me motorbike, cricket and footy and sheilas were about it.

**Tell us about sheilas?**

Oh there's not a lot to tell really.

15:00 No, I think the, well I only had one serious girlfriend before my first wife and as luck would, well as fate would have it, we met up again after the war with her husband who was also in the air force. He was a gunner, air gunner and was shot down and was a POW for quite a while, very nice bloke too. He's since died

15:30 but she became quite a difficult woman one might say or if you can edit it out, she was a real dead bitch, there's no risk about that and the bloke that she married when I look back on it, I thought geez you, that's the best favour you ever did me mate was to get hold of her and marry her yeah, yep anyhow.

**So you all, as a group there's, was a group of talking of joining up together was there**

16:00 **in a sense?**

Oh yeah, from work we used to, we'd discuss it at lunchtime at work and then in the pub afterwards. Well, I didn't drink at the time. I used to go on a boozier and have a sarsaparilla and a lemonade when the fellas were ironing themselves out on beers but oh there was a fair bit of talk about it you know in the early part of the war, when we obviously knew that it was going to go on for a while. Well, I shouldn't say obviously but we thought it would go on for a while, we thought we'd better do something about it and

16:30 just had a look around and somebody suggested this searchlight unit. Oh that sounds like a good idea, we'll have a go at a search light.

**Was there any particular reason why you didn't drink?**

No, me old man had a, liked his liked the grog but he wasn't an alcoholic. Me brother didn't drink much at all. I think Mum had a sherry once a week or something like that but oh no hadn't, just hadn't got around to it.

**Did you have a girlfriend at the time you joined up?**

17:00 Joined up? Oh yeah, my first wife was my girlfriend, yeah.

**Did you discuss it with her that you were going to join up?**

Probably not, no. Oh well you know, girls weren't included in that conversation, those sort of conversations the time you just did what you wanted to do and told 'em after.

**Did you discuss it with your parents?**

Yes, yeah.

**Can you take us back to that conversation when you told them told them you were going to join up?**

Well, it's a complication but I seem to

17:30 recall having said that, well it was about a month after the war when, oh we were just discussing the war in general. There wasn't much going on by the way as I recall. You might know Hitler had gone into bloomin' Poland. Chamberlain had said "If you go into Poland, we're gonna go for ya. Get out in three days or stop it in three days and otherwise we're at war" and then silly old Bob Menzies said, "I've the melancholy duty to inform you that Britain has declared

18:00 war on Germany and as a result Australia is at war, we are at war", something like that. No consultation with anybody or

**That's a pretty good impersonation.**

Yeah so, no well that's how, well that's how we knew we were involved and there was a question of just you know, how do you get involved or in what way.

**How closely were you following political events or how interested were you in Bob Menzies and the politics of Australia at the time?**

Oh not much,

18:30 no I was 19, 19 year olds weren't at the time much involved in politics or statesman or unstatesmanlike decisions either. We just thought it was a, it was something that had to happen, I think.

**Were you still reading your comics from the, from England at the time?**

Was I still reading them then?

**Yeah.**

Oh no, gone long since.

**What were you reading around about that time, can you remember?**

Oh, not terribly

19:00 much I don't think at that time. Always interested in travel stuff and you know outback Australia stuff and it was probably something like that.

**When you went down to enlist in the search light battalion or brigade, is it a brigade or?**

52nd Anti-Aircraft Company, yep.

**company. Did you know you were going in to join up in that company?**

Oh yeah, I went specifically to that place, yeah.

**Can you tell us perhaps the reasons why**

19:30 **you selected that in particular?**

Well, I don't know that any of us in, any other fellas at work who I was discussing it with came up with any reasonable reason why we should join that one but about four or five of us did and we all went into camp sort of at the same time. Stayed there for a couple of months and

20:00 go back to work for a month. Real chocolate soldier stuff it was, there's no risk about that and that's what we were, we were just chocos but there was something wrong with the system with you're, you know you had to get accustomed to somebody barking at you know sapper this and corporal that and marching up and down the bloody parade ground and then suddenly it's all over, you go back to work and you're pencilling out stores records and what not.

**You had a, you know there was a bit of a**

20:30 **smorgasbord of things you could have joined at the time?**

Yeah, why that?

**Yeah.**

No real reason. No, we just plucked that out of the air and one, two, three, yeah four of us from work all joined the same thing.

**You could have also joined the AIF [Australian Imperial Force]?**

Could have too yeh, yep.

**So why perhaps, why the CMF?**

Can't tell you that either, don't know,

21:00 I don't know. Some of the blokes did not [?] from where the specifically where I worked but some of my mates were in the CMF and some went into the air force. In fact one or two blokes that I can recall wanted to be to do something with engineering and so they joined the air force as engine fitters and they were given about a crash course in about six months of how to become a blooming mechanical fitter, which was great for them after the war too

21:30 but honestly I don't know why we went that particular spot, why we didn't go to the air, the AIF or the air force in the first place.

**Can you tell us a little bit about the CMF at that time and the search light brigade or company?**

Oh yeah. It was good fun when we first of all we had to learn all the parts of a

22:00 searchlight. And I remember one particular bloke, I think he might have been either Aboriginal or half part Aboriginal and memory, oh gee a beaut memory. He could strip a search light on his own and put it back on his own. He could name every piece in it. Now I could never do that for starters and there were usually two of, you working as a pair to do that sort of work, and so that when you

22:30 came across a difficult piece, one or the other would say, "Oh I think this or I think that oh, well we'll try this you know". It was pulling the thing to bits and putting it back together but this dark fella, we used to call him midnight, he was that dark but he was colossal and just must have had a thing up here, memory terrific memory.

**Can you tell us a little bit about how you operate a search light?**

Oh Christ, not much there mate. It gets towed on the back of a truck,

23:00 well the ones that we operated towed on the back of a truck. We used to go out what they call on location, I can remember us going to Hawkesbury Racecourse in the middle of bloody winter too, God, frost that thick on it. This must have been about winter 1940 I s'pose went on location. Another one we went to was up that way Long Neck Swamp along the lagoon out of on the way up to Wisemans Ferry but we'd go out,

23:30 we set up the search light, we'd set up our tents and we'd stay there for a week and they'd send old Avro Ansons over us doin' about 100 mile an hour you know and we were flashing all over the sky lookin' for this damn thing and they'd finish up coming down and down and down to give us a closer look till we got fairly proficient at 'em. And then they'd start a few thousand feet, there might be two or three of 'em at a time and we'd have to pick each of them out, which was very

24:00 basic compared to say 1943 or '44 in over Europe where the Germans had radar controlled search lights and if you got amongst those. There was one came up and he went straight onto you and the others'd come 'phew,' and they were all onto ya and you were coned within about half a dozen lights and they you'd have shit shot out of ya then too.

**Did that happen to you?**

Oh yeah.

24:30 **So how actually do you find a plane with the searchlights back in those training days?**

How do you find it?

**Yes.**

Well, we had two blokes with things on, oh big ear things acoustic something or other. Anyway, they were supposed to when the noise got loudest, they were pointing it the right way and the search light was attached, so that they could follow 'em too.

25:00 But it was very, very basic and it was you know if a bloke had one crook ear and one good ear you could be 100 yards out in a quarter of a mile but it was, it gave us an insight into what did happen when you were flying at night. Not that I was thinking of that at the time but the fact that you could get caught in search lights was a thing that came

25:30 to mind.

**How many people in a search light crew?**

Rob [Interviewer], you're pushing it. I was 19 then and I'm 83 now mate but I think there must have been about, well there was certainly half a dozen. What the hell did they all do? Can't tell ya but I finished up a corporal in charge of one, search light anyway. And I did have the drill down to the point

26:00 where the boss'd say "Well, we want one to go to A, one to go to B, one to go to C and you're gonna be there for a week and we'll supply you with the rations and you'll have something to do every night. We won't tell you when it's coming but you've got to be prepared for it" and that's how we worked and I'd say that we were all fairly proficient at picking up very slow aircraft in very good conditions with nobody firin' at us or droppin' bombs on us.

26:30 **How long were you in doing that work for?**

Oh a bit over 12 months, October '39 to about the end of 1940, a bit over a third and 12 months, yep.

**Were you enjoying military life?**

No, thinking it was the bloody horrors yeah.

**Was that because it was the CMF and not the full time army?**

Yeah, I guess it was too. The, you know the part, you were a part time soldier and

27:00 they, I don't know why it took me that long to wake up to it but by the end of the 12 months I was, absolutely had it. It was a, seemed to be a silly way to be fighting a war. A couple of months there, a couple months back at your desk and not really contributing much at all. Getting a bit of training but didn't feel there was much of a, doing much towards the war effort.

**Was there a time when you were ridiculed for being a CMF choco?**

Oh yeah too right, going home

27:30 maybe on, in your CMF uniform and there'd be some AIF blokes in the same carriage and you know got you, got the bloody treatment about being chocos and even when I joined the air force you were the, what are you the blue orchids or something. Why don't you get out and get in the real service mate?, and all that sort of stuff the AIF blokes used to give us.

**What happened in one of those incidences in the CMF?**

Oh well no, there were no, didn't get into any punch ups but

28:00 was just exchange of pretty bloomin' rough words from time to time, yeah.

**Did that swing you one way to think about going on further or?**

It probably did yeah, I s'pose. You know with both AIF blokes and or and then you know navy blokes from time to time then who were in a real war as well. They had their ship and could be sent anywhere and you felt like a, really like a second class citizen trying to do

28:30 a job where and you were too. Well that's the way I felt about it anyway.

**So what happened at the end of that 12 months with the CMF?**

Oh well, no I just joined the air force down at Woolloomooloo. That was the recruiting depot and they just took your name and they gave, don't think they gave you a number even at the time.

29:00 But they said, "Well righto, well you, you've got to start your night school work brushing up on maths", and so on and "Well, you'll hear from us when we're ready to call you up" and so that's what we did. We just kept on goin' to work. Right out of the army by this time too out of

**Sorry?**

I was out of the army by this time too. Well, I'd gone to the search light company and virtually resigned and as I mentioned before how

29:30 I got a real serve from the CO for not sticking with the good old search light company and ratting on 'em and running out on 'em when we're really needed, they were wielding up force and blah, blah, blah but I was really glad to get out of that and even though we were back in civie street and waiting for the air force to call us up, it was better than knowing that you were going to go on and on with part time soldiering and part time

30:00 pen pushing.

**Was it a big decision at the time for you?**

Oh no, it was a pretty easy one in fact. The only difficulty at the time was the CO givin' us the treatment.

**Can you recall at the time the feeling of Sydney towards the war, did that feel real - the war?**

The feeling of what?

**Did, was the war - can you describe the feeling of reality that there was a war in Europe that Australia was involved in Sydney at the time?**

Oh yeah, well especially I was still here in May '42 when

30:30 the Jap midget submarine thing was on in Sydney.

**This was when you were a part of the RAAF [Royal Australian Air Force] though, wasn't it?**

This is, yeah I was still in the air force, yeah. Oh yeah in fact I was training out the bush somewhere by that time May '42, I would have been at Wagga yeah.

**What about that feeling at the time early in the war in the 1939 - '40 period?**

Oh God no, it was business as usual out here for quite a long time yeah until the real war started in May 1940 but even then there wasn't much until the German

31:00 pocket battleships I forget the fella's name now but there was a Von somebody or other out of, off a pocket battleship round and we started black outing then black out curtains around and turn the street lights off and all that. This must have been probably early to mid 1940. I remember goin' on a holiday up to Brisbane and I went, I got one of these, oh sugar boats I s'pose they called them up to - where'd I go?

31:30 Oh Brunswick Heads or somewhere like that by boat and then got a Reg Ansett bus from there up to the through the Gold Coast to Brisbane. And the Gold Coast was a mass of sand hills at the time with the old Lennons Hotel sticking out in the middle of it. And the bus driver used to say "Why would anybody want to build a bloody hotel out in the middle of a sand hill?", but what that was blacked out too, the old Wollongbar that was the, was the name of the boat as a matter of fact

32:00 that we went up in.

**Why did you go up by boat to Brisbane from Sydney?**

Oh, I hadn't been on a boat.

**Did they have a regular passenger service to Brisbane?**

Yes, oh it was a cargo, oh wouldn't say liner, it was a cargo boat basically with about oh half a dozen or so cabins and I don't know why I wanted to go to Brisbane. I'd never been to Brisbane before so I just hopped on this boat and went there. Matter of fact, I overstayed me time in Brisbane,

32:30 overstayed me money. I had to wire back home or ring my mother back home to send me ten dollars or 10 pound or something to - I flew back in an old DC3 [Douglas] then.

**Was that your first trip away from home big trip away from home?**

Oh no, not really no. I was only about 16 or 17, a relative, Dad's sister married a bloke who had a sawmill at Frederickton just out of Kempsey and I went up there for a week,

33:00 went up on the train and had a week lookin' around Kempsey, not lookin' around really. I used to go out in the trucks out in the bush and pull down trees and then take 'em back to the sawmill and I remember going out with a local bloke who was doing grocery deliveries of all things in a truck and delivering around the Frederickton area and learning a little bit, just a little bit around MacLeay River and it was a nice enough holiday but like I didn't know the people, I didn't know me Aunt at the time,

33:30 they'd been up there and we'd been down in Sydney.

**Can you talk us through a little bit more about your induction into the air force after your initial sort of period of waiting to be called up, when you were called up?**

Called up, yeah in middle of '41, exact time I don't know but middle of '41 and we went to Bradfield Park,

34:00 the No 2 Initial Training School where the emphasis was on drill training, square bashing carrying your rifle and pack sometimes and on Morse code and on maths and on, oh not much else no. Just making sure we, you were fit. You could do a bit of maths and you could rattle out a few

34:30 words a minute on Morse and that lasted a couple of months but from there?

**Yes.**

From there to Narromine for a No 2 Elementary Flying School on Tiger Moths, where it blew a bloody gale during the day and

35:00 the drill there was to get up about five o'clock in the morning. You'd fly till about eight till the wind got up and then we used to die about four in the afternoon and so during the day you do lectures and drill, more drill and what not and then start flying again the afternoon late.

**Had you seen a Tiger Moth before you got there?**

Yeah, I think a mate of mine who had a, you know quite an older bloke he used to work as a mechanic in a garage in Parramatta and I'd see him going home

35:30 from wherever and we'd stop and talk and he had a pilot's license and he had, he used to hire an aircraft occasionally from Mascot and so at that time I asked him to give me a bit of just experience really and I think it cost me 10 bob for about half an hour. He'd take off from Mascot, just fly round the local scene land again and he'd call at me through the, they had a tube, I think it was the Tiger Moth it in and he'd shout in the tube from the

36:00 back seat and I'd have to listen. Didn't have earphones but I'd have to listen hard and I'd put me ear down to the thing and he'd say "Well, I'm going to do this, I'm going to do that now" and I didn't know even what he was talkin' about, we're goin' to do a slow roll or whatever, I didn't know what a bloody slow roll was but he taught me a little bit.

**How old were you when you took, that was your first flight, was it?**

No, in way back in the

36:30 barnstorming days - well first of all Hinkler was goin' to come out to Parramatta Park when I was still a kid in school but he didn't make it but there was a local dentist named Hart, who owned an aircraft and he flew out instead and landed in Parramatta Park, pretty, rough old bloody landing it was, a pretty, rough old place to be landing too but liked all that but then Mum took us out to a place near Warwick Farm Racecourse,

37:00 it was a little airstrip out there. Can't remember the name of it but there was a bloke doing a barnstorming thing there for I think it was 10 shillings for adults and five shillings for kids if you could fit two of 'em in the one seat, so Mum took us out there. She didn't go up herself but she bought tickets for the three of us kids and me eldest sis, I think three of us must have sat in the seat because me elder sister sat in the middle.

37:30 And I can recall when once we got off the ground she just ducked her head like this and didn't look out at all. She didn't like it at all but we just had about a 10 minute quarter of an hour barnstorming thing around round Liverpool area and landed again. Hoxton Park it might have been, yeah something like that and then another time we went up in the Faith [?] in Australia, I think that Lester Brain who became a bit of a wheel in,

38:00 quite a wheel in Qantas [Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Service] later had this aircraft and he used to, it was about a 10 passenger thing and he used to fill it up with people, 10 bob a time and take 'em around Sydney from Mascot. Did a few of those sort of things yeah, liked it really.

**So do you think you aspired to be a pilot at that time?**

Don't think so, no. No, I think, thought it was just fun getting up in an aeroplane, yep.

**Back at Narromine you were introduced to the Tiger Moth. Can you recall your first impressions of the aeroplane?**

Yeh, I wondered how anybody'd

38:30 ever fly the bloody things. They didn't have any flaps to slow you down, they didn't have any brakes. What else didn't they have? Didn't have much at all really. They were very basic aircraft and they were excellent for learning to fly on. You had to steer it by the throttle and pedals, no such thing as tapping a brake and the thing'd turn this way and when you landed, if there was a bit of a cross wind,

39:00 you had to hold it into the wind by rudder and throttle again, so there was, it was a really good aircraft to learn on but when you were getting first instruction in it I thought, Christ, how am I ever goin' to cope with this? I had a look around and I said "Well, you know most people are so - I don't want to be

out on a bloody limb not being able to cope with it", so just pressed on and on and on. Went solo after about, well I can't

39:30 tell you this figure because I haven't got me bloody log book but I think it was about eight hours I went solo. I think if you weren't solo by 10 hours they told you to buzz off and become an air gunner or something.

**Do you recall your first instructor?**

Oh yeah. His name was Eric Avery, a very young bloke. He used to get air sick and he was a glider pilot from Lismore. I've tried to look him up a couple of times since then at Lismore only in recent years but he's not there. Lovely little bloke, never did his block.

**Did he give you any**

40:00 **words of wisdom that have stuck by you all through your flying career?**

No, but he had a little navigation book called How to Find Your Way in the Air and he used to give this to each of his pupils for a couple of days at a time. They said "This will help you in navigation when you've got to do navigating" and we had to do it of course and ultimately but he was a lovely little bloke too and I think that he was probably, he was

40:30 probably instrumental in my becoming a pilot ultimately in solo - well soloing in the first place because of his, the encouragement he gave his blokes. I do recall a number of instructors used to shout at their fellows and scream at them and shouldn't have been instructors but this bloke was the perfect instructor.

## Tape 3

00:33 **Telling us about after having spent a year in the CMF then joining the air force, did you notice that there were big differences between the way that they operated or?**

Oh well, yeah there, well the air force being a full time thing, it sort of or you got to take them more seriously too and you knew damn well that there are certain things that had to be done over a period before you became proficient or before you were able to

01:00 get into action and the processes just had to be got gone through one, two, three and well there was a set time for it too. You didn't make your own pace, like had x months for ITS [Initial Training School] x months for elementary flying, x months for bloomin' service flying and so on and so just to stick to the program was, and knowing that you were getting somewhere was I think, it was pretty important to me.

**What was the discipline like**

01:30 **in air force training?**

Oh very, very hot indeed as a matter of fact. We used to do our square bashing there when we were learning flight to fly as well but. And as well as that at Narromine for example, we oh God the cooking was dreadful and we used to get these greasy eggs for breakfast and they'd be black or dark and so I remember one bloke Ron Cross, who's a retired High Court Judge now,

02:00 ah Supreme Court Judge now lives in Canada with whom I was in the same course and even though he wasn't a legal bloke at the time, he said "We've got to do something about this breakfast", so we declared a strike and you don't really go on strike in the services mate. What you do is, to you it's a meal parade and you are deliberately not going to a parade, which is an offence

02:30 and the station commander at the time was Snowy Lachal - LACHAL - quite a well known name in the, became Air Vice Marshall, I think but he lined us up all and said, "If the rig was big enough he'd have us all in bloody jail." But we weren't to be, we weren't to expect any leniency because we hadn't attended parade and

03:00 this will all go down your on your history and blah, blah, blah. And we won't put you on a charge but it will be a black mark against ya. Anyhow, he did agree to see a delegation about the cooking and this fella Ron Cross, who became a Judge led the delegation and convinced management that the cooking was crook and that it improved out of sight from that day that day on, so even though we had a illegal strike during the air force we won the day.

03:30 **Was, were there any particularly feared characters that that were particularly strict?**

Oh gee, the blokes that gave you parade around the ground with your bloomin' pack and your rifle on, they were, they barked out orders at you and God help you if you didn't turn the right way or if you're out of step or what but I don't think anybody liked the

04:00 square drill. Anyhow, I hated it.

**What other training did you do apart from the flying training, what other training did you have to go through?**

Well, there's a fair bit too, of like for navigation for example you needed a good basic training in maths one and maths two. Geometry and just arithmetic and that was fairly

04:30 solid too. I remember I did, I felt that I did more work there than I had done for the intermediate certificate, certainly learnt more anyway.

**Did you find it difficult?**

Yeah, at first I did yeah getting back to well geometry and trigonometry was not easy. I don't think I'd touched trig at school. I think that was the first time I'd heard of it and it took quite a while too, I was only an average you know student

05:00 and I took quite a while to get accustomed to this to learning new stuff.

**What about physical training?**

Whereabouts?

**Physical training - what kind of marching?**

Oh yeah, oh Christ yeah, marching and running and I remember at Uranquinty just out of Wagga where we did some of our Wirraway training, they used to take us on a route march, oh every so often. One of them was from Uranquinty down to the Rock. It

05:30 was down the main road and God I don't know how far it was but it was a fair way. It took us some hours and you'd march for 55 minutes and then have five minutes off and the way that, well they way they told us to recoup was to lie down with your legs up on a bloomin' wire fence or something like that to, for whatever reason help your feet get a bit, feel a bit better then as soon as the five minutes was up the whistle'd blow and you'd be off for another 55. Took us ages to do the time.

06:00 Fortunately, they had buses there to take us back but never forget that mate.

**What sort of packs and stuff did you have to carry on these marches?**

Oh just usually your own gear. Just pack up your own gear and stick on your back.

**What about rifles were you introduced to rifles as part of this?**

I don't know whether we did it on the route marches but we used to do it around the parade ground on a rifle.

**Had you ever used a gun before?**

No I hadn't, no.

**What was that experience like?**

06:30 I did basic rifle training in the search light unit but nothing else, no.

**It's not something that the air force puts much stock into or?**

No, oh we did, yeah we did some rifle training. I remember going out to the, what, where you shoot at the targets - target place and had a bit of practise but there was no like the score you got on, that didn't count for anything. It was just showing you how

07:00 to use the rifle and how to load it, how to look after it and blah, blah, blah.

**What were conditions like at Narromine in the barracks there?**

Oh quite good. Oh they were straight dormitory barracks. The thing I got the biggest shock at was the bloody dormitory latrines too: no doors, no doors on the bloomin' toilets, so you sat there either reading, you're readin' your magazine or whatever and talkin' to the blokes across the way but I thought it was awful that you know you had to

07:30 wipe your bottom in sight of other people.

**Did you have to do everything together in the barracks, was everything communal?**

Yep.

**Were there any WAAAFs [Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force] or women around these barracks?**

Don't recall 'em at Narromine. I s'pose there must have been but certainly at Wagga there were. There were girls on the like if you were flying, they would, they'd run the office of the flight and you'd book in with them when

08:00 you were going out and you'd book out rather than book in when you came back. And there were a

number of WAAAFs in there on the job there by that time, I s'pose it took a while to start recruiting them and by the time we got to Wagga they were there, yep.

**Do you go into training as a sergeant? Do you have a rank at this stage?**

No, leading aircraftsman. You were just aircraftsmen mark 2, when you were at Bradfield at doing the, essentially the paperwork and then leading aircraftsman

08:30 that put you, gave you a little propeller to put on your shoulder I think, it was little metal propeller.

**At this stage everybody was going to be a pilot. Is that?**

Yes, at that stage yeah, yep.

**Had they weeded out or not weeded out but they'd channel people into different directions already or did that happen later?**

Well, it happened initially at Bradfield. Some people wanted to be navigators or wireless operators or air gunners but most wanted to be a pilot and to get the numbers

09:00 up for the others, for the other titles there had to be a weeding out, well had to be a weeding out process anyway for blokes who weren't able to cope with flying, with pilot training. And I s'pose I don't know how many but a certain percentage were knocked out of that and went into the other categories then of observer navigator wireless operator or WOPAG -

09:30 wireless operator air gunner or just air gunner.

**Must have been a fair bit of pressure on everybody wanting to succeed and become a pilot?**

Oh yeah, I think there was, yeah.

**Did that affect you at the time?**

Don't think so. I just, well I was only a middle-of-the-run bloke and I just finished up in the middle, so I wasn't, I never got any what they give you. They gave you average, above average and excellent or below average

10:00 and if you were anything below average you sort of went out and I was only average all the way through like most blokes, yeah.

**Was the camaraderie good?**

Yeah, real good.

**Can you talk a bit about that?**

Oh well yeah, well for example the, oh not for example at all but that judge bloke I was telling you about we kept in touch after the war for a while but then when he became a supreme court judge, like they're a bit

10:30 restricted for access you got to 'em. Matter of fact I didn't run into Ron Cross for a number of years and then I was going for a ferry one day down near the Quay and he came round the corner with his minder and I said, "G'day Crossie, how're you goin'?" And the minder sort of went a bit between us pretty quickly but he said, "G'day Dunk, haven't seen you for ages." And so we yack, yack, yacked and I think within a week or two, he was over our place for dinner and we went up to their place for dinner and so on but for the

11:00 rest of it, yeah there was good camaraderie there. I s'pose you sorted out blokes that you got on better with than others but I don't recall there being any animosity between groups of people or I think the, well the only times there was any sign of something different was at Wagga when the blokes from Victoria and Tassie used to get a football out and they'd be practising their bloody drop kicks and we'd be

11:30 running around and when and if our passes went astray and went on amongst them there'd be a bit of a, there'd be a few words exchanged then but no real animosity at all.

**You had different sporting backgrounds. Were there different class grounds and stuff that people with different civilian lives before they went into the air force?**

What do you mean by class groups?

**Well I'm just saying that the air force is an amalgam of all different parts of society?**

Oh right yeah, yep. On, no well we had professional blokes. Had engineers, accountants,

12:00 lawyers only in very early stages of course 'cause they're all, most were in their early 20s and then you had other fellas, like I was doing accountancy when the war broke out and just gave it away till it came back. I didn't go back to accountancy, went back to secretarial but there were no sort of class groups as you call 'em in there because of their profession or non-professional backgrounds, no not that I recall anyway.

**It's quite an amazing experience I guess at the time suddenly to have people**

12:30 **from all different walks of life together in the one area?**

Yeah.

**Did you get on immediately. Was there any kind of?**

Oh took a while to get accustomed to other mainly, see we're in, everything was in alphabetical order and like I can remember there was Dalley, Davey, Dunkley and so on in the in the group and then we had our, I was 413358, that was my number and Davey was 413357 and Dalley was the one before that

13:00 and so on. So really you were stuck with the blokes on either side of you in the barrack room but you know everyone in the barrack room pretty well, but the blokes who were nearest to you, you'd probably talk to more than anybody else and irrespective of background you'd, we got on.

**Can you describe that barrack room for us?**

Oh yeh I, well how many beds? I s'pose there'd be 30 beds in the room - 15 on each side, which you had to make up yourself. You've got to place your pillow this way,

13:30 make your bloody bed this way, tuck the blankets in this way, make sure your shoes are down there and you've got a little locker about so big to put your personal stuff in. Everything had to be dead right 'cause the orderly officer, well first of all you had a barrack room leader who'd change from time to time but he'd just have a, run a quick eye around it and say "She's right mate". When the orderly officer came through if he was a cranky old so and so he might find some little thing wrong with it just as a matter of principle or he'd

14:00 just walk from one end to the other without even looking just to get the job over as quick as he could but, what was your question again?

**Well just describing the room?**

Oh yeah describing the room, oh that, well that's basically all.

**Were there any decorations or anything you were allowed to sort of personalise your barrack room?**

Not on your Nellie, no. Had lights on the middle of the thing. No bed lamps, you couldn't read in bed. Lights out at a certain time and that was the end of that mate.

**Did you have anything personal in your locker that?**

Oh well only a, yeah personal stuff I s'pose, a diary,

14:30 if anybody kept one, and a photo of his girlfriend and so on.

**Did you have a girlfriend when you were at Narromine early on in this stage?**

Yep, I did yeah.

**How was your relationship when, did you start your relationship with your wife?**

Oh well before the war. In fact we got married in between initial training at Bradfield and training at Narromine.

**Did that courtship just take place while you had leave? How did that work?**

Oh no, she'd been

15:00 a friend of my younger sister and they used to swap weekends at each other's places and she come up to our place, one time we took a shine to each other and started going out yep.

**How much leave did you get in this initial training period?**

I think a week, oh well we used to get weekends off from Bradfield and we'd knock off on, I think either Friday or Saturday and have one or two days of the weekend at home and then in between Bradfield and in between initial training

15:30 and Tiger Moth training we had a week off, I think.

**Did you have much time for any kind of recreation when you were at the barracks?**

Oh we had footy games and cricket games but not many of 'em. The sports officer used to organise these and well you were just told when you were allowed to play or when you could play and we'd have a game of something or other.

**Can you tell us a little bit about your first few flights in a Tiger Moth,**

16:00 **it must have been a pretty amazing and terrifying experience?**

They were hairy and scary yeah, especially in bloody windy, windy Narromine too. Yeah, I marvel at the way this bloke Eric Avery, I was telling you about a while ago that can control an aircraft and can be air sick at the same time but he was a very, very good instructor and any time he was doing anything at all he'd tell you, "I'm about to do so-and-so", or "This is - we've got to

16:30 do steep turns and in this lesson and to do a steep turn the aircraft is standing up on its side and pulling around in the turn and that's what's going to happen in a few moment's time. And I'll keep you informed" and so he would. But in fact doing a steep turn is, one of the first times is one of the hairiest things you ever did see cause you're not lookin' there, you're there and the ground's down there and you think Christ, am I goin' to fall out of this thing or how are we ever goin' to get out of this?, but

17:00 with a good instructor you learn very quickly and we had a excellent one. And although I do remember not being frightened but being a bit apprehensive every time we took off, how far up are we going? What are we going to do today and will he try to get me to land or it's got to happen some time, is it gonna be today? That was the only sort of apprehension that I had.

**Did you ever get airsick yourself?**

Never, no.

17:30 Never been airsick, or seasick.

**So how did your instructor deal with his airsickness did?**

He had one big throw and that was the end of that yeah. It wasn't an unusual thing by the way. A mate of mine in Queensland, who was a navigator by the way, his crew, the pilot and navigator only about 50 mile away from each, 50 kms away from each other and he was 92 this year, this navigator used to get airsick every time he went up and his pilot said well and it was only for a short time

18:00 but he'd get crook anyway and his pilot said he was such a good navigator that he was prepared to stand it. This bloke used to take his little cake tin up with him and have a chuck into his cake tin, put the lid on it and stick it under his seat and they and then he'd be right from then on but he, because he was a good navigator, his pilot was prepared to put up with, ah the smell and all that, which you couldn't help but to get. One time the poor bugger forgot his cake tin, he had nothing else to put

18:30 it in and he took his flying boot off and chucked in that for God's sake but I had a navigator early in the 464 time, who was airsick every time he went up but he just didn't have one throw and he was over it. He'd throw and throw again and he was very upset when I said to him one day "Look, you're really not cut out for this mate, you should find yourself a job on the ground where you haven't got to put yourself up with this". He was very upset and he pleaded with me not

19:00 to dob him. But he was gonna, he was at the point where he couldn't navigate properly because of his airsickness and I thought he was gonna A [?] and get rid of himself and the poor ruddy pilot who was with him, so I dobbed him in and he was grounded.

**How, was this sort of thing looked at by superior officers?**

What airsickness?

**Yeah, was it against the rules as such or?**

Oh no, well it certainly couldn't have been in Avery's case. I don't know that his CO [Commanding Officer] knew that he was airsick. I s'pose he would have had to because he would have had

19:30 been checked out himself up there by the Chief Flying Instructor but I imagine it was frowned on if there was more than just one throw and she's right mate yeah.

**Did Avery have a cake tin or something of the like?**

I don't know. I don't know, he sat in the back seat just telling me what to do and I could hear through this tube, I could hear him having a go. I remember saying "For Christ sake hit whatever you're taken and not the tube, I might cop it down the other end"

20:00 but no I, he'd have to have something. He might have a little strawberry bag like you get with the airlines for example but whatever it was he coped with it.

**Can you explain me the layout of this Tiger Moth with the instructor behind you and this tube? Can you just tell me about how the plane was laid out?**

Oh sure very basic. Just enough room for one person to squeeze in and you had the same instruments in the back and the front and they were basic too. There was a

20:30 air speed indicator, altimeter, a turn and bank indicator, which is a little ball in fluid and if you're not flying straight but you're skewing a bit like that the thing, the little ball will move to one side, so that you know when you're flying flat and level too. Let me, what else there was, oh not much else in them. A single joy stick down there, and two rudder

21:00 pedals and as Rob would have probably told you from time to time nothin' else in a Tiger. No such thing as brakes or wing flaps that slow you down and the tube, I forget what they call the bloody tube but

anyway it was this, just tube that was connected to the mouthpiece like a funnel connected by a hose to the front,

21:30 how the bloody hell did we hear? I don't think we had bloomin' - oh gee Rob might be able to help me in this - but I thought we had to just listen through the tube to somebody for the bloke in the back yelling at you but honestly I can't remember that now and bear in mind mate, it's over 60 years ago. When you get to my age you won't remember things too but anyway it was basic but it was as I said before a very good aircraft to learn on because

22:00 you had to learn to control an aircraft with the most basic of aids from your throttle ailerons and rudders and elevators.

**Did you have parachutes on?**

Oh gawd yeah.

**Did you get trained in what to do in case of a bail out situation?**

Oh yeah.

**Can you explain to me what you would do in a Tiger Moth in case of that?**

Oh yeh, well Tiger Moth you'd just unhook yourself

22:30 from whatever you were strapped in with stand on the seat and dive over the side.

**You said that it was pretty hairy the first few times. What was your hairiest moment in the early days of your flying career?**

Oh my first solo, that was my, by yeah, by far the hairiest. I got up all right and only had to do - I think was two circuits of Narromine and land again. And all the way round the first circuit I thought, oh Christ you know, will I and around the second one. I thought well, I've got a,

23:00 and just did the, oh the you know, the like down wind, the cross wind and all that and the approach thing and I managed to put it down without too much bounce and I seem to recall the instructor saying "Well, that was a very good landing", which shook me. I thought it was just an ordinary landing but he said, I remember him saying "It was a good one". Not that every one was a very good one by the way either. It was - there was plenty of bzzt and bzzt and bzzt. Kangarooing they called it

23:30 in my landings, the same as anybody else's but it just happened I flew a goody first up.

**What was the hardest part to master when you were learning to fly?**

Oh I think, gee I s'pose aerobatics must have been pretty hard but I found controlling a Tiger Moth on the ground without you know, without any aids was not easy too. If you wanted to turn for example you gave it throttle and kicked that

24:00 that rudder pedal, so that the rudder turning would get the air flowing around it and push it that way but aerobatics was a bit, wasn't easy either. Well I didn't think it was easy first up.

**What kind of aerobatics did you do?**

Oh slow rolls, a loop and a half loop and a roll off the top

24:30 I think that was about all we did in, well I don't think we did much more than that anyway.

**Sounds pretty dangerous?**

Oh well, you've got plenty of height yep.

**Were there ever any accidents?**

Oh occasionally but not many. I think they impressed on us the need to get height when you were doing those sort of things especially loop for example. You had to get up a certain speed, don't ask me what it was to loop a Tiger 'cause it was, wasn't what you'd call over powered.

25:00 And the loop was started by a dive to work up your speed to get you up the hill and you'd just about make it over the top and come out again but in the second when you were coming out the dive you lost a fair bit of height as well. Coming out of the loop you lost a fair bit of height, so I think that there was some thousands of feet

25:30 anyway that you were told to get to before you did this looping.

**Did anyone during your time there crash?**

Don't recall them at Narromine. I do recall a few emergency landings but no crashes. We had, well there was plenty of it, was wheat paddock stuff at Narromine. There was plenty of open space too, nice long wide roads as well. You'd

26:00 had a ton of places to put down but they also had satellite landing fields and you'd practice emergency

landing there. Emergency landing being the - you'd be somewhere near the field and the instructor'd say, "Well, we're going to do emergency landing", and just cut the throttle and say, "Righto, it's yours mate", and mate had to do the emergency landing. Usually a dead stick yeah, dead stick landing, whereby you'd

26:30 have a big enough paddock of course to muggins to make, allow, make mistakes on and you'd have to get down there in a glide in approach and landing of whatever sort you could make.

**Can you take us through a landing in a Tiger Moth 'cause landings were particularly difficult, weren't they?**

Yeah, especially in these very light things too because you know they floated quite a way because of their lightness and any sort of wind at all, they were, they weren't easy to put down. You had to really drive 'em

27:00 on rather than try to do three point 'em.

**So step by step how do you perform a landing?**

Oh well, say in those circumstances with a Tiger you get to a point where we're facing the runway and you're in, you've got a certain landing speed to or approach speed and a glide and an angle of approach as well and they didn't have such things I don't think at the time as a red and a yellow and a green light.

27:30 We had 'em at later training but not on basic training and you had to keep your revs, certain revs and oh that was the other instrument you had too was a rev counter, certain revs which gave you the right approach angle and you aimed for the just inside the boundary fence and then when you got to what you thought was about 10 feet, I think it was 10 feet, we just levelled out and

28:00 cut the throttle and the thing would just gently sink to - hopefully - gently sink to the ground and sometimes if you're 10 feet was, 20 feet you would not gently sink, you would bounce very, very badly and you would feel it and you would feel the wrath of your instructor too.

**How did you judge that height?**

Oh simply by guess work. In fact that's what a lot of blokes cost them their pilot's ticket because, simply because 10 feet was never 10 feet, it was 20 or 30

28:30 or maybe 5.

**Is that just sort of innate thing that some pilots have and some don't or?**

Oh some people have and don't. I remember a very good mate of mine from Parramatta who was a dux of the school and he was in a couple of courses earlier than me but he just couldn't land an aircraft. He was a good flyer but he just couldn't put one down on the ground.

**Did lots of blokes get culled**

29:00 **off the course at Narromine?**

No, not from Narromine, only a very few from memory, very few indeed but oh geez, look I honestly can't remember but I don't recall having to say 'ooroo to any number of blokes that I was I was friendly with there. They were more so when we got to Wirraways, which were a harder thing to fly. Well harder thing, they were a heavier thing and faster thing.

**Was it in between Narromine and Wagga**

29:30 **that you went away and got married or was it before that?**

No, it was before I got to Narromine, between, yeah between initial training at Bradfield and at Narromine.

**Was that an air force wedding?**

Oh well I had me uniform on, yeah. No it, the, my best man was an army bloke that I grew up with in Parramatta and Evie's best girl was just a, you know personal friend.

30:00 **Was it difficult to put on much of a party at that stage in the war?**

Oh yeah, wasn't easy yeah.

**Can you tell us a little bit about what, how your wedding went?**

Oh well, we didn't put it on. The parents put it on but it was fairly basic sort of wedding thing compared to what you go to today for example and even what you did before the war. There was, food wasn't a problem but grog was. It was hard to get a bloody bottle of beer in

30:30 Australia during the war but oh we had a, I s'pose a fairly average war time wedding but it wasn't anything flash.

**Were there lots of war time weddings going on?**

Oh fair number yeah, I can remember well that judge bloke I was telling you about Ron Cross. Evie and I were his, I was his best man when he was married at Wagga.

31:00 In fact the two of us were the only witnesses and wedding breakfast was, I think it was a steak and chips or something down at the local.

**Did it give you cause to reflect on how serious what you agreed to do for the air force was when you got married and you had someone else in your life?**

Yeah matter of fact, I'd well, I was a little while later that I realised what responsibility I had when my wife had the twins.

31:30 I thought, oh gawd, you know here's me runnin' away overseas. Japan's in the war too but because of the system, the Empire Air Training System we were up to a certain number of people had to go to England and we were, I was stuck with that lot.

**Did, was there a lot of resentment towards the system at that stage?**

I think there was too. People were saying things well not directly to us but I think people were saying "Why have we got to be sending

32:00 troops overseas or train airmen overseas when we'll be needing them here?" There was nothing sort of said directly to you to running away from the war or anything because we were running into a harder war at the time or one which was, which had further progressed. But I think from accounts I've read since that there was a lot of resentment from the locals about anybody at all going away when we should have been stayin' here.

**Did you ever talk about that amongst yourselves**

32:30 **as training?**

Yeah not very much, though we, I think we realised we were stuck with the system and well got over, the sooner we do something about it over there and get back home the better well. Little did we realise we were going to be gone for three years anyway.

**You never decided to have a strike or put a delegation force after that?**

No.

**Can you tell us about the time you found out that your wife was pregnant? Where were you then?**

Oh where were we?

33:00 Oh just finishing yeah Narromine, I think, yeah I think we were yep. She came up and stayed in a pub or a boarding house or something like that for the last few weeks of our Narromine training. Then she came down to Wagga when I organised some house or a flat for her down there too and she was pretty upset about the fact naturally enough too and we didn't do anything about it or try to do anything about it but I think

33:30 that she was wishing that she hadn't been pregga before I left.

**Because of the chance that you wouldn't come back?**

Probably, yeah more than anything else I s'pose, yeah.

**Did you ever mention that fact to each other?**

No.

**It is just sort of hanging like a possibility?**

Yep.

**How do you deal with that?**

Well, you just accept it and get on with life. There's really bugger all you can do about with it except make a hell of a scream to your

34:00 superiors and see if you can get left behind. But there was so much call for people to go over there at the time that I think there would have been little chance of success if you made a noise about it.

**Did anyone make a noise about?**

Not that I know of, no.

**Did it make you a more careful pilot?**

Oh I don't think so, no.

**Were you a careful pilot at all?**

Oh I think so, yeah.

34:30 **You did everything you were told and?**

Yeah, well up to a point where you finish training but after that it's all on you as to what you do. There was only one time when I think I mentioned this to one of the girls on the phone when I showed any sign of, I wouldn't say nerves so much as I had a premonition something might be gonna happen. It was, we had a,

35:00 an operation to do in a Mosquito at night and our own aircraft, I think we only taxied out when the bloody lights went out. We had emergency lighting, which wasn't very good and it wasn't, it was only good enough for you to take off and land and so I taxied straight back and told the ground crew that it was unserviceable and they put us straight into the reserve aircraft,

35:30 which was alright too. And so away we went and that taxied out, took off, were half way over the bloody channel and the lights went out on that and of course Muggins says, "Well you know somebody up there is giving you a message mate", and I said to me navigator, "Hey, this is no bloody good, we've got to go back. If we get to the target we won't be sure of where we are." You've got the worst job but I don't feel as though we should go on and he said, "Hey, listen mate", he said, "If we go back now with light trouble after having light trouble in our own aircraft,

36:00 you know what's goin' to happen, they're going to point the finger at you and me too." And so we had a talk about it for about only about a minute and we decided we'd press on, which we did. We actually got to the target, we bombed our target, we did our job anyway and got back and as soon as we got down I reported the other one unserviceable too and I remember the ground crew electrician bloke saying, "Christ what are you doing to it?" You know, but anyway

36:30 we, I got over it in just carrying on with that operation. I think if I'd gone back I might have been well you know a) not feeling too good about it myself and b) I think the powers that be might have said "Well, he lacks moral fibre, he hasn't got, what do they call it nowadays the ticker." But in any case it was a one off thing and it was all over in one night.

**We'll talk about that a little bit more.**

37:00 **Can you just explain to me, actually we'll talk about that now a little bit. When you're out with light trouble can you explain the difficulties you have in an aeroplane? Are there internal lights, outside lights? Can you explain what the lights do for you?**

Oh well, there was no outside lights in the operational aircraft, only internal ones but the internal lighting system light lit up everything beautifully and the emergency system lit up, oh the very basic stuff like

37:30 your air speed altimeter and oh not much else. The navigator had a hell of a job. He had always had a little torch but he had a hell of a job reading the instruments with these basic things. The emergency lights I think were only there to allow you to get down again, once you were up there and you had any problems. They did that but

38:00 they certainly weren't anything anywhere near as useful as the main lighting system.

**So as a pilot was mainly the navigator's problem?**

Yeah it was although landing again wasn't very easy with only not, it was pretty, it was fluorescent stuff and it was only very, oh very pale light too just you know, whereas you could sit back and read the other ones

38:30 off like that, you were sort of craning your neck and squinting your eyes to get the emergency ones.

**It sounds like a pretty legitimate problem to go back to the base for. Was there a real air of being thought of as a quitter or being branded with LMF [Lack of Moral Fibre] or that kind of thing?**

Well I think if I'd done it twice in one night there would have been yeah, although I had a legitimate reason for doing it but

39:00 I would think the fellers, they mightn't say anything to you but they'd think, oh you know him, hasn't got it or words to that affect and they'd probably be thinking higher up of wondering whether you should stay there or not.

**Is that how the air force worked at the time, there were lots of rumours going on about people behind their backs and?**

Oh I don't know don't think so. Well the only few times that I had had troubles with this navigator I was telling you about that was airsick

39:30 I had another bloke, the first navigator I won. Like we got our navigators because we went to 464 from

a single engine aircraft and we had to do our training there, we had to pick up a navigator. It wasn't like the normal training where pilots and navigators got together an operational training unit and became a good team but I got a good fella who'd done a couple of years as navigator training, as a trainee training officer himself and he was a real

- 40:00 chappie too and all that stuff. But on our first op, a low level thing against buzz bombs and coming back we were, we went low level for the particular reason we were coming, we were getting shot at and the lower you got, like you didn't get up a couple of thousand feet and give 'em a good target to hit, just went lower and lower and lower. We clipped a tree, just the top branch of a tree and a Mosquito was
- 40:30 a wooden aircraft and it took a couple of holes in the leading edge of the starboard wing and there was some flak coming up at us too at the same time and when I did a bit of evasive action and pointed to the wing to the navigator, he threw his maps up in the air and ducked and he, bless his heart, he didn't like the look of flak and he didn't like the look of the wing too and I thought he was going to his first air
- 41:00 operational flight, he was going to lose it. So he just ducked and I had to find me way home and on the way home, when we got back towards base I said, "Are you, do you reckon you're really cut out for this mate? You were probably a very good training navigator but not much good on operations." He said, "Look I feel the same way." So as nicely as possible I reported the matter to our squadron doctor and to the CO and
- 41:30 he was just taken off and put back to training work. It was then that I got the bloke who was airsick and so we had had to unload him too and then I got a third bloke.

## Tape 4

00:31 **How many flying hours did you have when you left Narromine?**

Oh

**Roughly? Not many?**

Roughly no, oh well we did 56-60, something like that.

**And then you went on to Wagga, is that right?**

Yep.

**And you were trained on the Wirraway?**

Yep.

**Would you tell us a little bit about the Wirraways you trained on?**

Yeah. The Wirraway was known, it was a vastly different thing from the Tiger for a start. It had

01:00 brakes and it had flaps to slow you down for an approach and it had a couple of guns to practice your air to ground gunnery. It was fairly, I think it had about a 600 horse power engine. It was a very heavy aircraft too and it was said to have the gliding angle of a winged brick, so if you lost power you just phew went down that way. Wasn't a very difficult thing to fly but

01:30 approaching and dropping it in was not easy. By the way we went to Wagga, about 70 of us on the course and during the course after a few weeks both Uranquinty, just out of Wagga and Deniliquin down on the Murray were opened as flying training schools and they took half of our course and sent 'em to Uranquinty. I was in that lot and the other half went

02:00 to Deniliquin. We were 18 course at Wagga and for some reason became 19 course at the other places.

**Did you ever see anybody fly those bricks into the ground?**

No, I didn't but there were a few accidents while we were there too of, well whether it was the aircraft's fault or the bloke's fault, I really wouldn't know but all we knew was that that Jo Blow had had an accident, he was in hospital or so-and-so had made an emergency

02:30 landing. I don't recall really any, certainly none of my friends had any problems.

**Was it a bit bigger or what were the differences between Narromine and Wagga in the barracks?**

Oh gawd yeah, well the Tiger Moth had about a, I think about 80 horse power engine and the Wirraway, a 600 horse power, so there was a hell of a lot of difference there. The Tiger was basically a timber and fabric thing that,

03:00 like a De Havilland aircraft and the Wirraway was all metal.

**Did you have a navigator on board the Wirraway?**

No, had the instructor of course sat in the back seat but no navigator.

**Can you describe this aeroplane a little bit more for us, so take us through from the back to the front that you've got the nose to tail, what did it look like?**

Nose to tail? Oh well, it's got big radial engine in the front for starters, which makes it a lot harder to see out of and

03:30 the front than a Tiger, which had a small in line engine and what, well the all metal thing became, oh very noisy too. The Wirraway, the cockpit had a, many more instruments in it. What they were, the hell they were, now I really wouldn't know but you had real communication with the instructor too. Had you're helmet

04:00 and you just plugged that into something and had your own microphone, you spoke in his ears and he did the same thing to you. It was, the communication was a lot easier in the Wirraway. Both front seat and back seat had as far as I remember similar instruments and then all metal fuselage and all metal tail plane and fin and rudder too in the

**It had flaps?**

Oh yeah it had flaps,

04:30 yeah and brakes yep.

**Did you have a particular instructor for most of your training in that aircraft?**

Yeah did, whose name eludes me at the moment but we did have I think the same bloke right from go to woe, well certainly same bloke at Wagga and the same bloke at a different bloke but the same instructor for the rest of our time.

**Was he a particularly, do you remember much about his instruction?**

Yeah, pretty quiet bloke

05:00 and not one that, there was no shouting or anything. He was a good instructor again too. I think having a good instructor in Tigers and a good instructor in Wirraways certainly helped me through the course and I think it would have done for most blokes too. I think that instructors are, they're sort of half born and half made. People with a nice quiet approach to other people to my way of thinking make good instructors. Those who tend to

05:30 do the lolly and scream and shout at you, well oh it's all you can do to put with him, you're glad to get out of the bloomin' - out of the aircraft.

**Must have been a few occasions where you gave them a bit of a fright though?**

Oh probably were, yeah. Can't recall particular ones but I imagine that my first landings in a Wirraway must have had the instructor grippin' his seat yeah. 'Cause they weren't, like once you chopped the power in a Wirraway it just shoo -

06:00 it went. If you were above your 10 feet there you really heard the under cart growl and groan at what you were putting it through.

**What about the rest of the set up of those two flying schools? Was it very similar to what you've described already at Narromine?**

Yeah very much. In fact the Uranquinty place had been somebody's wheat paddock. The air force brought it off 'em, put up the buildings and the parade

06:30 ground and that sort of stuff and then they put down this, I think from memory they had the summer field track, the wire mesh stuff there for - course where those Tiger Moths could land on even soft stuff or not very solid ground and the Wirraway being a much heavier aircraft needed something underneath it to stop it sinking into soft soil and so I, we had from memory, I had a couple of runways there.

07:00 It was right, the railway station was here, the town, well you couldn't call it a town. I think there was a general store and the boozier, the pub and that was all at Uranquinty and a few silos. Matter of fact I was back there last September when the Governor General opened the, our, the late Governor General opened the, yet another notice board, a Sicard you might call it. Every year a, Uranquinty committee team

07:30 headed by a retired Professor of Nuclear Science, Doctor of Nuclear Science, Peter Ilrey lives at Wagga gets another one of these notice boards, put up invites, the Governor General, up he opens it - a few speeches. They put, Wagga City Council nowadays puts up a marquee and supplies seats and cup of tea and bickies and all that sort of stuff and it's quite a thing. Matter of fact it was that occasion

08:00 that they put up this new plaque thing and then they had lunch at the farm house where the people who had the farm before the air force took over the air force sold it back to them and they, it's wheat paddock again but they invite these people who are commemorating the fact that the air field was

there. They invite people back in there on that occasion every year now.

**Were there married**

08:30 **quarters in any of these places?**

Oh no.

**You mentioned your wife had come up to Wagga?**

Yep.

**Did she come up to Deniliquin, Uranquinty as well?**

No, well Uranquinty was only about 10 mile out of Wagga and we'd have a bus go into town, well whenever you could get leave, usually at the weekends at say a day, maybe two days and that was all.

**You didn't have leave, you were allowed to go to the pub there? You mentioned that the pub was**

Oh no there was, while you were on duty

09:00 and not that it stopped us sneakin' out the back gate from time to time and having a night out over at the boozier and

**Do you remember any of those times?**

Oh particular time when one bloke, one particular mate, he had a very small denture just the front, he got crook. And we only got out of the pub, we were crossing the road to go to the railway line and into the thing when he had a big spit and he dropped

09:30 his dentures in the gutter. And it was dark and I remember all of us, some of us standing at a distance mind you saying "Have a look up this way, look down that way, look it might be there, look". And nobody was prepared to go and give him a hand except advice but that was the only. But also coming home on leave one time, middle of bloody winter too, oh gees it was cold and I remember there wasn't much room in the

10:00 train and not seats for anybody, for everybody and I remember lying down the bloomin' corridor go to sleep and it was freezing. I'd had the good fortune to dose me up with OP [overproof] rum before I got in there, so I slept pretty well and pretty loudly although it was cold and got through the trip back to Sydney.

**So you'd obviously moved on from the sarsaparillas at this stage?**

Oh yeah, well that was a couple of years later.

**Was there a bit of a drinking**

10:30 **culture in the air force do you think?**

Oh well not early on, I think there certainly was later yep.

**When you say later what do you mean by that?**

Oh well at Christmas '44 for example, we were still at Thorney Island in England and it was a very, very bad Christmas as far as weather was concerned and we didn't fly for oh three or four days and we had a navigator, a French bloke Philip Leevry,

11:00 he was on 21 Squadron and Philip, he was much older than any of us too but he had shares in a champagne company, the Piper-Heidsieck Champagne Company, which had been freed by this time too and he flew over there over towards his company, loaded the aircraft up with as much champagne as he could load into and flew back. And on this occasion when we couldn't fly it was about Christmas, New Year,

11:30 we had a really good celebration of the time of the year. So much so that that Philip and I got, had opposite sides and we started a fight with soda water things, no the, you know where you, and we made a hell of a mess of the mess and we got hauled up before the station commander the next day, the pair of us. We were told "What low so-and-sos we were

12:00 and that we would have to pay for whatever damage we'd caused to property", which we did "But under no circumstances were we to do it again". Well at the time we were in the mess because at that time we were practising to go over to France and live under canvas and we were living under even though it was Christmas and snow on the ground, we were living over on the other side of the aerodrome under canvas when we had this beautiful permanent mess with rooms heated

12:30 and all that stuff in it and I think that probably put us off side with the whole organisation really. And this is probably why we let go a bit but anyway it wasn't a very happy occasion. There was a lot of grog flowed on the night and I think just about everybody was gone when we got stuck into this soda water stuff. Not a very happy occasion to remember either except that

13:00 it's the sort of thing that you can't forget.

**The tradition of rum rations that you mentioned before, was that something that you were introduced to in training?**

Oh no, it was essentially an operational thing and I think well it must have been part of the system because our squadron doc was the man in charge of the rum and every now and again he'd charge around in my room I shared with my navigator

13:30 and he'd say, "Here, plant this", and he'd produce about a gallon jar of OP rum. And I'd stick it in my wardrobe and he'd say because I'm in charge of it, he said, "If anybody does happen to order the thing and they find they're a couple short I'll be gone." He said, "They won't think of lookin' for you or anybody else." So I took the risk and did it and then when we didn't, when we had a non-flying, a non-operational night we might have a little rum session. We'd buy a couple of bottles of bloomin' coca-cola or something and

14:00 iron ourselves out on this gallon of rum.

**When you were still in Australia was rum an air force drink? Did you know anything about rum at the time?**

No.

**Drank coca-cola? What did you drink?**

Oh just a beer, yeah.

**How long were you training on Wirraways for?**

From memory about three months and this'd be

14:30 say from February, March, April, oh no maybe a bit, hang on, November, December, January oh early '42 anyway. The first half of '42, wouldn't be the whole, be about three or four months.

**Was the Pacific war on?**

Yeah that started December '41.

**And did that change your attitude towards the war?**

Oh I don't think so, I think it was all war

15:00 anyhow, yeah.

**In Australia though, was there a noticeable change in how people were reacting?**

Oh yeah, God yeah, yep.

**Can you talk a bit about that?**

Well the fact that they started blackout curtains and this bit of antipathy towards people still going overseas and I think there was also additional recruiting

15:30 drives taking place at the time too because then we had, who did we have? The 6th Division away, 7th Division probably being formed, 8th was away and then came back, and went to Singapore and all got imprisoned there, and the 9th was underway as well, though our blokes were different in as much as we had this bloody Empire

16:00 Air Training Scheme, which was organised by the Poms to provide them with crews. And it wasn't, even though we were six months into the war out here or seven months into the war out here, we still went away under that arrangement which wasn't a very popular move with a lot of people includin' my misses and I s'pose all the other married fellas too.

**Did she get angry at you or?**

Oh no.

**How did that frustration come through?**

Oh just the unhappiness at the

16:30 fact that it's happened.

**Do you remember the midget submarine attack on Sydney?**

Well yeah it was in May '42, I was still at, up at Uranquinty or Uranquinty at the time and my wife was living with her parents at Bower Street, Manly and that was one of the nearest, near targets anyway. Then there was some shells fired or bombs dropped or something like

17:00 that and on eastern suburbs and north eastern suburbs and then the little midget submarines came into the harbour and I think they sent, knocked off a torpedo or two aimed at a big American warship that

was there but finished up hitting the Kuttatubul, a little training ship, I think from memory of ours yep.

**What news did you get of this up where you were?**

Oh well, the newspaper and the radio news yep.

**How did you react?**

17:30 Well you know, well it's happened here too, it's about, that's about all from memory I recall of that.

**The bombing of Darwin - the same sort of impression on you?**

Yeah February '42 yeah. I wonder if we'll finish up there was our thoughts at the time. Somebody's got to go up and in fact I think all they had were Wirraways up there too for that matter.

**Did you have mates who were still in the CMF who were heading off to?**

Have the what?

**Did you have mates who were still in the CMF who were heading off to**

18:00 **New Guinea at this stage?**

I don't recall having any contact with the blokes still in the CMF then.

**Well, what about your brothers, had they joined up?**

Yeah, well only one brother, yeah. Oh yeah, he was in the army and matter of fact he was driving a bloomin' truck up the track as they call the Adelaide to the Stuart Highway now and he was driving a truck up there for a fair bit of that time in the war.

18:30 **He wasn't in Darwin at all during?**

Not stationed in Darwin, no. Not as far as I know. He went, he was actually invalided out of the army at some time, I don't know when with flat feet or some darn thing. He couldn't march too far but he was a very good photographer and he applied to be transferred to public relations of the army and he got a job with 'em. In fact so much so that he followed the army

19:00 up through the islands and finished up with the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan for a few years.

**Did you know much about public relations in the army and air force? Did they have any role in your training?**

Not out here but in the later years at, in '44 I think it was, we had a bloke come out and take some photographs and interview some people. He was from the BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation],

19:30 name I can't recall and an Australian photographer was with him too and they took a lot of photos of our unit there and interviewed - matter of fact they interviewed specific people and I had an interview with this English fella too. Oh gosh names, names, names, no can't think. He came out not long after the war. Matter of fact he was still with the BBC then

20:00 too. When he came out it was only a few days after the BBC was relaying to us the world title fight between Dave Sands, who was our middle weight or whatever champion and some bloke over there and they were in about the second last round when it was time for the BBC news, so what'd they do? Cut the fight off and put the news on! And didn't I give him some hammer over that when he got here too. No but they were our only contacts

**Do you remember**

20:30 **that interview? It must have been quite exciting to be interviewed by the BBC?**

Oh yeah, not a lot, don't recall much. He asked a few questions but I think he went round a fair number of us too in the half a day or so or day he was there. He would have been covering the group captain and wing commander and the other flight commander and meself and whoever else he could grab.

**464 Squadron has gone down in history, quite famous squadron for some of the operations they did,**

21:00 **did you know that at the time?**

No didn't really. We thought it was just you know, they were, it was work and we were doing our work and ultimately when it came out that not many squadrons had done so much specialised work. We were very sort of happy with that too, happy with the knowledge.

**Someone looking at this interview later on the future they might be able to find that BBC interview, you might be able to do a bit of research?**

Yeah.

**It'd be interesting to see if it still exists. How**

- 21:30 **much information were you given about what you might be called upon to do in training? Do you remember being told about what, how you might be deployed?**
- In training?
- Yeah, before you left Australia anyway?**
- No, not much, no, none at all. All we knew was we'd done training on single engine aircraft and when we got over there, we were either in fighters or what we were doing, army cooperation or whatever but had no idea what we were up for.
- 22:00 **Were you trained in aircraft identification?**
- Oh yeah. Well even at Bradfield we had that when we were doing just maths and Morse code and that.
- Into '42, were these Japanese aircraft as well as German aircraft?**
- Yeah
- Did you just assume you were going to Europe or did you think you might be employed north?**
- Oh didn't have a clue really till we were finished training, and they sent us back to Bradfield, which was an embarkation depot as well as an
- 22:30 Initial Training School and then it was only then that we discovered where we were going.
- When you discovered where you're going, can you tell us about that moment?**
- Oh yeah, well they simply said "You're going overseas going to England" and
- 23:00 but they took us into Central Railway Station to go to England. So we went to Melbourne by train and stayed a couple of days there at the showground before we got that boat to New Zealand and another boat to England from there.
- Was your wife still pregnant?**
- No, she'd had the kids the day I left Sydney.
- That must have been really difficult to do?**
- Oh for her it was, yeah. It was not easy to get when I said,
- 23:30 "I'd like to stay here for a while." They said, "Sorry you're on this on this embarkation, you've gotta go." Said, "Well the least I can do is to get off the bloody bus at Crows Nest and go down and see her in the maternity ward at the Mater Hospital", and I was allowed to do that but I only had a half an hour with her and I had to dash into Central then to get the boat to, the train to Melbourne.
- Did you feel like going AWL [Absent Without Leave]?**
- No, I didn't no.
- 24:00 No, well that would have been the end of whatever I'd been trained for anyway, would have had to do time and all that stuff and maybe get a job that I didn't want to do yeah, so I didn't really feel like it. I felt pretty crook about leaving but I didn't feel like deserting or AWOL-ing.
- How did you're your wife take it?**
- Not too well of course but and she wasn't very well herself for a few weeks after
- 24:30 the twins were born but got through it and brought the kids up very nicely for the, for my homecoming when they were three years old. I got through that part with no nappy changing and all that stuff.
- You then went down to Melbourne and you embarked on the Waipawa?**
- Waipawa - WAIPAWA.
- 25:00 yep.
- And that was going where?**
- It was goin' to go to England with a load of, it was one of these refrigerated cargo things that it took oh mutton and lamb and that from New Zealand to England but it broke down in Auckland or for some reason we were taken off it. We were told it had broken down and it was then that we were taken down to Christchurch and got the Empire Star at Littleton direct to England through the
- 25:30 Panama Canal. Didn't, we travelled on our own. We go in any convoy. It was a pretty fast little ship but it was a lovely little ship too. Fact we had what you might call a rather good cruise out of it. The Empire Star was a cargo liner again with accommodation for 12 but we really roughed it. We had 22 on board, we only had a double up in about, oh the majority of the cabins but it was still very comfortable.

26:00 Had stewards on the thing serving you meals and duty free grog and goodness knows, oh it was real - coming home was different. I came home on the Arundel Castle. God knows how many Australians and Indonesians as well but oh we were four to a cabin, six for a cabin you could hardly - if the six of you got in there at a time you couldn't turn round. Somebody had to get undressed and get to bed before the next bloke could come in.

26:30 **Just sticking to the Empire Star for a moment those 22 people**

Yep.

**Were they all people you'd trained with?**

No, some of them were, some of them weren't. They were just 22 lumped together at Bradfield at the embarkation depot.

**And they were air force?**

All air force, yeah. Yeah we had a group leader one Dick, no, forget. I shared with a cabin with George Evatt, who was Doc Evatt's nephew.

27:00 But I got to know the other blokes all pretty well. One fella was keen on the top 10 muse numbers on the hit parade and he brought a couple of bloody records in New Zealand and we had one of these wind up thingo's and he played these things, "Chattanooga Choo Choo" was one and whatever was on the parade then. I remember Ray Fleming, who was a pharmacist from

27:30 oh Woollahra way, big, rather stern sort of a bloke but quiet fellow too, he said to this John Maxwell, he said, "Play that one more time and that'll be the last time." Well Maxwell took no notice of him, played it again and Fleming just went over, picked the bloody record up, went outside and threw it in the sea.

**Did a fight ensue, were there any fighting after that?**

28:00 No fighting, no. Matter of fact we were a pretty easy mob except for those sort of occasions yeah. We used to play bridge and gawd knows what on the way over too. Matter of fact I learnt to play bridge, was the only time I ever played it, was going to England on the boat on the ship.

**How much information did you 22 people know about where you were going?**

All we knew was we were going to England yep. Went through the Panama,

28:30 had a big Pommy skipper. He was very good too. He was always talking about the yellow peril'll come down and get you fellas in Australia but anywhere we went he was only too happy to give us a bit of a briefing on what it was all about. He'd tell us where we were going too because we couldn't impart it to anybody else and that but going through the, just out of the Caribbean we had our closest shave. There must have been a U-boat around but it wasn't too fast as there were

29:00 two torpedoes at us both of which fortunately missed but and missed by quite a long way too and all we knew about it was at the time that he was taking evasive action. We could feel the ship moving this way and that way. Only for about 10 minutes it was all over. He told us that night "That we'd been lucky" but he said "Now, we're going across the Atlantic on our own and we might get some more of that", which we didn't get fortunately.

**That stuff that he talked of the yellow**

29:30 **peril, was this something that was common, was it a common expression in those days?**

Well I don't know. I hadn't thought much about it till the Japs had a go at us. I thought the Japs frankly had their hands full in China and trying to make oh, what the greater Japan or something out of the whole of South East Asia. And some of the places, the Indonesians for example I believe were glad to see 'em because they'd had a belly full

30:00 of the Dutch and all down South East Asia too, you know you had French Indo China and German New Guinea and all that stuff, or they had been German New Guinea and the Yanks had a big, well big say in the Philippines. And I suspect, and of course the Poms in Malaya. What Malaya at the time and Singapore. And I think a lot of these people would have thought well, you know better to have

30:30 some little slit eyed bloke looking after us than the whites from away over there and I don't think that they were very unpopular but the thought of 'em coming out here, I think didn't worry us much till the war was actually on and they were making headway towards Australia.

**In that period while you were still training in Australia was there much sort of propaganda about this idea of a Japanese**

31:00 **invasion and a peril from Asia?**

Well, only when they got close and that was you know in Battle of Coral Sea and the Battle of New Guinea and what not and that was toward, just about the time we were leaving, that was say about the mid '42 and there was a lot a, hell of a lot of talk about it then. Can we defend ourselves? And I think it was one of the Liberal government at the time said,

31:30 "We will defend everything below the Brisbane Line", and drew a line right across the country. So that we'd take positions below that but or including Brisbane I think but anything north of there, they were prepared to, I wouldn't say give away but not to defend too hard.

**Remember discussing this with any Queenslanders at the time?**

No I don't no.

**Would have been some passionate opinions about the Brisbane Line up there?**

Yeah, I guess there would have been too, yeah.

**Well let's talk about when you arrived in**

32:00 **England, what happened, do you remember the moment you arrived, where did you?**

Oh yeah, we went into Liverpool and we were taken by train to Bournemouth yeah to a, oh a receiving depot or something like that they called it. And there were hundreds and hundreds of people there, Australians and South Africans and Canadians Kiwis all waiting for to be posted

32:30 somewhere.

**How did the Empire Air Training Scheme work in this respect? Were you still RAAF or were you on loan to the RAF when you arrived in England or what happened?**

We were still RAAF but we were only paid in equivalent English pounds, which meant that we were very badly off for a while too and until at some time, I forget when it was, when we were

33:00 given the Australian equivalent money and it meant that we, well the English pound was half ours or as you were twice ours, so instead of getting say 20 pounds a week, we only got 10. And when we got our 20, well they paid us in English pounds in 20 too, which was, which made us bloody millionaires pretty well, which meant that we could pay our mess bill without any trouble anyway. But sorry what was your question again?

**I say were**

33:30 **you, did you join the RAF or?**

Oh yep but we were on loan to the RAA, oh the RAF, yep.

**How much is your mess bill? Can you, I've never?**

Well by the time I paid my wife's sustenance out here, out there and I paid my mess bill I was a smoker but I didn't have much money to smoke.

**You said you were on loan to the RAF? At what point did you join 4 Squadron?**

34:00 At 4 Squadron, after I did AFU [Advanced Flying Unit] and OTU [Operational Training Unit] joined 4 Squadron about, oh must have been late '42 or early probably early '43 when I joined them.

**So before that there was AFU and?**

Yeah, Advanced Flying Unit, and Miles Master, and the operational training on the Mustang I

**Where were they held?**

The Miles Master was

34:30 somewhere in Norfolk, oh can't remember the place and the Mustang I was at Hawarden near Chester up in north England. The Mustang I by the way was vastly different to the Mustang that you, that we had out here or later in the war. It was actually ordered by the RAF and made to an

35:00 RAF, not an RAF spec but RAF wanted an aircraft, which would meet this spec and the North American company in England in the States made the Mustang I with an Allison engine. They were later superseded by the Rolls Royce Packard Merlin made in Canada, or in England made in Canada rather or the States but the Mustang I was essentially a low level ground attack aircraft. It was no good up high but you could -

35:30 the one good feature of the Mustang I was the fact that it had the Curtis electric air screw and instead of flying at say take off revs about 3000, a cruising revs about 2100 you could back this thing off to, I think it was about 1300 revs and the thing'd still fly at 200 mile an hour although you were hanging on the prop at the time like that. On and you could stay aloft for seven hours. If you put that together that's 1400 miles

36:00 you could do in the thing. Only had 140-gallon tank, so you were getting 10 mile to the gallon out of a 1150 horsepower. Not too many people tried it by the way too but that it was a good low level aircraft but no bloody good for height at all or distance or speed.

**We'll talk a bit about the Mustangs in a minute. I'm interested to know when you first arrived in England, were you homesick at all?**

Oh don't think so, not very no,

36:30 not much. Thought a fair bit about it but I was a bit of a practical person in this way that there was, if there was nothin' I could do anything about, anything, bugger all I could do about anything, well what's the point in pursuing it? So I'd think a bit about it and think, oh Christ, it'd be nice if I wasn't here, or if I was back there but I can't do it, so let's get on with life.

**Did you write and receive lots of mail?**

Oh yeah, oh gawd yeah. I kept not a diary but I kept

37:00 a thing I would write about three times a week, starters. I think it dwindled to twice later but I'd have a bit of paper with number one letter on such and such a day, number two letter on then and also when I received 'em back from my wife. Mind you she was a bit busy with her hands full with two kids but she wrote pretty regularly and I remember sending back for me football boots too, which I wanted to have a game on

37:30 over there rather than having to buy a new pair and they got lost somewhere in the on the way, I didn't get 'em.

**How long did the mail take at that stage?**

Oh weeks and weeks yeah, yep. Oh I'd say four or five weeks, maybe six yep.

**And how did you receive it?**

Oh just by gettin' a letter.

**In bundles or did it come?**

No yeah, no usually, oh sometimes a couple at a time but usually just we got a daily, our mail delivery

38:00 **What was the experience like of being in this sort of international Empire Air Training Scheme environment in England?**

Oh yeah.

**Did you look at it like that, being people from all different places was it an interesting environment to be in?**

Oh yeah was indeed, yep. Yeah, well we had the chance to learn a little bit about how other people live for example. The Jamaican bloke that I talked about before

38:30 finished up as a West Indian oh officer looking after refugees for, well not refugees but people who want to migrate from West Indies to England. And in fact just before he died he asked his daughter to write to the Air Force Association Australia saying how much he enjoyed the company of the Australians in 464

39:00 and he'd like to be remembered to them and I sent her a letter back I sent about five years ago. Iva De Souza was his name, yeah.

**Did you meet him early on in training or only when you were attached to the squadron?**

Oh no, met him when we were in 464 yep.

**So the blokes that you were training with where were they from?**

Everywhere, our advanced flying unit for example had, they were about

39:30 half Canadians, no a third Canadians, a third Poms and a third Australians. We had had a photograph of our flight, which was in air in the memorial museum and the Australians were about seven or eight of us and about seven or eight of each of the others as well.

**Was it an eye opening experience for you to be surrounded by people from so many places?**

Oh yeah, God yeah. The South Africans for example, they spoke funny but

40:00 they were masters of all those bloody black fellas down there even then.

**Was there conflict between the Poms and the colonials?**

No, oh well I think some of the Poms felt that well you know, we're training you chaps, you should look after us and blah, blah, blah and a few had a bit of an old school tie attitude towards us too, sort of look-down-your-nose at us you know, you just had a public school education

40:30 out there and we went to Oxford and Cambridge and blah, blah, but some of our own fellas did too. We had a bloke on 4 Squadron, there were only three Australians: Tony Tuck, me mate from Bowral, David

Fairburn, who became a Minister in the Fraser Government, I think and myself. And David had been to Cambridge too and he spoke a little bit like a Cambridge man. Nice bloke though.

## Tape 5

00:31 **You were with your mate Tony Tuck - you'd been with him all through the training is that right?**

Pretty well. We were both at Wagga before the Wagga split took place and I went to Uranquinty and he went to Deniliquin. We didn't go overseas on the same ship but we got together again at the Advanced Flying Unit and then at the, on Miles Masters and then at the Mustang OTU.

01:00 And we were both posted to 4 Squadron [RAF] together and then when that broke up we both went to 464 together.

**Can you tell us about a bit about Tony, what was he like?**

Oh yeah he had, Tony is a chartered accountant. I think he did his final exams - by the way I gave his name to your people too, so you might finish up at Bowral some time - final exams when he was training out here.

01:30 Married Doreen, been married, oh Patti, I went to their golden wedding up at Berrima, oh five years ago or so I s'pose.

**Why did Tony and you get on at the time?**

Why did? Oh buggered if I know. Matter of fact we're quite different blokes. He's a quiet studious bloke and I'm a rather noisy bloke, who's not terribly studious

02:00 and how the hell we got together I don't know. We both liked good music and in fact he took me to me first concert at the Albert Hall. It was one of these old Henry J Wood used to run these promenade concerts where people'd stand in the body of the, like stand in the body of the town hall, no seats, they'd just stand for the whole bloody concert and we used to go to London on leave and we'd always go to, you'd get free tickets from a Boomerang Club, the

02:30 air force club there, to a number of places including that. And we used to also grab our free tickets to the concerts. There were always plenty of them because not too many blokes went to 'em but I don't know, we just got on and we've retained our friendship since.

**Can you tell us a bit about the Boomerang Club in London just at that time when you first went there?**

Yeah, it was in Australia House in the Strand, no not in the Strand, in the Aldwych

03:00 I think it was called. The little sort of semi circular thing or like a football thing, the street going around it right near St Clementine's Church, which'd been bombed but it was a place where you got pretty good food for pretty not much money, where there were always these free tickets available to this, that and the other. And also

03:30 invitations to you know Lady this or Lord that's country mansion for the stately home for a weekend or so and so it was a pretty popular place and you'd meet your mates from, it was, I wouldn't say essentially air force but because air force fellas were predominant in there rather than navy or army. It was mostly air force blokes you met there and so every time you were on leave in London you'd always go to the

04:00 Boomerang Club almost every day perhaps and pick up whatever freebies you could and see what else was on. And so I s'pose we used to meet blokes that we'd trained with either out here or gone over on the ship with and parted company with, or some had gone on to bombers and we hadn't and all these sort of meets with bods and spend a bit of time with 'em. Go down to the, there was a place called the Codger's pub

04:30 down Fleet Street, which was a bit of get together for Australian Air Force fellas too and we might meet at the Boomerang Club, have lunch, go down to the Codger's for the afternoon and iron ourselves out and then go to whatever pub we were staying and sleep it off. No, it was a pretty popular get together place.

**Can you talk a bit about your first operational training? You weren't on Mustangs at that stage, you went into another fast aeroplane I've forgotten which one?**

No that wasn't operational training, that was the

05:00 advance flying unit, yeah.

**The advanced flying unit, yeah.**

Yeah the Miles Master.

**Can you tell us a bit about the Miles Master and?**

Yeah, it was a very nice little aeroplane to fly. It was quite, had quite a lot more power than the Wirraway and it was quite lighter too, so it was light on the controls and it fairly easy from my memory to take off and land as well, although it had a higher landing speed than the Wirraway but it was a very nice aircraft to fly and easy to learn

05:30 to fly on too. Like bear in mind that we'd been away from flying now from say about middle of '42 till this is probably getting on to September now, so we'd been off flying for about three months, then we went straight onto these things and I found it a very nice little aircraft to resume your flying training on.

**Did you meet any RAF guys at that time?**

Oh yes they were on

06:00 once we'd left Bournemouth and gone to this advance flying unit that was a mixture of all nations.

**Were you aware of what had happened during the Battle of Britain?**

Oh God, yeah. Well a) we'd read about it at home before we left and b) once you got over there were a lot more tales about it too. Didn't actually meet anybody who'd been involved in it flying Spitters and

06:30 Hurricanes and what not but had plenty of stories about 'em. When there are books being written about it and films being made about it at the time too.

**Did you aspire to fly the Spitfire?**

Yeah I did as a matter of fact but well, just didn't get it, get onto it at all. Well, they had a certain number of blokes went to Spits. I don't think Hurricanes were still flying at the time. I think they were, would have been superseded

07:00 by the time and then the only other I think, the only other aircraft of that type was the Mustang I at the time. Later they got Typhoons Tornados and Tempest and all that stuff but

**The air war had a lot of attrition of pilots. How did this make you feel going into single engine fighter planes?**

Oh well, I don't recall that we lost anybody on 4 Squadron

07:30 while we were three. Tony might be able to tell us more about that but see our jobs were not difficult ones. When we were taking the, taking photos up and down the coast for example the, if you got too close these bloody great 16-inch coastal defence things'd open up on ya when they - when I say open up on you they'd just shoot something out to scare you a bit but when they landed a huge shell like that landed, it was whoo

08:00 the bloomin' water came up like a water spout. But one occasion we - but then again just to finish Mustang bit, when we did the train busting operations there too, our route was chosen very well to make land fall a safe land fall and not over a known flat position or a defended position. And usually the squadron nav [navigation] officer'd work out a nice little flight plan for you, which would take you around the big cities or defended areas and

08:30 another nice little flight plan to get out, so we didn't see a hell of a lot of enemy action at all in Mustangs.

**I was thinking a bit of more of when you were in the training. You knew that this was a fairly dangerous occupation. What was your biggest fear when you were being taught to fly single engine fighters?**

Oh no, well the biggest scare we had was to get to know the damn things and be able to handle 'em properly yeah. Matter of fact the Mustang I had a hand operated

09:00 exit for the hot air coming through the engine and if you were climbing you'd leave that thing fully open, so that the overworked engine'd have plenty of nice cool air coming through it and on an occasion I climbed to x-thousand feet and like all young fellas of your day, you think I wonder how fast this can, thing can do, put it in a downhill hit, forgot to pull that thing up close and before you could say night of air,

09:30 the air temperature or the engine temperature's goin' off the clock till I realised what had happened and put it in it's right position. But thing is, I think just learning to fly the aircraft was enough trouble without wondering what was coming yeah.

**Can you tell us bit more about some of the training you received in the Mustang at that time?**

Oh yeah, oh God yeah, well generally speaking it was local.

10:00 Once you got solo on 'em, it was local course you were solo on 'em all the bloody time, there was no dual but it was mostly cross-country stuff. In a particularly low level area because that was the sort of

work that you were going to do being able to recognise targets or recognise places. I put up a hell of a blow at one time by our - all of us had to fly from Chester

- 10:30 up there down to Peterborough, photograph the railway station and go back again. But the weather turned crook just about the time we were all to take off or well had taken off and we were told "If there was any doubt at all about the weather to turn back and go". Course Muggins says, "Oh no, we'll go through and we'll do this", so I got through all right, through some pretty rough old, you know cloud too. Got to Peterborough, took the photograph of the railway station and headed back but instead of
- 11:00 heading 180 degrees but for some silly bloody reason I only added less anyway and I finished up flying south west instead of north west finished up at Bristol aerodrome Filton Aerodrome at Bristol, where the Bristol aircraft company had it's factory. Full of bloody balloons, when I came out of cloud over there, full of bloody balloons. How the Christ I got down I don't know. Busted a tail wheel when I got down. Had to ring up the boss and tell him that, what had happened. They sent down a proctor or something for
- 11:30 me and a spare tail wheel, which they promptly put on for us then the bloke who, me flight commander brought it down there and I said, "Oh righto now, so we'll go back." He said, "Yeah you can take the proctor." He said, "We're not goin' to trust you with this bloody thing anymore." So I flew the proctor back. And when I got back I got another bollocking from the CO for not being reasonable in me attitude to bad weather flying and also not being able to add 180 on
- 12:00 to the outward bound reading and I was stood up in front of the whole mob. I thought I was goin' to be scrubbed from it but he just said that "None of you fellers want to try and beat the weather like this fella tried". He said "There were only", he said I think there were 10 of us on the exercise. He said "Nine of you did the wrong thing, this bloke did the wrong, ah the right thing, this bloke did the wrong stuff. We don't want any more of that in this flight."

- 12:30 And so again I was feelin,' I was trying to get lost while all this was happening but anyhow it taught me a lesson too.

**But you got the photograph?**

Yeah got the photograph, yeah.

**What else about the Mustang made it a special aeroplane to fly?**

Oh it was a lovely handling thing beautiful aircraft to fly. The Spit [Spitfire] had some, I believe some pretty rough old characteristics

- 13:00 at stalling speed and also the under cart folded outwards and when it closed down it was a very narrow under cart and you could you know, you had to be spot on with the landing or you'd be doing this with the wings. With a Mustang it had a very wide under carriage and it was, that was an easy one or was an easy to make a good safe landing on 'em too but like all singles as you know, are aware when you're taxiing you can't see in front of you, you've got to
- 13:30 taxi like this to make sure you're not going to hit anything but they a good response. Only had 1150 horsepower, I think it was Allison engine but and it made a noise like a bloody chaff cutter too but it was a very good performer at low level. Only had a single stage super charger, wasn't any good over about 10,000 feet but it was a very easy to fly good handling aircraft, which was easy to take off and easy to land too and
- 14:00 some, many of them aren't. Some have got horrible stalling characteristics where you think you're going to do a nice three pointer, suddenly your wing drops and your, all you've done is wreck somethin'.

**Can you describe doing your first stall in training in the Mustang?**

First stall?

**Yeah.**

Oh yeah and it was in very good circumstances. Same as a Wirraway matter of fact. Cloudy day with thin cloud but nevertheless cloud and the instructor said,

- 14:30 "Get, just go above that cloud and do your stalling and see what happens in relation to the cloud", and I did the same thing in a Mustang and it was a nice, you know a nice just drop like that whereas the Spit'd drop, the Mosquito'd drop too but the Mustang was a nice slow stall.

**You had to fly this thing without an instructor for the first time, is that right?**

Mm.

**Can you describe your first solo flight in the Mustang?**

Yeah, a bit

- 15:00 hairy again, a bit like the bloomin' first one in the Tiger Moth or the and the Wirraway too, except that you're doing God knows how many times the speed. And they were, you know they were a 350 mile an hour aircraft but they still only had an approach of about 100 I think miles an hour and as I say a nice

- easy stall, so as long as you got somewhere near the ground you can cut the donk, not necessarily try to
- 15:30 three point it, you know really only the lairs try to three point operational aircraft like that. They had to be flown, it was better to fly 'em on and provided you got to within your know your five or 10 feet of the ground, they were easy to put down but again you couldn't see anything out there, this is how you were landing the bloody thing, this way yeah. That's by the time you pull the nose up again yeah. On the way down you could see 'em of course but once you were on the ground it was a matter of
- 16:00 S-bending on the way.
- How many hours preparation in the other aircraft did you have before you did that?**
- Oh geez, without me log book again but I'd put it down to about 40 or 50 in the Miles Master.
- Was there a lot of pressure on you to really get towards operational squadrons at the time? Were they really needing pilots?**
- Well I don't know that the army cooperation squadrons really needed 'em because
- 16:30 they didn't have much work and they weren't losing people either. And Tony and I got onto 4 Squadron at the same time and but I think it was oh quite some weeks before we did a first op [operation] then and it was only at the rate of, well from as I said before I had three months off work with me health troubles but I've asked him since "How many ops did you do in a bloomin' Mustang?", and he hasn't come
- 17:00 back to me with the answer, so I can't say, but I'd say that it, probably something like oh an op every three weeks or something was their limit.
- Was there a feeling that the colonials or the people from Australian and Canada, and the pilots from the Air Training Scheme were the sort of reserve and the British were the elite pilots?**
- Oh no.
- Was there a sort of separation between them?**
- Don't think so, no I never struck it anyway, no but
- 17:30 well certainly not with 4, oh not anywhere, they, we were treated as much equals where from my memory anyway, wherever we went.
- How did you get on personally with your British commanding officers?**
- Oh all right, yep. Oh I think the bloke who was our flight commander in 4 Squadron was a bit of, a bit up himself you might describe
- 18:00 it as these days. But yeah, we were to them, the old hands in 4 Squadron had been there for ages but they didn't have much work either. They sort of looked down on the new blokes as sprogs who hadn't had any experience and they weren't prepared to impart much either to us. I know that all my bloke did, which bloke'd sign me bloody logbook once a month. If there was anything like a social occasion
- 18:30 going on well the old hands sort of they had their team to go on these social occasions. I think the only time I joined 'em was when one of the flight commanders got married and that was towards the end of our time in 4 Squadron too and we were invited along to that but prior to that game of snooker for example the two flight commanders'd have a game and the rest of you get in the queue and wait for the table.
- 4 Squadron was the AFU or the?**
- Oh no,
- 19:00 the AFU was just AFU and the OTU was just, no it was, I don't know the number of the AFU but no, I don't know the number of the OTU even for that matter, no.
- Did anyone wash out of the AFU at that stage?**
- Yeah there were a couple, yep. I imagine it was the increased speed of the aircraft that
- 19:30 they couldn't cope with and I also remember a couple who couldn't cope with the increased speed in the landing speed of the Mustang too and washed out because of that.
- Any accidents at that stage?**
- Don't recall any particularly, no.
- How were you enjoying your status as a RAAF officer in England?**
- Enjoying a what?
- Your status as a RAAF officer in England?**

Oh all right,

20:00 oh pretty good in fact. Like we could, well commissioned blokes got these invitations to the stately homes and that sort of stuff and more so that non-commissioned did I think. Tony and I used to go up to a place up at, oh up in the Midlands somewhere not far from Birmingham. I remember the old man had a, the Warwick Aviation Company and we

20:30 went there a couple of times on leaves and the old man would take us down to the boozers and sort of show us off as his house guests and what not. Had a couple of good daughters too by gee and Tony and I squired them around the local scene for the time we were there. Yeah what else?

**What do you mean squired them around the local scene? Can you elaborate?**

Oh there'd be a dance on or something like that and they'd want somebody to go, so

21:00 we'd go with 'em. Later on when we were down at Thorney Island there was a WRENs [Women's Royal Navy Service] establishment over at Portsmouth only a short distance away and every now and again they'd put on a dance and they'd want some fellas to dance with and they'd ring up our mob and they'd even send over their bus for us and we'd, we might send about 20 blokes over there and we'd put on a dance as well and we'd have them over to our place and matter of fact my navigator Les Webb,

21:30 me last navigator met his wife that way. His wife, Jean, she was in the [WREN] at Portsmouth and he was with me at Thorney.

**Just in No 4 Squadron can you tell me the, that was an RAF Squadron, was it? Can you tell me just to elaborate a little bit more on its role and perhaps what your role was specifically in that Squadron?**

22:00 Yeah, well I mentioned before it was an army cooperation unit without any army to cooperate with, so they just found work for us like this map photographing the English Channel and North Sea coast and also looking for railway transport to bring to a halt and really that's all we did. I can oh, on an occasion when we were going

22:30 to one of these railway or train busting things I remember Tony and I flew over an aerodrome in France. There were a lot of aircraft on it too, I can't remember what the aircraft were but they were parked and they were parked in a nice neat row and we just gave 'em a nice belt up with our 650 mm or point five rather guns on the way.

23:00 But the thing after we'd started shooting 'em up that worried me a bit was that there were blokes takin' off in all directions and even though it was, they were - it was a German airfield - I thought there might have been frogs who were actually French, who were doing the actual work on there. And we might have been hittin' the wrong fellas, even though we'd damaged some aircraft you know, we might have damaged some of them as well, which wasn't a nice feeling, no.

**Can you cast your mind back to that to that operation**

23:30 **and take us through a particular operation and you know describe in as much details as you can what you were feeling and what decisions you were making along the way?**

What on the Mustang I's?

**Yeah.**

Oh yep. Well used to be a favourite place to go into France in the Bay of the Seine where there was a water tower, which the Huns'd made into a flak tower

24:00 but they couldn't have had any radio or radar because it was a very popular place to make land fall. We didn't have any Gee or radar instruments in the Mustang. You were given a flight plan based on the met [Meteorological] fellas, the meteorological blokes', idea of what the wind should be all the way over and so all you saw was water for a hundred and whatever miles and you hoped that you're

24:30 gonna hit the right place and you're flying at very, very low altitude too, so that you wouldn't attract any attention from their radar.

**How low were you when you flew across the Channel?**

Oh probably only 50 feet or something like that.

**And how many of you in the flight?**

Oh only two, two at a time, yeah. Tony and I flew as a pair too on, quite often.

**Radio silence?**

Hey?

**Are you under radio silence?**

Oh yeah but we'd make this, oh actually the radio silence didn't matter terribly much

- 25:00 till we, when you were within about 25 or 30 km of the French coast. At that level it was a bit hard to pick up messages but we'd sweat on making landfall with this flat tower because it was seemed to be nobody very rarely on duty on it. One or two blokes got shot up but we would take the opportunity to test our guns on that bloody flak tower and we'd go in at the same time, almost
- 25:30 flak tower a couple of hundred yards up there bb bb bb bb couple of times. And I can't remember ever seeing we made that flight, that landfall probably half a dozen times. Can't remember ever seeing anybody manning the bloody Bofors guns on top of it. Goodness knows what they did but anyway the flak tower must have been bloody near brought down by our guns and from there on we were given say a length of
- 26:00 railway line to

**Can you specifically give us you know a specific operation that you?**

Yeah, I'm doin' it now.

**Ok, yep.**

We'd, I can't tell you exactly the names of the places but this is on the railway line south of Paris, oh long way south of Paris and it's say a oh 50 mile length of railway line, which is probably not far from where the Germans'd be bringing up supplies for coastal defence.

- 26:30 And our objective would be to make after landfall, all flying low level just pin pointing various things on your way. Making probably, making little adjustment for course because of, maybe you'd found that the landfall, you could see the flak tower up there but you were flying down here, so there'd be obviously the wind was a bit further in that direction than the met had given you.
- 27:00 And we'd make the adjustment on the on land as well. Get to the start of our railway run, go up that railway, maybe see in the 50 mile you might see half a dozen trains and have a belt at the engine with each time both of you flying side by side and having a go at it. Well at the time you were actually attacking the leader, Tony was leader in most of ours. He'd attack and I'd go in almost behind him and we'd have a go, have a belt at the
- 27:30 engine then once we got the end of our 50 mile stretch, we'd just take off for home on our pre determined course. Again making a little bit of an adjustment for that wind, which mightn't have been, well mightn't have been quite right but also exiting the land would also be made at a safe place, so that you didn't get belted up by coastal defence stuff there. Never saw a single bloomin' German fighter while we were doing that
- 28:00 by the way. And we did it well, as I say I only did 10 ops but I think only two of those were the coastal photography things and the other eight were the same sort of job and yeah never saw a German fighter at all.

**And when you were flying up over the coast and over France, how low were you flying?**

Oh well just up and over, well anything higher than a few hundred feet and you're subject to

- 28:30 say like machine gun fire too and so to keep that to a minimum as you know, if an aircraft comes over very low here you don't hear it till it's just about here and by the time you're looking up to see where it is it's gone. Well, we were doing the same thing too, so that the lower we were - I'm talkin' about 100 feet or less or something like that. The only time you get up is if you saw power lines coming or something like that, that you felt was
- 29:00 a danger to you and you'd get up a bit higher, just get over 'em and down again.

**How did you feel on your first operation?**

How do you feel?

**Over France?**

Oh Christ I wouldn't say shit scared but I knew darn well where I was and I knew darn well that I wanted to get in and out of there as safely and quickly as I could as well as doing the job.

**Did the possibility of capture cross your mind?**

Oh yeah too right, yep it did and always the thought

- 29:30 is you're probably aware when you're flying around here is, if me engine does fail, where's the nearest paddock you know? And although we, you know we had plenty to do, and we were doing say 250 mile an hour too, you're still aware of the fact that you mightn't be up there all the time and if I've gotta go, well you know there's gotta be something over there where I can get down.

**Did you have anything in particular in your kit that would allow you to -**

- 30:00 **well what would happen if you came down? What was the contingency?**

Oh yeah right, yep well we had detachable flying boots for starters stitched around there. You could rip 'em apart from your shoes and so you wouldn't look like an airman there. We also had a little compass that fitted into a stud. We had an escape kit, which included by the way an English flag, a Union Jack

30:30 with the words "Yar Angla Charnan" on it, so if you were caught anywhere near the Russians you just yelled out, "I am English to them" hopin' to God they wouldn't do the wrong thing by ya. And there were oh little pills, bandages like I said, a first aid, a very small first aid kit and a pocket-knife that fitted into your flying boot, a little thing in your flying boot

31:00 and I think it was a bar of chocolate or real hard bloody stuff anyway, that it would see you through the first day that you were down there, your escape kit.

**Can you tell us a bit more about those flying boots? I hadn't heard that before. What was the purpose of that?**

Oh well, so that you wouldn't be walking around in flying boots obviously a bloomin' airman and you could cut the legging part off and you'd still have your shoes to walk around in. The legging part'd be say down there

31:30 a bit. They'd be a bit bigger than an ordinary shoe but not much. Like the upper would come a bit higher than an ordinary shoe but the stitching around there was easy to break. You could, I think you could tear it but anyway your pen knife could cut it out.

**What other things did they brief you on in case of capture?**

Oh naturally enough, all you give 'em is your name, rank and number

32:00 and you try to evade if you can. In fact one of our mates up in Jack, Bob Walton up at Buderim, we always win the war again when I get up there. A lot easier with no bastards shooting at you too you know but he evaded for some months. Don Shanks evaded for some months. In fact there's a, I've got a book on our squadron over here too that The Gestapo Hunters it's called.

**That was 4 Squadron or 464?**

Hey? 464 yeah

32:30 and there's a photo of Don Shanks with his little black beret. He hung around with a, he could speak good French and he hung around with the Frogs. He did a lot of sort of not espionage but got a lot of information anyway and brought it back to our lines. He was an old bloke.

**Did you keep your French up at this time?**

Oh Christ, as good as it could be, oh at that time. That was before we went over there but

33:00 oh my Frog was purely school boy stuff, that was not much good in practise.

**Did you lose, was there any losses during those 10 operations?**

Any what?

**Any colleagues that were, lost over France at that time?**

In Mustangs no, don't remember anybody bein' lost on the whole year or so we were there.

**What about the, when you were shooting up those trains?**

33:30 **Were you, were these targets, so called targets of opportunity? That's what they call them these days or were you sure you were shooting up German trains?**

Oh well, any trains that were, well particularly freight trains that were moving around France would have been thought to have been used by the Germans rather than just well, I know I never attacked passenger trains at all thinking that they'd be well - whether they had troops in 'em or not, I wouldn't

34:00 know. But you'd assume that there'd be a fair bit of French people amongst the passengers there, so I never attacked any passengers but any freight train we had a go at.

**How were you able to identify the targets if you're coming in so low, you wouldn't have too much time to decide about that sort of thing, would you?**

Oh well you've got enough time for it really. You see either railway carriages or goods trains, yeah.

**Do you swing around and have another pass**

34:30 **at them or how do you attack a train?**

No, straight up the bloody line. No you're asking for trouble havin' another, pass yeah. Well in this way, that eventually, they started putting flat carriages on all trains, both passenger and freight but apart from that to do a 360 degree turn or eight one turn and get back into 'em is giving the local fighters a chance to get up and at you, whereas

35:00 if you just have the one pass and shoot through, you're probably right out of their area by the time they could get airborne, even though they might phone on to say that "There's somebody comin' up the line, comin' up the railway line", could have another go but nevertheless we never struck that. There was no sign of an enemy aircraft while I was flying Mustangs over France.

**The aircraft performed ok during the time on those 10 operations?**

Yeah,

35:30 oh yeah no worries.

**Did you carry a revolver a weapon at all?**

Yep, had a Smith and Weston 45, the bloody things, God it was heavy too. Yeah, always carried that.

**Did you know how to use it?**

I think we had one lesson on it but you almost needed two hands to pick the damn thing up it was a huge bloomin',

36:00 bloomin' thing. Why they gave it to air crew, I'll never know when you could have had a, say a little pistol. Anyway, that was the standard issue, so we were stuck with it, always wore it though too.

**What did it feel like coming back after, once you'd finished an operation getting back over the Channel?**

Oh felt bloody good, yeah. We're on holidays now, we've finished all that, we can go home and have a good meal.

**But you're not quite home after you've got over the Channel? You've got a bit of water to cross?**

Oh yeah, have

36:30 got a bit yeah. That story'll come later when we get to Mosquitos but well with the Mustang we, well we didn't have to fly low anymore. We got up to a few hundred feet, so that you had a comfort zone between you and the water and just kept an eye out for you know, for them and got yourself home.

**Was your neck getting stiff looking for them?**

Oh gawd yeah.

**Can you [?] what happened, how are you looking for the fighters?**

37:00 Oh number two was supposed to do all the lookout for fighters, the leader, he just navigates you home. But we worked on the principle that four eyes were better than two and each of us would be on this all the way you know, not all the way but you'd have a quick look up and down and that and leave it oh half a minute and have another look up and down.

**So how often are you doing that?**

37:30 Oh well, I used to do it about every half minute on the basis that, well if you missed something last time and he's on your, on the way to, you won't have a lot of time to do anything if you don't check regularly.

**Is your neck getting stiff doing that sort of thing?**

Oh Christ yeah it did.

**Is it something, I can imagine something you wouldn't notice at the time but you get back at the end of the day and you'd, your neck could be?**

Yeah, you think oh Jesus what happened?, you know, how'd I get this?

38:00 **In the Mustang did you carry a life raft?**

No, had a Mae West [rhyming slang: life vest] and nothin' else. Oh had, oh 'varey' type things to, oh not 'varey' so much as Christ, what was it? You got it out and pulled the bloomin' thing then threw it away and it'd send smoke and God knows what. Air sea rescue were s'posed to know that you're on the way

38:30 'cause you called out "May Day" anyway and they got a few seconds to put a beat on you and know roughly where you are and I think that's all we had. When you get round to Tony, ask him, he's got a better memory than me but I think that we just pulled a bloomin' bit of thread, not thread, a bit of paper tape or some darn thing like that and you had a few seconds to toss this thing away from you, so you wouldn't get caught in the smoke yourself.

**What was the hairiest**

39:00 **mission you had on the Mustangs?**

Oh, don't know that any of them were. Didn't see much, flak didn't see any bloody fighters. Can't say I

really had a bad one on Mustangs in 12 months flying 'em or less me sick leave, yeah. Tony might have a different story but mine was pretty easy lot of operations.

39:30 **How are the ground crew in looking after you when you got back and looking after the aircraft, how much did you rely on them?**

Oh Christ, everything mate, everything yeah. There wasn't much ever to report about the Mustang because a) you didn't have any bomb, you only had a single engine, no bomb bays, no drop tanks, no anything else bar the fact that the engine went well and the aircraft handled well yep.

**Can you describe the sort of characters in your ground crew?**

40:00 On the Mustangs, I don't remember too much about 'em cause we didn't have our own aircraft on Mustangs and so we, you know, we'd have you as the engine man one day and Chris [interviewer] the next day and so on. So we got to know 'em but not all that well. Unlike when we got to 464, when we did have our own aircraft and our own ground crew but

40:30 I really, I can't remember a single bloke's name on the Mustangs ground crew for that matter. You know we could only fly 10 ops in a bloody month in a year and in different aircraft too and you don't see these fellas unless you're well - we used to do a bit of training you know, cross country training and that sort of stuff too. And we did a bit of ground gunnery and also bombing and what not too, no not bombing on the Mustangs, just a bit of ground gunnery but

41:00 you don't really get a chance to know or get to know these blokes well. And I s'pose I was only average in it. I don't think that, well except the flight commanders would have had their own aircraft and they would have got on, I would think they would have got to know their ground crew very well but for the rest of us, well we knew he was Joe and he was Jack and he was Harry and all that but you know nothing personal.

**Did you ever use the drop tanks?**

Well, not on Mustangs no. We did on Mosquitos, yeah.

## Tape 6

00:32 **Right Ern, can you tell us a bit about why you decided to try and get a transfer away from 4 Squadron?**

Oh the 4 Squadron was disbanded.

**Oh Ok.**

Yeah and well actually they were going to, they were disbanded from Mustang low level work and they were going to convert to PRU Photograph Reconnaissance [Unit] Spitfires and the job there

01:00 was to fly at about 35,000 feet with an aeroplane full of bloody cameras and petrol and just take photos and that didn't appeal to Tony and meself, so we decided we'd move.

**Not even the chance to fly a Spitfire you mentioned that was?**

No.

**You'd lost all urge to that by this stage?**

Oh to do that sort of work, yeah.

**You'd already been taking some photographs though in the coast line work. How did that work, did you take the photos yourself**

01:30 **or did you have a photographer on the plane?**

Yeah no nobody else, it's only single seater aircraft, the Mustang, so we flew, we had cameras going right angles to the coast and also at about 45 degrees and we've, we had to fly straight and level along the coast for a certain period certain distance and just operate the camera as we turned to make that run and so

02:00 we were running say, oh I don't know five or 10 minutes, something like that making lovely shots of the coast and but again that was low level, that was only a few hundred feet and it was only a short distance, a short time to where by the photographic reconnaissance thing is flying a long way at a high altitude and takin' lots of photos. Doin' nothin' else really.

**So did you have any trouble in leaving the squadron?**

02:30 None whatever, no matter of fact we might say we cheated our way out of it a bit - to get a job as a PRU bloke at 35,000 feet you had to pass a decompression chamber test too and they had this compression thing in there and you were able to look through the window and see what happened to the blokes and

as they'd decompress further and further people'd start to go arr arr arr arr. So Tony and I just looked at each other and

03:00 said, "This is goin' to be easy." So I'm not sure whether you had, whether we did it or whether we would certainly try to fail the test and we did fail the test, so we were out of work then.

**Did that have any repercussions on that career? That wasn't marked down against you or anything?**

No none, oh none whatsoever. About half the blokes failed.

**So then you decided you would apply to RAAF squadron. Can you tell us a bit about that**

03:30 **process? What did you start?**

Yeah well we, I think we got the addresses or we just got the drill from the Air Force Headquarters in Cuttag House [?] in Kingsway in London and we just addressed the letters to the commanding officer of this, that and the other squadron and that's right, I think I mentioned we didn't get an answer from one of them. Another bloke said, "Well, put your application through the usual channels." and

04:00 Iredale said, "Well I'm short of crews, finish up there on Frid'y night, have the weekend off and I'll fix up the paperwork. Front up to me on Monday morning." And it was low level, similar work most of it to what we had been doing, so that sort of suited us down to the ground.

**Those other squadrons you mentioned, they were all in Europe, the ones you applied for?**

Oh yeah.

**Well, what was your status at the time after 4 Squadron had dumped you for**

04:30 **failing decompression chamber? What did you, were you going to get attached to some other squadron anyway or?**

Oh, we would have, yeah we would have been transferred somewhere but we would have been transferred at the pleasure of the RAAF or the, rather than at somewhere of our own choice.

**Did it cross your mind to try and get a posting back to the Pacific at any stage?**

Didn't no. No, I guess we should have thought about that but didn't.

**It was no longer an issue so much as it had been earlier on in the war?**

No.

05:00 **Can you tell me a little bit, before we go on, about the reason you only flew 10 operations on Mustangs? You were ill, I believe?**

Well, apart from the fact that I was crook for three months of it, there was no army cooperation to do and so all the army cooperation squadrons and there were at least, well I know of 4 Squadron, 24,

05:30 168 and 268 - that's four squadrons that were in the same boat and they were all just doing, oh hack work rather than real work I'd say. They were, well it's not as though they had you know, you've got a plan for these four squadrons to attack enemy trains every day in the week. It was just as though they were feeding us enough work to stop us becoming disinterested and it was pretty unhappy sort of a way to be,

06:00 fightin' a war.

**You also became ill. Can you tell us a bit about your illness?**

Oh yeah, again Tony and I did a blooming, what the heck was it? A course down at Handover down in the, on the Wiltshire Downs and again this was real army cooperation work, where you fly up and down behind your own lines where the artillery are shooting at somewhere and

06:30 you tell 'em where their shells are landing you know - couple hundreds yards short or two hundreds yards too long or whatever. Well there was no way the war was goin' to be waged that way in Europe anyway but they were still training us on sort of pre-war theories. Anyway, we went down to this course and we had to go by train and coming, we were up in Norfolk, so was

07:00 a train down to London and a train down to Handover and a bus both ends as well and when we got back to Norfolk, the place where we were at Norfolk - we were in a beautiful lodgings there by the way too - we were in a stately home but we got out of the bus and had about half a mile to walk and I only went a couple of hundred yards and couldn't go any further. So I just sat down on me kit bag while Tony went on and reported this to squadron doctor. He came down and picked me up, took me back to his surgery

07:30 and said, "Oh you've got glandular fever mate." So they raced me down to the local hospital for treatment for glandular fever, which lasted oh quite a while and then I went and I was losing weight too and when I got over the fever thing I was puttin' weight back on, I went back to the squadron. They

gave me a couple of weeks' leave and said "You've got to get your tonsils out now 'cause this is where you got the thing", so I went to the, into hospital at Ealy near Cambridge, where my tonsils were removed and

08:00 all in all that took three months there, which seemed a hell of a long time but it did before I was fit enough to go back.

**Glandular fever is quite contagious, is it not?**

Oh yeah, I was in a ward well away from everybody else, anyway what, I forget what you call these things now.

**Isolation.**

Isolation ward, thank you.

**Is that something the air force did quite often if somebody caught something contagious?**

Oh yeah.

**What was the procedure when that happens?**

08:30 Oh well simply that. You were diagnosed with those contagious thing and so you were put out of the way, so you didn't wreck the whole bloomin' squadron thing. I don't think I passed it on to anybody by the way, no. Certainly not to Tony, and he was the bloke I was closest to.

**You never had to go off work for any amount of time or?**

No.

**Did you fully recover from that because it stays in your system for a long time, doesn't it glandular fever?**

Yeah, well it certainly did. Oh I did fully recover, oh yeah,

09:00 yep. Well, I played footy with 'em after we - to, so I was, I got over it all right.

**How many weeks in all did it knock you out for?**

Well a total of about three months from the time I was, first felt crook, yep.

**And what were the different stages then once you felt crook, what were the symptoms of this three months?**

Oh, gee well in this little isolation thing at Ealy for what seemed to be ages just

09:30 lying there, I remember reading Agatha Christies, oh Christ by the dozen you know. When you've got nothin' to do, just sit and read and you can get through a book in a day and a half or so and I went through their library of Agatha Christie's and became one of her real fans at the time. But it seemed to take ages before they let me out and I was getting, I was considered to be over the fever bit

10:00 but because of the loss of weight I had to, I was on leave for a while just to just to build up weight and that. And then I went back to the squadron and I just did sort of hack work around the office and just enough to keep me quiet and not run me out of leave, yep.

**Did you spend much time in hospital where you weren't isolated? Did you get to see any other inmates of the hospital you were in?**

No, don't recall that.

**Patients?**

I did when I got my tonsils out. I

10:30 was only bedded there for a couple of days and they still wanted to keep an eye on me because of the fever background and so I was there for, oh I think a week or two after that and just walked around the place saying g'day to people gettin' 'em cups of tea if they wanted 'em, that sort of stuff.

**What kind of patients were in the hospital?**

Oh just general hospital bods. No, there were no, oh well there were apart from the,

11:00 when I told people I'd been in an infectious diseases, lot they thought you'd had all sorts of bloody things, you know and it was hard to talk to people in the local pubs and that after it too. As soon as you mentioned about being, oh people'd back off a few yards. But oh, but well no, in the place itself there were only sort of general purpose hospital patients if I can put 'em that way, with all sorts of ailments and busted bones

11:30 and what not and so it was only a question of walkin' around and keepin' myself out of trouble and helpin' those that needed help a bit.

**It wasn't so much a military hospital, they weren't wounded?**

No it wasn't, no.

**Did you ever at any point in your service life see a lot of wounded people?**

Well, yeah I did. Later in me time, oh it was about a month after D Day,

12:00 I had to, we had to bail out in the middle of the night over France and broke a leg and I was in casualty clearing station for starters then flown back to England and I was in hospital in a Dakota with about oh maybe 25 others or something and in hospital there for a while only for a little while, me leg was attended to and they stuck a walking plaster on it with a metal heel and

12:30 I could walk around, so I just went on leave till I was, it was ready to come off, then sick leave.

**Was that at the time when most of the D-day casualties were still coming in or was it a long time after?**

No, oh no, it was a month after D-day, so there were some army and other casualties coming back and oh, I was just one of those.

**Did it give you cause to reflect on the different kind of war that the people on the ground might have been fighting?**

13:00 Oh yeah did, well the reason I busted me bloody leg was that we got shot up in the middle of the night, two o'clock in the morning from memory, or somethin' like that, when we were doing a train bust at night time between Orléans and Tours. That was our section of railway line for the night and I think I mentioned before that the Germans got the bright idea of putting flat guns on trains and

13:30 this is about our third or fourth train for the night and the others were easy but this one had about a flat gun every 10 cars or so and as we attacked that they just, one search light came up and boom, boom, boom, boom they all knocked out the starboard engine. I couldn't feather the propeller, which would've saved a lot of fuel. Every time I tried to turn the feathering mechanism, which stops the prop Rob'd understand this,

14:00 instead of going around that way, turns it that way, so that it doesn't provide a big air resistance to going through the air, couldn't feather that. When I'm tryin' to turn the fuel off the bloomin' engine caught alight. Now we had fire extinguishers and I hit it - one. It apparently stopped the fire but as soon as I let go of the extinguisher it caught fire again, so I hit it again and the same thing happened.

14:30 And I didn't want to chance running out of the stuff, so I just let it, the prop, whirl around doing God knows what revs but a hell of a lot and we did a quick calculation to say that, to tell us that we couldn't get back to England, didn't want to run out of fuel half way across the Channel and have to swim home, so we decided to bail out in the beach head, which was at that time was about 40 mile long and 10 miles deep.

15:00 And we had a, oh a couple of hundred mile to get there by the way too and climb over a range of mountains about four and a half thousand feet on one fan, which we did, then we got to the stage where you've got the beach head there and we're coming up here. Germans are on one side of the Orne River and our mob are on the other side and we had to attack that from the east going west to get ourselves in the safe area. There's a screaming westerly blowing too, so we got across the river and the navigator said "Oh take a bit more, I don't want to be

15:30 blown back over the wrong side of the lines", which we did and he, out he went. I had to push me foot in his back to get him out. There was a common thing in Mosquitos, apparently 'cause they had a little wear strip on the timber decking and that got caught on the backside of the navigator. Pushed him out, dived out meself and where I landed, our transports had been driving over paddocks, so

16:00 bloody cart rut this deep, I put me foot down like that on the cart rut and broke me ankle on the way and so oh, and then, oh gee while we were coming down bloomin' Polish fellas on the ground were firin' at us too. I had about half a dozen holes in me parachute and I had to use some pretty good Australian language to make 'em understand that I wasn't German. They thought we were, might have thought we were the start of a parachute counter attack.

16:30 Anyway, broke me leg, English doctor found us, put us into the casualty clearing station, gave me half a bottle of brandy and said "Ooroo, he'll, we'll take you back soon". And so, I had to just, had to wait for a seat on ah bed or stretcher on the Dakota to take us back to England.

**What became of the plane?**

Oh yeah, well in the casualty clearing station the next morning some bloke says, God he said,

17:00 "I'd like to get me hands on that bastard that let go of bloody aircraft." He said, "It missed our quarters or our, whatever we were, our camp by a whisker", he said. "And when it did, did it blow up", he said, "I got blown against the bloomin' tent pole or something" and hurt his face, he said, "And I'm considered out of action for a while", he said but I didn't let on for a while naturally enough that I was him.

**Wow, is that**

17:30 **acceptable practise in the air force to - did you have to take into account where your plane would land and stuff like that?**

Oh no, well gee, I forgot something there. There was a, in this 40 by 10 there was a strip, an airstrip designated as a prang air strip and we were trying to get in there and all the way up, not all the way but for half an hour we were calling 'em and if you were in trouble you could get in there and they'd turn the lights on for half a minute, allow to land and get out of the way.

18:00 But we got no response from them at all and so we just had no option bar to bail out.

**We'll come back over that story again cause it's, oh I think we want to talk about it in a bit more detail but first of all you were flying Mosquitos at this stage?**

Yep.

**And I think we'll talk a little bit about that so's we have the details of the plane**

Oh right, yep.

**before we go on about what you did in it? The Mosquito was a twin engine plane?**

Yep.

**You'd been flying single engines up till the stage you joined 464?**

Yep.

**How was the process of adapting to the new plane?**

18:30 Oh well, it wasn't easy, simply because you had two throttles and all that and two pitch things too but we had a dual control one and there was one bloke who'd done a lot of training on 'em, Irish bloke named Monaghan and he gave both Tony and myself, oh I think about 10 hours dual and then said "Well, you're right for solo, so we went solo".

19:00 And after a few more training flights on say cross countries and that with our navigators Bob Iredale, the CO took me on me first op anyway, just the two of us at number, I was number two to him on a raid on one of these, the V1, the buzz bomb sights and I just flew as his number two. And we both had bombs and I bombed but again my job was to be lookin' out with me navigators lookin' out for thing, while he was concentrating on finding

19:30 the target, which we did very successfully. We hit the target on that and when we got back he said, "Well apart from tending to fly a bit too high and keep in close formation on us, I think you did all right, so you can you know, go on your own any time." So we did.

**Was a completely different kettle of fish really, the Mosquito wasn't it, you were bombing and can you tell us a little bit about the plane? How was it different to the ones you had been flying before?**

Oh well, apart from the fact that you've got a navigator to worry about, get there and

20:00 back, oh it's a beautiful plane, the Mosquito. First of all there big engines are sittin' out there and you've got a nose that falls away just like drivin' a car and you've got a beautiful forward view both taxiing, taking off, landing anything when you're flying as well - lovely view. Easy too, ton of power, was only a Plywood aircraft with two thirteen hundred and fifty, donk donks on it,

20:30 had a pretty high wing loading because to get the speed out of it they had to reduce the wing area, so you'd either have as Rob'll tell you, either have a slow aircraft with plenty of lift or a faster aircraft with not much lift but a lot of power. Power to weight ratio was pretty high in 'em but it was a very versatile aircraft, the Mozzie [Mosquito]. It was designed initially as an unarmed bomber. Because

21:00 it was so fast, it was considered that they could get in and out without the - it was faster than any German fighter at the time and that was its first role but as they developed 'em the Mk VI, which we flew was one which carried four machine guns, 303s each with a thousand rounds four 20 mm cannon each with 250 rounds. The cannon breeches took up the first half, front half of the bomb bay, where the bomber could carry four

21:30 bombs - our fighter bomber could only carry two but as well as that on the wings you either carried two more bombs or if you're going long range, it carried drop tanks on there with only two bombs in the bomb bay. The, I think the worst feature of it was the very high landing speed approach and landing speed. 135 - 140 was the approach speed and stall was about 120, so you really had to be

22:00 very careful with landings. Never any such things as the, you know the copybook three point landing on those. No, drive the bloody thing down and don't cut it till your wheels hit really or say close to it anyway but lovely aircraft to fly. Oh real one finger exercise. Once you took off, pointed the nose up, kept climbing revs and boost on

22:30 and put the wheels and flaps up and oh gee you could drive it with one finger, gee it was a lovely aircraft to fly.

**The first few times you flew one did you have trouble getting it onto the ground?**

Oh yeah. Yeah, I don't think anybody in their early stages of converting or flying to a Mosquito found it easy to land. The, all the blokes I talk to now still say that they used to drive it on rather than try to

23:00 stall the aircraft on.

**Did you ever get close to running out of runway or?**

No I didn't, no.

**Can you describe a bit more about the physical conditions in the plane, what was your cockpit like, can you describe it to me?**

Yeah, lots of instruments there, throttles and pitch over here,

23:30 a spade grip control column rather than a joystick and that had on it. Let me see, the bomb button up there from memory, the machine gun thing out there from memory and the cannon one this way from memory but don't quote, well you are quoting me on it but it was something like that anyway but the control column had just about everything on it.

24:00 Good brakes, oh although I ran out of brakes at one time but in normal circumstances good brakes, yeah.

**How much space do you have inside one of these?**

Not very much mate, no. Not enough for the, well the little doorway is down there and the pilot seat is opposite the doorway but because the navigator can't have his seat up here, the navigator's seat is back, oh

24:30 say about a foot or so.

**And how did you get in and out of them?**

Through the doorway there, oh in our Mk yeah, the bomber you had a little ladder that came up the nose through a thing yeah.

**And that was the same doorway that you mentioned before that you had to bail out of in case?**

Yep, only way out, yep.

**Were you sitting on your parachute?**

Yeah I was. Navigator had parachute that clipped to his chest.

**Must have been very difficult to get in and out of these**

25:00 **planes?**

Oh it was, yeah.

**Was the flight gear, we haven't talked about that in general but can you describe your flight gear to us?**

Fly what?

**Your flight gear, what were you wearing?**

Oh just battle dress, helmet and goggles, flying boots, gloves yep.

**Was it cold up there in these operations?**

Oh yeah it was but we did have a basic sort of a heater,

25:30 a bit like the old car heaters where it just blew hot air through a little nozzle rather than the sort of heating systems or air conditioning systems we've got now.

**Were there any concessions to comfort on board these Mosquitos?**

I'd have to say absolutely nil. Oh you did have a pee tube that was down here like a funnel, had a long flexible tube going outside,

26:00 which wasn't altogether successful either. I remember coming back from a very long trip and we're over the North Sea and I badly needed a pee and so I'd, I was trying to get this thing up, we didn't use it - used it very little as a matter of fact - and I think it was rusted onto the bloody spring clip and I tried to get the bloody thing out and I couldn't and I said to Webby, me navigator, "Hey give us a hand with this", and so he was trying to and we're both down here and when I looked up, here's the bloody sea

26:30 about 50 feet below us. If we'd have both kept trying to get the pee tube out it, we, nobody would have ever known about it. In fact somebody said, somebody who was going back with us said "That the, there was propeller wash on the water as we pulled out of our sort of shallow dive", yeah.

**These aircraft had quite a quite a long range then?**

Yeah.

**With the drop tanks on how far could you fly**

27:00 **in a Mosquito?**

Oh yeah well our, I think our trip to Aarhus was about as long as we went. Copenhagen was about the same. We went to Berlin at one time too at night but I think it was four and three quarter hours, was the longest one I did, without consulting my logbook.

**Must be difficult to fly four and three quarter hours without wanting to have a pee?**

Oh always had a pee before you left.

**Yeah, was there some ritual whereby you took**

27:30 **a pee before you left or?**

Well, some fellas always liked to pee on their bloody, on their port wheel, which was on the other side of, where you've got, like have your pee over here, walk around there and get up your ladder. But I used to go to the boys room in the operations hut before I left, yep.

**Did you have any rituals at all in 464 Squadron? That people used to follow?**

Any?

**Any sort of rituals before you would go off on a?**

I didn't, no. A lot of blokes did.

28:00 A lot of blokes took their, you know their pet this or that dummy, a little baby koala or some darn thing or did this piddling on the bloody port wheel.

**In 464 Squadron you joined with Tony Tuck. Was he to be your navigator? How did that?**

Oh no, we were pilots yeah.

**He was a pilot as well?**

Yeah.

**So how did you corrupt [?] in 464?**

Well we were, we had

28:30 to be found - navigators - and there were these fellas that had been on training command for a while and that was where I got our first lot. And as I mentioned before that bloke was the fella that threw the maps up in the air, so he departed. I was looking then for another fella and this bloke who got airsick came along too. I forget how, I think it was just a spare nav on the squadron. See 464 had been

29:00 operating with the Lockheed Ventura, which is the bomber version of a Lockheed Hudson light passenger plane. They had a crew of four but they were just converting from the Venturas, which were slow and heavy and not very manoeuvrable and easy meat for enemy fighters. Fact they, the Kiwis lost 11 out of 12 on one bloody raid

29:30 and Basil Embry our AOC [Air Officer Commanding] was offered the Vultee Vengeance dive bomber too and he said, "No, forget all that, we, if you want good results out of us, you've got to give us good aircraft", and he hung out for the Mosquito and got it. Well now the crews were just changing over from Venturas as well. They were run out of time, two had expired really and they were looking for more people and so they got spare pilots like us, spare navigators as well and that's how we

30:00 crewed up. Normally they'd go to operational training unit fellas who were training on twins, the same as we'd trained on the Mustang and they'd pick up pilot and navigator together there and they'd crew up there but we didn't have that luxury. And so we won just whatever happened to be vacant. Tony got a dud out of his first pick of the, out of the hat too for a navigator.

**Did that cause any resentment**

30:30 **coming along and having to pick all the dud navigators?**

Well, you didn't know they were dud till you flew with 'em but oh no, I don't think so, no. Well, I was so happy to be on an operational squadron and an Australia one too after having served a year on an English one but I was glad to have it and you know take me pick of the lottery of navigators available but unfortunate, just unfortunate that those first couple had to be not

31:00 ready for operational work, or not suitable for it.

**Was there an unofficial hierarchy within the squadron depending on who'd been there the longest?**

Oh yeah.

**Can you talk a bit about that?**

Yeah oh well, the CO Bob Iredale, he'd done work with other squadrons before he joined 464 as a flight commander and he became

31:30 CO and we had an English flight commander on each squadron then too. I forget who was on B Flight but Dick Sugden was my first flight commander and he finished up retiring to Zimbabwe and not long ago died over there but the, these were the big boys to us, new boys and we used to love to get into a conversation with 'em and hear

32:00 about what they'd done and how they'd done this, that and the other. And they were quite happy to do that too but they were always, well from my point of view they were the experienced fellas off whom you could learn plenty and their word was you know was like the bible to us too. Well, we did get an Australian flight commander on my flight who, went in just after D-day

32:30 Geoff Oxlade and then we got a Rhodesian bloke after him. Geoff was one of the boys, so there was, it was a different outlook. Even though he was well experienced he hadn't, he wasn't one of the Gods when we got there, so he was just one of the fellas. Then we got a Zimbabwean bloke, Rhodesian bloke, who was a real bloody snob, oh out and out snob too and but he

33:00 reckoned that all he had to do was to say, "Do this, do that, do the other", and it was all law. The ground staff hated him too but we didn't take to him too well but anyway he didn't last long. Matter of fact he went up to the CO himself and said that he didn't appear to be getting along as well as he should with the boys, could he have a posting?, and he went and that's when I got the job of OC [Officer Commanding] of A Flight about September '44.

**When you first arrived in the Squadron, what did the older hands tell you about what,**

33:30 **the operations they'd been doing? Do you remember any stories they told you?**

Oh well simply, well they were yeah, they'd done well this - Amiens prison raid for example was one on which our squadron supplied six aircraft and that was the talk of the mess for days and days after it, they had different aspects of it. And the Amiens prison was housing a lot of German, a lot of French prisoners, who were going about to be knocked off, about to be

34:00 exterminated by the Germans and the, for some reason the extermination date was put back a couple of days, which was just as well because there was snow and dreadful blooming weather on the February day that they were first supposed to go, and on the second day it was still bad weather but they elected to go anyway because the fellas were getting closer to losing their lives and each of the squadron had specific jobs to do. Break

34:30 down the outer wall, break down the inner wall, hit the bloomin', hit it at a time when the Germans were at lunch in their mess and so on and this is why it was such a success too. A lot of blokes got out, a lot, a few of the French fellas were killed too but the Frogs said, well their attitude was that they'd rather die by an allied bomb than by a firing squad from the Germans, so those that got away were very grateful having got away. Those that did, that got away and were recaptured, well

35:00 some were shot, some weren't but at least it was considered success by the Frogs, so they were, our team were very happy about it but it was the talk of the mess for some days and I remember talking to a couple of blokes who were on it and well I was just sort of enthralled by the story that they had about specific little bits of target that they had to hit and did hit.

**Can you talk a bit about how, that being enthralled? You'd been running these quite uninteresting**

35:30 **train busting raids and things and suddenly there was talk of quite an interesting and unusual**

Yep.

**operations. How did that make you react?**

Yep. Oh well there's a total of 24 aircraft going into this thing all with the one objective, whereas in our train busting days we're goin' individually or by twos to do this and that and I hadn't experienced that sort of operation before, so I was very glad to get the

36:00 feelings of the blokes who'd gone and to get some indication of what it might be like for me in future times.

**Did that idea of team work and working together change what you thought of being in a squadron, your idea of a squadron was different?**

Well, yeah but see it only, that only happened on rare occasions those things. Mostly, we were out at night doing specific targets. If the heavies were going

36:30 to Berlin for example, we'd be allotted night fighter aerodromes on the way to Berlin and on the way back from where their course as well. And our job would be to take off at half hour intervals and go to a particular aerodrome and make our presence felt around there for the half hour and keep the aircraft, the aerodrome lights off, so the night fighters couldn't take off or if they

37:00 did try to take off, well go down and attack 'em and bomb the intersection of the runways or something to that affect. Course they were well defended too and they'd let us, the Huns were pretty smart too, at if they had aerodrome there - a) they'd you know in a corner of a river up, five mile up the river there'd be a similar sort of a bend in the river and they'd build a dummy aerodrome there and put a few lights around it, so you could, you'd, your navigation could be pretty close

37:30 and you might think you're over the aerodrome when you're only over the dummy, and you might drop a couple of bombs on paddock. I've done it, I'm sure others had too but the guts of the business was to keep the night fighters down and overall we did a pretty good job of that too.

**Did you have to learn to fly in formation?**

Oh yeah and we did this on, only on those special daylight raids though. At night time you're just going out on your own and doing your half hour shift over aerodrome

38:00 coming back but on the Gestapo headquarters raids for example and the Amiens prison raid and those sort of things you had to fly in formation to get there. Show you a couple of photos of prints inside when you're here later.

**Is that difficult to do though to learn to fly in formation?**

Oh no, once you get your speed settled and whatnot, oh if you're flying close formation like tucked in like that, it's like the bloomin' roulettes or something, it's not easy but in the loose formation that we

38:30 as per the print on the front of the Gestapo had, a, that was dead easy, yep.

**How do you keep your formation? What's the rule when you're flying in formation?**

Oh well, you've got a set place to stay, the leader, number two, number three, number four, five and six and that's how we did it, did fly with a pilot, keeping a, well naturally enough, a good eye out for the aircraft nearest him and the navigator doing the

39:00 you know the, doing all this.

**Would you operate in radio contact with each other in these situations?**

Yeah but radio silence usually. Even in the later stages like in our Mustang days that was say '43, the enemy radio and radar were pretty basic but then later years in '44 '45, they were very, very good and you had to

39:30 keep well down and to keep quiet. Matter of fact on the Aarhus University Gestapo headquarters raid, we were over the sea at about 50 feet and we didn't utter a single sound until we got to within the point where we each took off, each box took off for the target. Once we're there of course, well the Huns knew we were there anyway too, so it didn't matter.

## Tape 7

00:30 **Did you have your own aeroplane during this period?**

Yeah, on Mosquitos I did, yeah.

**Was there, can you tell me about that plane in particular? Was there anything special about it?**

Oh not much different to any other Mozzie really except I had me own ground crew and knew them pretty well because it's your own aircraft, you're doing night flying tests every day on it just in case it's not bracing at night, you don't know that till later in the day, so you do an NFT [Night Flying Test] every day

01:00 and then report to the ground crew what needs to be done or they'll tell you what they've done in routine maintenance, an overhaul routine maintenance rather and to expect say a little bit of difference in your synchronising the motors, where if you don't have them synchronised they go whoa, whoa, whoa and you've got to get 'em playing the same tune but

01:30 it's very good cooperation between aircrew and ground crew when you've got your own plane.

**Did your aeroplane have a name?**

Oh no, I either had G or D on SB but oh I never game 'em a name, no.

**Can you tell me a bit more about your ground crew in particular and the relationship you had with them?**

Oh yeah, was good enough to be when we had a night off, we'd go down to the boozier together.

02:00 **Who were they, do you remember their names?**

Yeah, Noel Kington was our air frame man, Ally Barber was our engine man, oh the armour, the armish was shared between all the aircraft but gee I used to visit the bloke up in Queensland regularly too.

02:30 Cec, no, was there, was the armour we most knew. Pop Fisher - he was an old bloke, he was the sergeant engine man, had a garage in Melbourne peacetime. Oh I think that's about it yeah.

**Were these mainly Australians, these ground crew?**

Yep.

**All universally?**

Not all that crew were Australians but most of 'em

03:00 were yep.

**You mentioned before**

Cec Wall was that bloke Wall, WALL.

**Wall, right.**

Yep.

**For the record his name is down on the tape. You mentioned before that there were some other interesting nationalities though. Jamaican, Norwegian?**

Yeah.

**Can you tell me a bit about these personalities, were they interesting fellas?**

Oh yeah Jamaican bloke, very quiet but happy sort of bloke. He,

03:30 at one time he didn't have his own navigator and he'd take on anybody that'd fly with him and not that he was a bad flyer either, I forget what happened to his navigator, maybe he got crook. The Norwegian bloke, his name was Herman - matter of fact we used to call him Herman the German and didn't he hate it too but he was a short stocky bloke with arms like that and he used to love arm wrestling cause he knew bloody well, he could beat everybody

04:00 at it too but Herman never mind. The Yanks, the nicest Yank I ever met was Andy Blake, oh doesn't matter Andy. Wore his Yank uniform with his badges over here, no badge over there and the RAF badge over here. Poor beggar, he went into,

04:30 on a dreadful bloomin' day not long after D-day, we all came back to Gravesend just down near the Thames, oh there was fog and bloomin' cloud and goodness knows what and two fellers went into the drink in the Thames and he was one of 'em. Another Yank, I can't remember the other Yank's name. We had, oh he wasn't on 464 but we spent a fair bit of time with him. He was the photographic,

05:00 photography plane that accompanied our bombing raids and daylight ones, he was Bob Kirkpatrick from the States. I get an email from him nearly every week telling me funny jokes that I can't understand and I tell him that too, I say "Christ, if they, you lot of Yanks should have learnt something when you were with our squadron". And the Rhodesian bloke I've already told you about, not a very happy sole, very, in fact a very unfriendly one,

05:30 and the French fella he wasn't, he was with 21 as well, not with us but oh I think that's about all of 'em. But we came, we, our own fellas came from everywhere. Like there was one bloke from Norfolk Island was over there a couple of times lookin' for him. The second time they'd said oh well, he and his brother both died so that's and they didn't have any living family but we had blokes from every State in our country plus those

06:00 foreigners I'm tellin' you about, a few Poms as well. But the, we're down to two at the Anzac Day march, that's Tony and me plus Tony's wife, she was in the WRENS and we get her to wear her medals and come with us and there are four sons now, so we had seven at the last march and we're getting to the stage if we have any less, I'm sure that the, I've got the banner down in the garage. Matter of fact, I've got to go every year now but I'm sure that the, we'll get down to numbers where the marshalls will

06:30 say "Hey not enough of you here, buzz off down the back with the odd bods, take your banner with you and you can march down there, not here".

**How does that make you feel?**

Well it makes me feel this way, that I feel duty bound to get on the phone for about a fortnight before Anzac Day say, "You're comin', no bloody argument", and well the four, one of the sons turned up this year, well last year. Bruce Miles, who was one of the best known criminal lawyers in Sydney marched with us every year till he got too crook.

07:00 He was in a wheel chair last year and his son David pushed him all the way around and this year I rang his son and said, "Hey, bring your Dad's medals come and march with us", which he did and as we're putting the banner up, another bloke fronted up and tapped me on the shoulder and he said "This 464?" "Yeah". "My father used to march with you, his name was Rex Timbrey" [?]. I said "He used to lead the march, mate till he couldn't walk any more." "Do you mind if I march with you?" I said "Come along, not just this year but every year", so this is how we get our team together.

07:30 We should have had two more couples but for various reasons they couldn't turn up, so we could have had 11 but we had seven, yeah.

**How do you feel about that Anzac Day tradition these days?**

Oh, I feel it's a necessary thing.

**With the young people taking it on, I mean?**

Yeah don't mind that, well it's gotta happen, hasn't it? Either it started with the, with World War I blokes of whom there are well none of the Anzacs left themselves. Possibly some from

08:00 over the western front and that which I don't know of but well they've almost gone. They handed the baton over to our fellas and we might say we handed it on to the Korean blokes and the Vietnamese blokes and there are more of them than us now and as for sons and whatnot, well I think it is a, it's a good enough tradition, so long as they don't all become sons. Well I don't mean by that that we've got to have another war to keep up the numbers but it'd be nice if there were

08:30 enough say ex-serviceman there to make it worth what it stands for.

**We'll come back to that towards the end. We should get back and talk about some operations while we're?**

Oh yeah right.

**Before we do though just while we're talking about the squadron members, was there any particularly memorable member of the squadron perhaps who sort of was good at keeping morale up or one that had a particularly interesting personality?**

09:00 Yeah I guess you'd have to say that old peg legs Shanks would be that fella. He worked, he walked with a limp and he was old too. He was 37 when I was 24, so and he got shot down a couple of times, bailed out though. When Geoff Oxlade went in just after D-day, well Shanksy got out first and he just got down without injuring himself and Oxlade got out but

09:30 he, I think he got out and was killed out because he got out too low. He might have crashed with the aircraft, can't remember but Shanksy worked with the French, Free French people, the Maquis for a while and did a lot of oh lot of sort of spy work, which he brought back with him and he was a, was considered quite a bit of a hero in the place because he got out at such an old age

10:00 too. Bigger me if he didn't do it again some time later. Came back with the soaps of the stories too and whatnot but he was also, he was a bit short sighted by this time too and he'd be peering around like this. And matter of fact after his second return from a bail out, I was squadron flight commander by the time and the medical officer asked me to take him up and give him a bit of a

10:30 try out, test out as to how he would visually navigate. Well, we just ran up and down the English coast, he south coast and what's that place down there, Don. Ah well, accordin' to the map. I said, "Well now goodo, you've had a look at the map and you know roughly where we are, what is it?" He'd say, "Beachy head." I'd say, "Well tough mate, it's not, it's something else", Dungeness or somewhere. And I think out of six places that he was s'posed to

11:00 identify he got one right and so on the way back, he's saying to me, "Well you know, I'm right mate, aren't I? She's right mate and I'll be right, won't I?" "Not on your Nellie mate, you can't, there's no bloody way", I said but see, I said, "Yeah, on your own good, fair enough you just take your life in your hands but you're goin' take, you'd be navigating a bloke whose depending on you to tell you where he is and you're not goin' to be able to." Well, he didn't talk to me for God three months I s'pose but after the war he knocked

11:30 on my door one day down at Croydon and oh he rang up, rather, came up Croydon, stayed with me for a couple of days. We went groggin' on and whatnot and I used to stay with him at Bendigo when I went through there. Never married, brought a wool place down at Warrnambool after the war. Not being married he lived on the smell of an oil rag and every time he had a wool clip, he'd buy some more sheep and blah, blah, blah anyway you don't want to know all that yep.

**Did you, that kind of tough decision, did you have to make lots of those as you became a**

12:00 **Flight Commander?**

No well, I s'pose the two best ones I made from me own point of view were the two navigators that I sacked, oh well actually I sacked a third one too, he and that wasn't a very nice one either. I did 22 ops with him and that was when it was, the bloke that bailed out with me over France. But whenever we went into occupied territory, we were given a safe point of entry by

12:30 our wing navigation officer. Well, you'd always have about five mile either side and you could go bang through the middle and you, nobody'd shoot at you. Well, in the whole of our bloody 22 ops, this bloke never made a safe landfall once and that'd mean from then, from that point on I'd be saying "For Christ sake Woody, again you've taken us over a bloody flak area, can't you read your bloody Gee box", which was designed to get us over the Channel and into

13:00 a safe entry. New fangled things he done it too, on the first weeks of the war, he did one of these things in Blenheim 1s over the Dorbanams [?] Canal or somewhere and that was new fangled. All he wanted to do was dead reckoning navigation but at night-time you can't rely on that. You don't. You can't see the wind on the water and whatnot as well as you can in the day time, so it's hard to make adjustments to your nav, so this is why we went in, into an

13:30 unsafe entry of occupied territory every time for 22 ops and after we, I recovered from me broken leg after we bailed out, I said to the doc same bloke who supplied the rum, I said, "Look, I can't fly with this fella any more." He said, "Well look there's only one bloke who can tell him and that's you." He said "Have yourself a couple of good scotches and go up and tell him", which I did and the poor old bugger, he broke down. He was so lookin' forward to flying again with us even though we used to barrel him every time we made these bloody bad entries

14:00 but it was the only thing to do, I thought and so I sacked him. And so that was me third navigator I've done already but the last bloke that I got, Les Webb, he was on his own because an Australian pilot, who he had, couldn't take off on a Mosquito very well. Like it used to swing on take off, two engines goin' the same way and a lot of he'd start takin' off down this runway and finish up that one

14:30 and the second time he did it, he wrote off a Lancaster that had just been repaired too and so they said "You're a luxury we can't afford, on your way home mate", so I won Webby. Did 44 ops with him. And oh he was a ideal navigator, terrific. The only thing I had against him was he'd sing the bloody top 10 numbers and he'd play it all the way over and all the way back and when we went back there in '95, what's he do? He starts singing the bloody things again for Christ sake, Webby belt up

15:00 and anyway that's, I'm

**Did he have any reservations about taking up with you after you'd fired three navigators?**

I think he was lucky to get a driver of any sort. He was going to give me a go anyway to see how I went. No, we had a very happy association for the last nine or ten months of the war '44 up, so it's average four a mon [month], only one a week but

**Just something that you mentioned that I've never heard of this Gee box, can you explain what the Gee**

15:30 **box did?**

Oh yeah it's a, the early radar which you had a little set like that, oh it was much smaller than that but it was a little roundish sort of a radar thing that sat behind the pilot's seat and the navigator just had to work it this way and there were two, I think it was two transmitting stations. One in the south and one in the north of England going like

16:00 that and you picked up messages from both of 'em, which would tell you exactly where you were on that line or at that line or somewhere else but it was a matter of twiddling knobs, ascertaining where you were, comparing that to where you should have been on the pre-flight plan and making adjustments accordingly. But you could make landfall within, oh God half a mile of where you should have done just doing, just using that and nothing else.

**Would you say it's quite**

16:30 **a simple system to use?**

Oh well, the only bloke I knew who didn't use it was the fella that I was flying with.

**Just a couple of things on the Mosquito I'm a bit interested in. How did you fly on one engine and which was the critical engine on the?**

Oh well, the only thing about, the

17:00 critical part of it was that your generator was on the port engine, so if you lost that, you lost all your lights apart from the emergency lights I was talkin' about before but oh it would fly quite well on one engine provided you could feather the other one and get it out of action.

**But one of them, either one of them is more critical if you lose it, one than the other one, isn't it, if both props are going in the same direction?**

Oh both props

17:30 go in the same direction, yeah.

**Yeah but if you lose one engine's worse than the other if you lose it, isn't it?**

Oh well probably yeah, the port one, well I don't know, I've never really discussed that but I'd imagine that the port one would tend to push you this way, either the take off because they're all, they're both spinning that way - take off meant a hell of a lot of bloody left rudder to hold it.

18:00 I only had the one you know, the one problem with one fan going and I really can't remember apart from the fact that we couldn't feather this bloody thing, I don't recall any particular problem. I flew it all one, flew it the hour and a half or so with one fan at night and could hold it on course, so it's a thing

18:30 that give it a bit of thought, I could probably work out what you're talking about but I didn't consider either of them to be a critical engine, no.

**Some twins have a critical engine depending on?**

Yeah probably, look you're probably more up to speed with that than I am mate.

**I've never flown a twin but the Hurricane was unique in it was a wooden framed aircraft**

19:00 The Mozzie?

**Yeah sorry, the Hurricane was, yeah the Mosquito, it was a, how did that make it different in flying? Was there armour plating that could protect you more or was there?**

Well, we had something behind the pilot's seat that was armour plating, yeah I don't think the nav had any but we had oh quarter inch plate or something like that, yeah might have been even more but apart from that you only had metal bits around the wheels and the

19:30 engines and whatnot and only four bolts hold that bloody engines together too. The spar was a single piece of huge bit of timber light stuff and it was covered with ply, five ply and a bit of I think it was a bit of fabric or something over that too, I'm not sure. I know that it meant that the weight was down to billyo and the power was high, so your power to weight ratio was terrific in it.

**Did it make them more vulnerable to fire?**

20:00 Oh I s'pose it might have but there are a number of pictures available of aircraft with half a wing shot away that, where they didn't catch fire and the time when I couldn't feather a donk and it was just melting around and I tried to put fires out to you know save with the, for fuel saving

20:30 but the while the fire was obvious in the front of the engine, which was well away from the timber there was never any, oh I didn't notice any possibility of it catching fire then.

**Also you mentioned that, did you ever, were at a time when you ran into the radar search lights? Can you talk us through that moment?**

Oh God yeah, I certainly can. We were over

21:00 an aerodrome at Rheine in north west Germany. That was our night, our aerodrome for the night because the heavies were doing something only about a hundred mile away from there. Little did we know, I well certainly, we weren't told before we'd gone out that it was the base for the first of the German

21:30 jet fighters, the ME-262 and they also had the experimental rocket too, the ME-163 and while we were doing our patrol round there we saw firstly the jet go past, which didn't know, didn't even know there was such things as jets at the time.

**Can you describe that?**

Oh yeah, just the flame coming out of the

22:00 back of the thing as it, I think it might have, must have made a pass at us and I but I don't remember any sign of trace of bullets or anything, so he, while he might have made a pass he certainly didn't fire anything at us. But we saw these jet streams just go and go shootin' off like, just like jets, and on I think it was the same night - might have been another night - was with a similar with the same target, this bloody rocket

22:30 thing went past us just like a sky rocket in that sort of speed too, and when we got and it was only a single jet thing that came out of that or a single rocket exhaust. When we got back we reported this and then one of the blokes that de-brief you he said that, "Oh well, that's the place where they're keeping these new jet fighters", I thought, oh thanks very much.

23:00 "Well how about lettin' us know before we go next time". They said, "Well, it's just another night fighter place as far as you're concerned and you had to, that was your job." But when we were over there we'd done some, oh might be quarter of an hour, 20 minutes of our patrol and we were zig zaggin' around the

place, we didn't want to just do a rate one turn right around it, make ourselves a nice easy target, so we were doing this sort of figure eight things around it and suddenly up comes a bloomin,' the

23:30 controlled search light. And the other ones, I'd say within seconds there must have been half a dozen of 'em bang on, all bang onto us and no searchin' around or lookin' around the sky for us at all, they just went whack. And we were in the middle of it. And boom, boom, boom, boom and we were easy meat.

**What happened?**

Well they didn't hit any engines but there was a lot of damage in the aircraft

24:00 itself, a lot of explosions too in the aircraft itself. The thing that they did hit was the bloomin' tube that brought either hydrologic or pneumatic line to the brakes. And it, just like there's the tube here and it cut right through it and sealed the end off, so that we still had on the instruments, we still had pressure in there and it wasn't till we hit the ground and I hit the bloody brake that there was enough pressure.

24:30 Then went through to break the bloody seal and I was runnin' around Gravesend aerodrome, which is on a hill like that. Ran over the top of the hill and you really needed to plant yourself as close to the incoming fence as far as possible, so you wouldn't have to, we had the brakes out, goin' downhill. Well I was goin' downhill without brakes. And at this stage we were again practising for D-day and going over there living in tents and we had our blokes all

25:00 around the bloomin' edge of the aerodrome in tents and I ran through the bloody tents, killed a bloke and put another one in hospital and didn't know I'd done it until I got out of the bloody aircraft and saw all this mess too. And the CO said later that, or somebody said later "That didn't you know there was a prang aerodrome down at Manston, down at the end of the Thames" and I said, "For God sake, I didn't know, I've never heard it briefed and anybody with any problems could have gone in there." I don't know that

25:30 I would have gone in anyway but at the same time because the instruments read alright, I thought I was safe enough to go back home but I could have gone into that, that prang aerodrome but had a runway 4,000 yards by about 150 yards wide and it was full of bloomin' prangs. Once somebody landed on there, got a bulldozer off and just pushed the aircraft off to make way for the next one - lot of bombers there, lot of Lancs [Lancasters] and things.

**What happened to the bloke you killed?**

Oh I just ran over him and killed him, yeah.

26:00 **Who was he, do you know?**

Hey?

**Do you know much about him or what happened or?**

No, I didn't no, matter of fact I didn't, I was told to go on leave though straight away for a week, which I did. I went, I didn't go too far away and I came back to the, I asked where the bloke's funeral was and they said "He was taken home to have a service" and they wouldn't tell me where was home. They didn't want to let me in amongst his family,

26:30 I imagine. But the bloke who was in hospital, a fella named Matthews and I went to see him a couple of times in the local hospital. Oh he, I didn't do much damage to him, oh a broken something or other, oh certainly enough to put him off work but it wasn't really bad damage and him and I went in there too, well wondering how the hell he was goin' to take it but he just said, he was a Pom and he said "Well, tough luck mate, I just happened to be in the wrong place at the right time." I thought he might hang one on me

27:00 or get a bit upset and certainly the family, the other family of the fellow that killed would have had good reason to too but anyway that was the unfortunate result of getting the wrong sort of damage to aircraft. If you've got to get an aircraft damaged, well Christ let 'em just shoot a bit out of your wing or take a wheel off or put an engine out or something but not do the sort of thing that it did to me, no.

**Was this the first encounter**

27:30 **with close up immediate death?**

Yeah.

**How did you, I mean I know even though it wasn't your fault and it was operational but it must have shaken you up a bit?**

Oh I felt bloody awful about it yeah but the, I went off on the medical advice but he said, "Just have a week." And he said, "When you come back, don't report to your flight come and see me", said the doctor, the same bloke who'd the, smuggled the rum with us and he said, "I don't want you to have any more time off. I want you to get back in that

28:00 bloody aircraft, do a night flying test and do a bloody op as soon as you can", and so I did. I just had the week off and went back and went on ops the first night I went back too.

**Did you need that week off do you think?**

No, I don't think I did. I think I would have done better to stay there but I think he was thinking in terms of sort of medical necessity and whether I'd be better off having a bit of a spell rather than going straight back to work.

28:30 **What did you do in that week off?**

Oh I just went up to London and spent me week there, yep.

**What did you do in London during that week?**

Oh just the usual things. Went to Boomerang Club, I went, probably went to a bloomin' concert somewhere, probably took a couple of sheilas out, probably got meself ironed out a couple of times too but

**Was there something you know, I mean that you were, obviously this is not something that happens every day**

29:00 **that you've had this particular accident. You must have been particularly...?**

No, it was a very unhappy time in my service life. It was the most unhappy time by a long way, yep.

**Do you remember seeing the tents coming up as you came up the Gravesend runway or?**

No I don't, well the, no I think just as we were going through them I realised that we were in amongst the camp. It was, I wasn't too

29:30 sure whether that was the runway where we were, where the camp was or at that part of the runway where the camp was. I had thought that it was say back towards the intersection of the runways rather than towards one end of it but it was towards one end of the downhill slope too, going, oh was going about the one that ran over the Thames, anyway going about north west.

**Did they have defined runways or were they fairly sort of, you've got a lot of options**

30:00 **then when you're coming in or 'cause it seems odd that they'd have tents at one end?**

They had this, no they've got that, that runway is the operational one. It's a, one of these wire mesh things too but we had no option but to go there but Phil, I thought it was goin' to make a normal landing too. Both engines were all right. Had the brakes been all right we wouldn't had any problem.

**When you were sustaining that damage in that searchlight did you know the plane was in trouble or you were just?**

Oh well, we heard the couple of big bloody bangs

30:30 in the place and the aircraft shakes a bit too when a shell goes off within a, and we knew bloody well that they, the wings had been damaged as well but the, there was no indication that we had anything wrong with the aircraft that would prevent us making a normal landing. Had there been say indication on the bloody gauge that there was no air or hydraulics or whatever we could have gone into

31:00 somewhere else, anyway with a longer, with a prang runway.

**Is that your first time that you'd come home with a damaged aircraft?**

Well that with one damaged as far as all, that was yeah but we, we'd had holes through the fuselage and through the wings beforehand but not one that did any serious damage to it.

**Can you describe what it was like in the search-**

31:30 **light at that moment?**

Oh Christ yeah, shit scared mate, yeah bloody lights were all around you and you can see the bloomin' tracer coming right at you. It's a, not what you'd call a happy position to be in. In fact on the contrary, you wonder whether the hell you're goin' to get out of it. We just dived away, got corkscrewed as you might call it, away which was the standard way of getting

32:00 away from search lights and they followed us for a fair way before we got out of 'em too. I s'pose it happened about oh probably four and a half thousand feet, something like that which doesn't give you a lot of room underneath the, to make dives or spirals and get out of it.

**Did you ever encounter any night fighters at this time?**

No didn't, the only time

32:30 I had night fighters were the time that we struck this, these jet and the rocket thing and they didn't seem to attack us either. The only other time that we attacked anything was when I knocked down a buzz bomb that was, we were just in the right place to be. Buzz bombs could do about four hundred and bit over four hundred mile an hour and we couldn't quite do that without a bit of

33:00 a jump on 'em and we had this jump from, oh 500 feet above us or when we saw this little putt, putt, putt, putt goin' past. Dive on it, shot it, shot at it, bits of came all over us too. This is before the strategy of knocking the wings down became favourite and it was because of the fact that when you're behind 'em and you shot at 'em bits came everywhere at you. You could probably do as much damage to your own aircraft as you did to them

33:30 that the strategy was to change to tip the wings over.

**Can you describe that incident when you attacked that buzz bomb for us?**

Oh yep. Well, here's this thing putting along down there and we're above it and it's goin' the same way as us. We're goin' home. We've finished our op for the night and we're going home and we just said, I think we said to each other, "Oh that looks bloody easy if we can catch it and dived at it."

34:00 I don't know what range we would have been, I don't know about five or six hundred yards, I s'pose then just kept on firing at it until it disintegrated and just oh I can remember these bloody bits comin' everywhere and I was wonderin' whether we'd get out of it or not 'cause there was so many bits.

**Did you see, did it go in or?**

Oh yeah, well I think we must have knocked a wing off or

34:30 maybe hit the gyro that was running the thing straight and level and the thing just zzz zzz zzz zzz zzz peeled off and went, yeah. That's my only success of an air to air combat by the way too.

**Were you involved in any dogfights at all with German aircraft?**

No, none at all. Didn't see any. The only, the closer we got to that

35:00 was in one day in February '45 when the allies put up 7000 aircraft on a single day too. I think their object was to knock out any transport that was left both rail and road. And I took my flight of half a dozen and we were going to a certain area to break up and attack road and rail transport when two Mustangs

35:30 were going the other way and somebody said they might be captured Mustangs that the Huns are using, which they were, had done from time to time too. Well I said to me number, oh three I think it was on that side, "Yeah, could just keep an eye on those fellas", which they did and they made a bit of a pass towards us. So we did a rate one, turn ourselves in formation

36:00 so that we would be doing a turn the same as they were but when they saw us doing that they were our blokes because they just waggled their wings and buzzed off and we continued on our merry way with our targets.

**During these operations against the air fields were you sustaining any losses in the squadron?**

We were, yep I'd have to refer to the Gestapo

36:30 Hunter's book to tell you how many but we lost a few, yep.

**Any particular that come to mind?**

Yeah I do. One of me mates in Queensland, now the fella who lives only 50 mile from his navigator Gordon Nunn, he's on a farm at Mount Kilcoy in Queensland and his two particular mates got it in the same, within the same week I think

37:00 and they'd all been done training together, their own training. Then they'd been on training command training other pilots and they'd joined the squadron about the same time too and he lost his, there were only three of 'em, three pilots and the three navigators and Gordon and Mitch were the only two left after one particular week when he lost his mates Wicky and Mulligan.

**What about your particular friends?**

Who Tony? Well he

**No,**

37:30 **no in particular people that you know that went out on a mission and didn't come back?**

Who's that?

**Is there anyone in particular that?**

Oh, not in particular. Actually, I with the exception of Tony Tuck, I tried hard not to get too close to bods for that very reason too. The same as I don't do get too close to too many people in here too 'cause you get close to an age in a retirement village where people, we had five losses in one week only a couple of weeks ago

38:00 here but it was the same sort of thing there too. If you, I had me particular mate and I was oh well matey with a lot of other blokes, most of the fellas in the squadron but I had to do the job of as flight

commander as I was phoning people who, the next of kin of those who had been lost, once their, they got their official telegram which would have been the next day,

38:30 I left it for a couple of days and then rang 'em and just passed on the condolences of their mates in the flight who'd missed them. And usually Mum and Dad was, were pretty upset about all this too but they usually just want a little talk with ya. They wanted to know that their son had been had been a valued member of the unit and they were, they would, wanted to have condolences from,

39:00 personally from somebody in the unit rather than the telegram from the air ministry.

**Was that a particularly hard part of your job?**

Yeah it was, didn't like it but it was one of those things that just had to be done and ah good, you take a few good deep breaths before you do it but then just get on with it and look, "Your son was a very, very valued member of my flight.

39:30 He was very friendly with all the people here, he was well liked by everybody here and we're missing him. We know we're not missing him as well as much as you are but he's a big loss to us too" that sort of stuff and I meant every bloody word I said to people about that too because the blokes were, oh they were, well they were like brothers to ya, by the time you'd been with 'em even just a short time. Had one call to make when I got back home as a matter of fact,

40:00 a young feller named McMahon. He was 19 when he joined us and he lasted about three months I think. Had to ring his mum over at Mosman and tell her. She was quite resigned to the fact that he'd gone by that time, that was oh six months beforehand but she appreciated the call nevertheless. Not a best part of the job by any means, no.

## Tape 8

00:31 **You've, you were obviously, while you know you were getting in a routine of doing operations over Germany. These are not easy operations by any means, they're at night time and highly hazardous and you're returning in the evening in say this particular case with a damaged aircraft and given some leave to a, I guess a relatively, it seems like a somewhat surreal existence almost to come back to England?**

A what?

**A surreal, it's quite, it's something**

01:00 **coming out of this high tension. How are you dealing with that when you go on leave?**

Oh gee, I think you get a bit of a hardened outlook to it actually. Oh I just went on leave and considered meself on holidays and I used to go and stay with me aunt always for a couple of days. She said "If she ever heard that I'd been on leave and hadn't been gone down to see her, she'd be

01:30 reporting back to my mother very quickly", so I made sure I went and stayed with her. But we used to get these invitations from people when we were going to the Boomerang Club where there'd be invitations to stay at places or go to

**I'm thinking more personally, I guess you know how were you dealing with the absence from your wife?**

Oh

02:00 well let me, I was away anyway, there was nothing I could do with that, do about that so just accepted it and got on with a different life. I think all married blokes did it, had to do the same thing.

**I can imagine that there must have been you know amongst people far away from home some infidelity or?**

Oh there was plenty of it yeah, including me yeah.

**I think it's really quite understandable personally but do you**

02:30 **wish to talk about that at all, as a war experience?**

Well not too much but oh well there was certain amount of it certainly and it was accepted I think as the norm and in most fellas that, most of the married blokes that I knew over there. In fact we'd occasionally just go to a pub, couple of

03:00 us might go to a pub or a club or something like that around London and you'd find a, always find a few girls that went there for presumably the same reason and would usually after a night of a few drinks and maybe a feed you'd finish up with the same result with that, most of the other blokes did too.

03:30 Usually only on a very short-term basis, usually I would think. It certainly was with me anyway.

**Is there anyone you become particularly attached to at that time?**

Oh not really, no didn't want to, no. It was essentially a well, what we're over here and the family's away over there and we've still got to live as normally as possible,

04:00 even though it's not doing the right thing by the family you might say but to get attached to somebody would probably, would be doing the wrong thing, so I think we just, well I certainly just accepted it as part of wartime life and did my share of what I shouldn't have been doin'.

**Certainly it's not normal life. This is the lifestyle everyone's leading during the war was certainly outside anyone's normal experience?**

Yeah.

04:30 **Did you ever consider that your wife might also be?**

Yeah I did, yeah matter of fact yep. Matter of fact I told her about it when I got home too. She was very upset naturally but you know I said, "Well, what about you?" She said "Well, I had two little kids you know from aged naught to three to look after", she said, "I didn't have a lot of time and not much option either", so she said "Look, forget about all that", I didn't, yep and I believe her yep.

05:00 **I think the stresses on a lot of relation you know placed stress on a lot of relationships**

Yep.

**the whole war experience that's the [?]**

Of all the blokes that I know who went over to England during the war anyway, there's only one fella that I worked with who said that he didn't do the wrong thing for the whole of his two or three years over there and I believed him too. He was the sort of bloke that you would but now Tony's a bit of a straight

05:30 laced bloke, I'll let him talk for himself, yeah when you see him.

**Yeah, I don't, I think it's interesting for the archive to know that there's?**

Sorry?

**It's quite you know - war is just not a technical thing?**

Oh yeah.

**It's human beings and hearts are involved.**

Yeah, you're still human beings.

**In the exercise you know. On that talking round, that same issue of how people were coping, did you ever see cases of LMF during that time?**

06:00 Well really only one that I was close to and that was a Pom bloke that had one of the big RAF moustaches, way out here. We used to call him "Handlebars Hamilton" but where I mentioned previously that I felt like not doing a particular operation when I had a couple of unserviceable aircraft this bloke had a history of doing the same thing or saying that he couldn't find the target or

06:30 that he bombed what he thought was the target but now he's not too sure and all sorts of excuses without ever coming back with a good result I'd say and he didn't last all that long either with us. No, he didn't get shot down or anything but he, I think that he was estimated to be or considered to be again by our doc a

07:00 bit of a liability to the place. And I got a suspicion again that the doc edged him out as quietly as possible but anyway got shot of him 'cause the bloke was not a happy member of the unit. He contributed little and people really didn't want to talk to him very much

07:30 about it because he'd be bullshitting about what he'd done and you know damn well from his ops reports when he got back from an operation that he hadn't done most of what he bullshitted about. He'd tell you the truth in the ops report that you know, I couldn't quite find the target, so I did this or the something went us and we just turned back before we hit the coast and whatnot.

**I was just going to**

08:00 **talk a bit more about LMF, how could you pick the guys in the squadron when they were getting it in, say in the mess hall could you particularly notice them around those social times social activities?**

No, not really, don't recall that, don't recall having seen anybody in that that condition no.

08:30 **You get a change in behaviour that people went through?**

Well we only had the one apart from me own, only had that one case of this Handlebars and he stood out like a lighthouse on a cliff too really he, the fact that he was seen to be so much bullshit around the mess and yet he was clear about it on the ops report.

09:00 Not the fact that he'd, he deliberately hadn't been to a target but the fact that he so often didn't make, didn't do the job that he was supposed to do and I don't recall anybody else showing the same signs of behaviour as he did either in the ops room or in the mess afterwards.

**Might move on**

09:30 **to the raid, that on the Gestapo headquarters. I think it's a particularly interesting, can you take us through perhaps a lead up to that raid and then actually perhaps take us even on that raid as far as you can remember that, if you could cast your mind back to that?**

Yes, well there were three of them altogether. I only took part in one, oh the last one was only a very small thing

10:00 at Odense where they make the marzipan stuff but the two bigger ones were at Copenhagen and Shellhouse.

**Perhaps particularly the raid that you were on I think it's?**

Yeah, well mine was on the headquarters in Jutland at the Aarhus University which was a Gestapo records office and a headquarters for the whole of Jutland, the majority of Denmark.

**Were you told the nature of the target at the time?**

Oh only a briefing just a,

10:30 the bare briefing just before we went yeah. We were told we were on a special thing but that was all until we got the briefing and then from briefing we had no contact with anybody else in the station before we went out to the aircraft.

**Can you describe that briefing for us?**

Yeah, the Danish bloke had brought over a number of photographs of the target area from which a

11:00 scale model was made. University was comprised a lot of buildings but there were two particular buildings which were the Gestapo records office and then other Gestapo things were housed including people were housed in three other buildings, a total of five buildings altogether and again the story was that these blokes whose records were kept there were goin' to be rounded up and shot you know within the next x,

11:30 48 hours or something, so would we do it?

**What were you particularly requested to do? Destroy the records or just to attack a prison complex?**

Oh no, just the records, yeah oh the records where the people who were suspected, and so the object of this was to a) destroy the records and b) knock off as many Germans as you could in there, in their quarters,

12:00 I think lunch quarters, must have been lunch quarters 'cause it's a midday thing and this Danish bloke came over to England and briefed us, fella named Van Trulsen TRULSEN, major in the Danish army and we flew from south coast where we were, Thorney Island

12:30 up to Swanton Morley, I think it was and re-fuelled because that was the long, that was the longest trip I did just on five hours and we flew across the North Sea and

**And so where was this place you re-fuelled again?**

Swanton Morley up in Norfolk like going from down the south of England to north east and then over this the North Sea to Denmark.

**And in the briefing did they have a model, a scale model of the (UNCLEAR) for you to look at?**

Yeah.

**And what did you do,**

13:00 **did you all gather round it and?**

All gathered round it. We were briefed by the, well the navs were briefed by the nav leader, the wing nav leader who led the raid as well and when they'd had their briefing and taken their detailed briefing down on paper we were allowed in, the pilots were allowed in to get closer to the scale model and have a look at it and

**How many of you were there in this room?**

Oh well, there were

13:30 24 crews, 48 people plus, yeah 48 people plus the operations head office bods and the Danish fella.

**What was the feeling like in the room at that time?**

Oh well, you've got a special job to do mate, a very special job to do and I think we were all very pleased to be on it really.

**What did they tell you of the hazards of the mission?**

Of the?

**Hazards of the mission?**

14:00 Oh well we knew, the intelligence blokes told us where flak was and where German fighter aerodromes were around there too and the route was planned to be as far away from that as possible. We took a Mustang escort, which didn't go all the way with us but went a fair bit of the way and the idea of them was to diverge off our track a little bit

14:30 towards the enemy fighter bases to attract them up in the air and keep 'em away from us while we did the job.

**Is this a more hazardous mission cause you were doing it in daylight?**

Oh yeah it was, 'cause they can see you from a long way away and you're a better target in the daylight than you are in the night-time too despite all those searchlights but I s'pose it was really not much more

15:00 hazardous. But anyway that there were 24, 48 people, 24 aircraft and they were in four boxes of six and the headquarters lot, well there were no headquarters aircraft. They used to pinch aircraft from each of the other, each of the three squadrons.

**What time of year was this?**

31st of October 1944.

**Was it hot in the briefing room?**

15:30 No, not from memory, no wasn't hot going over there either, no.

**What was the smell of the briefing room?**

Oh you know fellas who didn't have a shower this morning and all that, so that's all.

**More like a football changing room or?**

Oh God no, not as bad as that but oh only just sort of personal hygiene a bit of that I s'pose too yeah, that's all yep.

16:00 **Did you sleep at all the night before?**

Hey?

**Were you able to sleep the night before?**

Oh yeah, we well the night before, we didn't know we were going. We could have just been going over the North Sea and back or out the North Sea and back.

**Generally before an operation did you get nervous the night before?**

No, well working most nights you'd be, we used to sleep a fair bit during the daytime, get up about lunch time and have well breakfast, do your night flying tests and come back for,

16:30 have dinner or usually eat brief about dinner time at night and then and start working from dark till daylight the next morning.

**Is there a particular thing you did at the meal before you had before you went on those missions?**

Did you?

**Were you particularly silent before you ate when you were eating a meal before those missions or?**

Oh I don't think so, no that was sort of normal life and I think most of us

17:00 got ready to just accept that you were doing that, yeah. I don't think this one made any particular difference either.

**Was Tony with you on this mission?**

No, he'd had a prang after a daylight in May '45, '44, '44 yeah. Oh we did these, what do they call 'em Oboes or something, no Oboe was the stuff used, was the

- 17:30 type of target seeker we used, no they were called no balls, high balls where we'd fly at 20,000 feet in formation following a pathfinder bloke to do a particular job. There might be 20 of us and you'd be flying straight and level at 20,000 feet for about oh Christ five minutes, sittin' ducks too and they'd be pickin' you off and you'd see the first thing of flak'd be bang on your height, maybe missing you by about 100 yards and all
- 18:00 this, all the aircraft'd shake. But this pathfinder bloke was supposed to open his bomb doors and then give you flashes on his taillight five, four, three, two, and at one you bombed. Pretty bloody rough it sounds now but that's how it was. And on this particular one, well we got away with it but Tony didn't. A number of people were hit but the bloke didn't go
- 18:30 down to one, he just closed down his bomb doors and buzzed off and that left us all sittin' there at 20,000 feet, so we just found our own way home then. I think I bombed a bloody railway something or other but Tony got hit and they had their flaps hydraulics hit. Didn't know it until they selected flaps down and the bloody thing didn't come down. Got down to 15 degrees, which was our take off thing, which meant that it was maximum lift on the thing, so he just floated along the bloomin' runway,
- 19:00 went through the far fence, his navigator didn't get hurt but Tony got a hell of a mess. He hit the windscreen and the, or the panel and he didn't fly any more over there, that was May '44. Still see his navigator Anzac Day or usually do. He didn't front this Anzac Day but anyway where were we?

**We were in the briefing room and I was asking?**

Oh in the briefing room yeah and yeah, we got the nav got briefed on the

- 19:30 thingo and on the target and their trackin' on the target and we got briefed as well mainly on the run up to the target. We're in four boxes of six with the headquarters leading, then there were four from, there were six then from 21, six from 487 and six from 464 in that order.

**All Mosquitos?**

All Mosquitos yeah. - the book doesn't agree with that even though I've told 'em we were last in, they put us in third. Even though in the text

- 20:00 the CO gave a talk to the BBC afterwards and he said of course we were last in and that's and it's mentioned in the text too but these bloody authors of ours wouldn't just, wouldn't take our word for it but anyway we made landfall we'd

**Sorry could you, I just want to get some of the operational**

Right.

**details of it of this mission cause it's quite a significant mission?**

Yep.

**Was there anything that the, your squadron leader or the commander, the CO said**

- 20:30 **to you on this particular mission that you remember instructions?**

No, not until we got near the target and I'll tell you that in a minute.

**Were you given any sort of specific instructions that this was at all costs?**

Oh yeah, oh God yeah, got to be done, got to be done today too and the, as much of the records building get rid of, do so but if you can't hit those, hit the other three buildings, so

- 21:00 five buildings target altogether, and as we were last in, we had plenty of options too.

**So after you had received this briefing you were essentially sequestered or isolated, was that correct?**

Oh yeah, yep.

**How long before, after the briefing before take off?**

Did we go? Well that would have been first thing in the morning and we had a two and a half hour flight,

- 21:30 oh not long.

**Do you remember the sort of some particular waiting time when you're shuffling your feet wondering, itching to get going?**

I think immediately after it we went to Swanton Morley, re-fuelled and got on our way yeah.

**Did you all take off together or singly?**

No oh, oh no, well probably in, oh I can't remember. Wouldn't have been more than ones or twos though 'cause that's all you can fit on the runway

22:00 but we were all in the air and formed up as a formation of 24 to do most of the flight. All the way over the North Sea we were in 24, we were in 24.

**How low were you over the sea?**

Fifty feet, have a look at that painting in there, it tells you.

**What was the weather like?**

All right yeah, it was all right there.

**What do you mean all right?**

22:30 Oh well, you could see on the Copenhagen one, they had bloody spray and rain and God knows what and the windscreen wipers didn't do the jobs fully.

**You had windscreen wipers on the Mosquito?**

Oh yeah, yep.

**So on this particular day what was the weather like again?**

Ours was fine. I'd say fine and mild yeah.

**So the, you I presume you must have imagined you could be seen. You must have felt fairly vulnerable after**

23:00 **being, doing night operations. How, what was the feeling as you were flying across the North Sea?**

Oh no, I think we were actually, we were glad to have a spell from night operations yeah.

**Where did you make land, can you take us through as you were crossing the sea and?**

Yeah, we made landfall on the western side, western coast of Jutland and, proceeded still in formation of 24 to a spot about oh 50 mile or so south of the target.

23:30 There was a lake there, Lake Skanderborg or something like that it's called and box number one took, that's the nav leader and the leader of the wing commander operations regimentals, took off.

**What do you mean took off?**

Well they went, they didn't, we, the other three boxes stopped at the lake and they went straight ahead. When I say we stopped, we did a rate one turn, rate one turn 360 degrees in one minute right

24:00 and then number two box took off and the other two of us just did a rate one turn and 487 took off. And we did a fourth rate one turn and we took off last from the lake to the 50 mile run fortunately up a bloody order barn type of a road main road, which lead right past the University. Couldn't have a better, well the first blokes in would have had a good run up to the target but unfortunately the wind was blowing right down

24:30 the bloody the order barn against us, so the, all the shit and derision from the first lot of bombs were, and the smoke they caused was stopping us having a nice run up to the target.

**What sort of, were you carrying any particular sort of bomb?**

Yeah 500 pound - 11 second delay, just a, oh a general purpose bomb yeah.

**Why the 11 second delay?**

Ah,

25:00 why the 11 second? Oh because there were six of us to get over the target and by the time you're getting there, you're not in a formation like this going up, you're in line astern and there's always, there's no way you can get in line astern and stay say oh just a few feet away from each other, you're going to be a couple hundred yards away, so to save the sixth bloke getting in and hittin', the number one fellas' bombs go up. Got 11 seconds delay which gets rid of all

25:30 those bombs in box number one before box number two gets there one minute later yeah. Though by the time we got there was, it was not a clear run up the target.

**How low were you coming in?**

Oh only a couple of hundred feet but we had, we were a bit unfortunate too. Me, the CO's navigator who was leading our box got lost with about three minutes to go, two minutes to go and the CO screams over the thing

26:00 you know where we're trying to cut the target, "Can't anybody find it" and my navigator nearly busted me ribs by belting into the thing. I said, "Yeah, we're right boss", or something like and the other flight

commander was there too, said Clayton and he was right as well. Now I had remembered that we let our six in but me navigator says that Clayton was so close to us he might have been you know 20 feet behind but he was, he'd say that we

26:30 both got in at the same time but

**Just to take us back a bit about the navigator ribbing you and saying you've picked up, acquired the target?**

Yeah

**Ok, yeah if you could just take us back to that?**

Yeah back to where the CO couldn't find the target and my navigator Les Webb said he could get there and both the two flight commanders led in instead of the CO.

27:00 And we both bombed one of the buildings - each of us bombed different buildings but by this time they're just about done too but anyway the target was well and truly done. We had no opposition from flak at all anywhere and we broke up too on the way home, we went, took our own, went out, we didn't get in a formation to go home.

**Can I just take you back to as you were coming in and**

27:30 **were you firing your guns, could, once you saw your target?**

Oh no, it was bombing only yeah.

**So what, so can you describe that moment as you released the bombs or is the navigator releasing the bomb or?**

No, pilot releases the bomb, the thumb bomb button. Oh well from about, oh shallow dive from a couple hundred feet I s'pose from, oh probably half a mile out or something like that. Got a bomb sight thing not much of a one it was,

28:00 how'd we use the gun sight not too sure but we had a sight anyway and you get to a stage in a shallow dive where you think, well this is about the right time to release it. Go, boom, and then as you pull away from it, your camera takes a shot of where your bomb went out the back and away you go. Bomb doors close, oh well we didn't have any bomb doors, no did we? Yes, we had hundred gallon drop tanks in the bloody wings, so we must have had two bombs in the bomb bay yeah.

28:30 **Had you dropped your drop tanks at this stage?**

Yes we had. Matter of fact we had, well we'll just - I go onto drop tanks in a minute - and we took off for home and we split up to make our own way home. We beat up a couple of trains on the way. Again freight trains, not thingo trains carrying Danish people and we were halfway over the North Sea when this bloody pee tube thing that I told you before came into the, into action.

29:00 And we used that and then I said to the, then I couldn't see anybody else and I said over the phone over the radio, "Hey, anybody seen the old man?" and a voice came back, "Belt up Dunkley or something like that, we're not home yet", and that was the old man.

**Who was the old man?**

Wing Commander Bill Newman, New somethin' or other yeah Newman I think yep,

29:30 yeah nice old bloke. He'd been out here grape picking before the war. He was a pretty old bloke. Spent a lot of time with training command too but he had a bum of a navigator but

**So can you and once you got back did you wait around to see if anybody, if everyone made it back?**

Mm.

**Can you describe?**

Oh well, we all landed back at base or Swanton Morley? I'm not sure and then we all got de-briefed in the same place.

**Were there any losses on that mission?**

No,

30:00 no losses, no. Was a goody, no it was a very satisfactory operation. Matter of fact, the Danes themselves in their history of the air force attacks on their places say that Aarhus was the least known of their Gestapo headquarters that were attacked and it was probably the most successful attack they reckon. There was a hospital on the other side of the road from the university and not a single bomb landed in the hospital grounds

30:30 but there must have been an awful lot of bloody heart cases, we reckon afterwards from the noise of the

bombs goin' off just across the road. We went back there in '95 too by the way. They took us back, gave us a lunch, the Mayor of Aarhus gave us lunch and went back to the, and we had did a bit of this. Peter Lake from Melbourne, he's pilot and meself were lined up with the local TV station to have a few words to.

### **What**

31:00 **was, looking back on it, what was the mission that most upset you?**

Most upset me?

**Yeah, I guess what was one of the heaviest losses in a mission you went out on?**

Oh well, I think that the, I didn't go on the mission but the Amiens prison one was the most upsetting of the lot because of the losses that we did have. We lost

**Where were you at that stage?**

I was back at

31:30 base because I'd only been with 'em for a few weeks and they took, naturally enough took the most experienced blokes.

**Can you describe that, you waiting at base on that mission?**

Yeah, well all we knew was that they'd gone somewhere, we didn't know where 'cause they'd been briefed and then straight out the briefing room into the aircraft but when they came back and we'd lost the CO, which was not the CO of the squadron but the wing

32:00 CO, group captain Percy Pickard and one of our flight commanders from 464 and I think one other as well. All very experienced and very good crews yeah. So we were a bit, we were all a bit bloody unhappy about that one. It was a success. Actually Pickard shouldn't have led it. He was

32:30 a night pilot more than anything else. He'd taken part in a lot of these secret things flying a Lysander over to France and landing by the couple of torch-lights held in a paddock and delivering a bloomin' secret agent over there and picking up a man with a Maquis or something that had to be taken back to England and all that. He was an expert on that sort of work but he hadn't done much daylight work and at Amiens, he not only led but he also acted

33:00 as master bomber after he led and did a couple of circuits around the prison and he was jumped by two 190s or 109s, I'm not sure which and shot down. Now Basil Embry who was our Air Officer Commanding, our Vice Marshall, said at a later stage "That he should have stood up to Pickard when Pickard said that he was gonna lead". Embry always thought that he should, he wasn't experienced enough in daylight mass operations

33:30 like that, he was rather a single night operator. Shouldn't have allowed him to do it, because of his lack of experience he reckons he went.

**Did you prefer operating daylight or night-time?**

Oh daylight, yeah.

**Can you explain a bit of your reasons why?**

Oh well you could see things a lot easier, identify targets a lot easier and

**Did that mean that you attacked a lot of targets at night**

34:00 **that you weren't sure what you were shooting at?**

No, no it doesn't but it meant that you had to concentrate a lot harder to ensure that you were on the right target. You're on your own and you could bullshit your way if you wanted to but that wasn't the point of the exercise. You were trying to get to a target.

**Did you ever shoot at, I can imagine it must be very difficult under the circumstances when you pushed that flying button on your control column when you weren't 100 per cent sure that, what you were shooting at?**

Oh no, well it was mostly bombing rather than

34:30 shooting at things at night time and no, I can't remember any particular occasion when I'd say that I wasn't sure of being on target. I don't remember taking bombs back at all but I know that the navigator and myself took great care to identify targets when we were sent there. I think most blokes did too.

**Were you given some special train, special**

35:00 **briefing in being very attentive to not bombing civilian targets?**

Oh yeah, ours was well, that was the job of the heavies you know. Old Bomber Harris, he used to flatten everything that was to be flattened, target or not, although I notice Rollo Kingsford-Smith in a recent

letter to the editor of The Herald defended the attack on Dresden, which was  
35:30 just fire bombed. The whole bloody city was virtually destroyed and it was a historical university city.

**Did you know of that raid at the time?**

We knew not, only after the raid yeah. We didn't know it was coming on or anything but oh well naturally, we wouldn't either but after the raid it was, there was a lot of hassle in the English newspapers about fire bombing a city without any industrial targets. Well Rollo Kingsford-Smith's argument was that there were three specific industrial targets there and he was on the raid,

36:00 he should know.

**Do you remember having a specific opinion about that at the time?**

Oh yeah, well I didn't know there were industrial targets, I thought it was another Harris used to just bomb to obliterate a place it seemed you know, destroy the bloody city, most of 'em were in the Ruhr where there were...

**How did you feel about that particular approach at the time?**

The Dresden one?

**Oh yes.**

Yeah, well mostly that. I felt the same as most public opinion that there was

36:30 unnecessary destruction of a bloody of a university town with a lot of blooming historical things in it.

**You were under overall control of Bomber Harris at the time?**

Oh no.

**Bomber command didn't?**

No 2 Div [Division] used to be in Bomber Command but they were separated and made into the tactical air force for specific support for Montgomery and the

37:00 allied invasion and the follow up of that to finish the war.

**Did you have faith in the strategic goals that you were being given?**

Oh yeah, yep. Why? 'Cause I reckon the blokes up there that were given us the bloomin' orders knew what they were doing, oh yeah in fact I understood they did.

**I mean you were, you and your men have been placed in harm's way and you must have thought that the loss of life was worth it,**

37:30 **can you reflect on that?**

Sorry, say that again?

**That you have been placed in harm's way**

Yeah

**And for these missions. Did you feel the, can you describe the feeling whether that was a, the goals you were sent out to achieve were worth those costs?**

Oh yeah, well I felt if it was good enough for our brass to consider that this target that we were sent to was one that was justified

38:00 in having an attack made on it and if possible destroyed, then, well then I was just one of the number that was sent to do that job and accepted that.

**Was there any particular target that you thought that was perhaps not**

Doubtful?

**Not as worthy of the, say given the risks involved that it might be a marginal target? Was there any one particular that you thought about or questioned in your own mind?**

No,

38:30 no don't think there was, no I wouldn't say there was, no. See most of the night flying was not... operations were against these airfields and they would have to be all considered to be justifiable targets.

**You also went into Berlin, is that right?**

Not right into it, no. We went, matter of fact this is where this navigator, this last navigator of mine

- comes into his own. We went to within a few miles of Berlin
- 39:00 and this Gee stuff ran out at the, say the enemy coast or the Dutch coast and we still had a long way to go at night-time and my bloke got there at about half a minute before ETA [Estimated Time of Arrival] and about half a minute, half a mile off track all by dead reckoning navigation from the coast out in there, which I thought was bloody marvellous yeah. And I remember buying him a couple of this particular drinks,
- 39:30 gin and something or others that he had when we got back for it, no it was good.
- What was your target on that particular night?**
- Oh an air field Neus Stettin [Neustettin], somethin' like that Neu something or other.
- What did you do over that airfield?**
- Oh, our usual thing. The heavies were doing Berlin and our job was to keep the night fighters down to stop 'em getting at the heavies,
- 40:00 yep.
- Did you shoot up the airfield or drop bombs on it or anything?**
- No, bombed it yeah after having after fiddling around there for about oh 20 minutes, half an hour.
- And the object was to draw them after you, is that correct?**
- No, it was to keep them on the ground yeah.
- So they?**
- So, that they couldn't get up and attack the heavy bombers, yeah German night fighters, yeah.
- And how did you do that specifically?**
- Oh well, we'd be allotted a
- 40:30 half hour
- I know but why wouldn't they take off?**
- Why wouldn't they? Oh well they couldn't take off without any bloody lights on the aerodrome. They would have to have runway lights to know where they're going, and if they're landing, they'd need runway lights as well. Well if we can keep the air, the aerodrome dark, why we didn't have an attack, a very systematic attack from a bloomin', from flak, I'm blessed if I know on the occasion. Maybe
- 41:00 all the flak had been moved around to Berlin itself.
- Could you see the raid off in the distance at night-time?**
- Yes, yeah.
- Can you describe that sight for us?**
- Oh Christ, a bloody great firestorm. Yeah, I'd say we went in a little bit early and it was on the way out that we saw the heavies hit, you know there would have been somebody take over from us when our half hour was up, there'd be somebody else following us and going in the same place and they would, we would have been in a box seat to
- 41:30 see a lot of it. But we saw the start of the attack and probably, oh five minutes that's all because we'd be doing 250 mile an hour goin' the other way.

## Tape 9

- 00:31 **Sorry, I'll ask that question again. Was there a limit to how many operations you could fly or you were supposed to fly?**
- Yeh, well in heavy bombers a tour was generally speaking 30 ops or round about 30 depending on how far they'd gone but you must remember they were doin' six or seven hour trips and we were averaging about three or something to that affect. But I was under the impression that I
- 01:00 had just about ended me second tour when the end of the war came because on the, just about the very day that VE [Victory in Europe] Day turned up I was told that I was being taken off operations and sent back to England and I'd only done 76, so how many exactly are a tour on what I was doing, I don't know but it must have been somewhere like about 35 or 40.
- How does it feel to get that many operations under your belt? Did you begin to feel like you**

**were pushing your luck**

01:30 **a little bit?**

Oh yeah, yep.

**Can you explain that feeling for us?**

Well in heavy bombers, I'll put it this way, 460 Squadron had a turnover of their manpower five times virtually with their losses. We had nothing like that but every time you went you thought, well you know that's one more, just how many more have I got? And

02:00 it's pure luck, there's no risk about that. Well there's a certain amount of airmanship in it but not a hell of a lot. I know that there were a number of blokes who were better flyers than me that, who were in the wrong place at the wrong time and copped it, whereas when people say to me "Geez you must have been a good flyer to get through 76 ops?" I say "No, no I was just lucky one". And I'm a firm believer in that. Goodo you can, if you can take the thing off and bring it back that's something but

02:30 to take off, get over there and dodge everything that's over there and then be lucky enough not to have a fighter jump you too and an enemy fighter jump you, then good. That is luck.

**How did that, that not knowing how many more there would be and how did that feeling of frustration manifest itself?**

Well simply in wondering when you're goin' to finish. The heavy blokes used to get to say op about number 25

03:00 and they'd be praying to God that they'd last the next five and knowing bloody well that they knock off at 30. Well, we didn't have the luxury of that information or the - don't know if luxury's quite the right word - but we didn't certainly didn't know, so it was only a question of just keeping on going while you were told that you're time wasn't up to knock off yet.

**Did that start to cause pressures and**

03:30 **frictions within the squadron?**

No, not that I noted. Certainly didn't worry me. I used to think well, geez I've got this far, I wonder if I'll last the war, you know that from time to time but it didn't worry me on particular operations, no.

**What about the war? How did you feel the war was going towards the beginning of, after D-day I mean?**

Oh well, it was a bit like the bloody thing in Iraq. There was no way that our mob couldn't, our side couldn't win. The, well the

04:00 Yanks made a hell of a difference with their, simply with their fire power but we had the numbers. Hitler lost his chance in 1940 and from there he was goin' backwards. It was only a question of when the D-day would come, when the invasion would take place, which I think the politicians were pushed into because the Russians were making such great gains on the eastern front and but once Hitler made the

04:30 bad decision of takin' on the Ruskies as well in, June 22 1941 and he had two fights, two fronts to fight on with big opposition on both sides, he was doomed so was only a question of how long.

**Was there ever any doubt when you took part in the D-day landing that it might not be successful do you think?**

No.

**Why could you, what made you so confident?**

Well, the only thing that could have been was the

05:00 weather. And as you probably know it was postponed I think for two days in a row and even the third day or the day that it came on the night of the 5 and 6 June, the weather was still very crook but they made a decision to go and to see that, gee whiz to come out on D-day and see that bloody huge armadas that was, that was lined up. All they had to do was get a foot on the soil and there was no way they were goin' to be stopped. So many of 'em

05:30 and the Germans were spread so far too.

**Can you, were up in the air while this was going on?**

Yep.

**Can you explain that bird's eye view of the situation on the ground?**

Well on the ground, I can't tell you terribly much because we had a specific target about oh, I'd say about 50 mile inland, wish I had me logbook, I could tell you all this but about 50 mile inland which was a railway junction. And all we had to do

06:00 was to find that, drop our bombs and bolt but because of the weather we were caught between being under cloud that was getting lower and lower and lower going across the Channel or go up and get above it. Above, it was a beautiful day by the way too but sorry what was the question again?

**What could you see of what was going on the ground?**

Oh well the huge armada down there. Not much on the ground 'cause it was at night-time when we went. We found our target and hit it

06:30 and then all we had to do was get home. Saw this huge bloomin' armada down there, the huge whack of bloody Yank flying fortresses goin' the other way and I thought gees I'm glad we're on our side and not theirs.

**When you said you saw the armada was that because dawn was coming up or were?**

Yep, yeah.

**Can you just tell us a little bit more about what that looked like, it must have been an amazing sight?**

Well fairly low because of cloud cover

07:00 with bloody ships everywhere. It looked as though you could almost walk across the channel without getting' your feet wet but they were lots and lots of landing craft destroyers and things on the outside guarding them, I don't recall any big ships, big battle ships or anything. I s'pose there was no need for 'em there but they were probably further away from there sweating on any big German ships coming down and catch them before they got there but a hell of a lot. Hundreds

07:30 and hundreds of small craft were there, the well not just the impression but was what I [?].

**Had the show started when you saw this armada massing? Were the landings already going on?**

Oh yeah.

**Was there much flak or firing from the ground?**

Well don't really know that. We were sort of in cloud coming out of our target and it was either we could have gone home in cloud for that matter and just flown estimates

08:00 all the way but I thought I'd like to see what was on, and so we went down to have a look at what was on and having satisfied ourselves with that, we went on to see what was on up there too.

**You said you had a close call with some fortresses?**

Yeah, yep.

**What happened there?**

Oh well, they were, I was comin' home from the target that way and they're goin' out to the target that way and I was climbing up through cloud towards 'em and broke cloud just, with just enough clearance between the cloud and them to

08:30 make a nice comfortable trip home. Lots of 'em too wouldn't say hund, well I s'pose there would be hundreds, yeah.

**Was there any kind of coordination between all the different planes flying operations at this time?**

Oh well there must have been I s'pose. Ours was the usual thing of go over well not round an aerodrome, it was to go to a target bomb it and get home again and I would say that the 20 or so of

09:00 our own squadron's aircraft would have had the same briefing at the, on the night.

**Did that mean you had to pay attention to your flight paths in specific areas and altitudes or anything like that?**

Yeh but then again see the Bay of the Seine was a thing like that shape, a U, elongated U and our fellas had made landings from

09:30 the bottom of the U there around to, can't think of the place round there. Another big harbour anyway.

**Calais?**

Hey?

**Calais?**

Oh no, Calais over there but this place where the Yanks were over on that side, oh Christ I've got a bad memory but we were spread right along there. So our targets were behind all these lines and you'd say 50 mile out that way almost to the

10:00 landing then right around the bottom of the bloody U to 50 mile out that way, so there was, it was not much different to what our customary job was going into a particular air field and out again. You'd have a stream of aircraft going in at half hour intervals and a stream coming home at half hour intervals too and we'd be routed, so that we wouldn't be bang on the same thing wavelength either, you'd be 10 mile apart say.

10:30 **You'd mentioned before that about a month afterwards you had to put down and bail out of your aircraft.**

Mm.

**How long were you incapacitated for after that incident?**

Well that was July 5, the night of July 5, to the 6, I think. And I resumed work on the first week in September, so I was out for two months, the busiest two months of the war by the way too then.

**Did you,**

11:00 **this had happened to you twice in a sense that you'd been bailed up for busy important times. How did you feel about that?**

Well pretty crook because if I'd have been lucky, I was averaging about oh two ops a week at the time and if I'd been lucky in those two occasions and also when I had a month's leave in March '45, I would have got another 24 ops in which would have given me a century. That's

11:30 provided I went through, got through all the ops yeah. I would have loved to have had that test century.

**What about the flip side of that, that these two periods without flying may have kept you alive throughout the war. Do you ever think about that?**

Yeah, what might have?

**The fact that you were out of operation for these two periods may have kept you alive?**

Oh yeah, might well have too yep, yeah I do think that way too yeah but that maybe there was that much luck in it yeah.

**Did that thought cross your mind at the time that you might well be lucky to be in hospital?**

No, it didn't no,

12:00 no, I just thought I was dipping out on getting my share of ops at the time yeah.

**Is there some glory in having a hundred operations on the board?**

No, there's not but I s'pose it's getting, the same getting a century in your first test match too. No, I think it was just, well I s'pose was a bit of thought of glory about it or wouldn't it be nice to be saying that you got home with a hundred, oh I don't know it's silly thought now but that's what the thought was then.

12:30 **You mentioned you were in the French Riviera when VE Day happened? Can you tell us about that, the moment the news came through that the war was over?**

On Christ, well the city of Cannes was just alive with people and the Frogs celebrating everything. Everybody was pissed including the Yanks naturally and they were, they all had a girl on each arm of course too and we were back from the seaside, so we had to take what was left.

13:00 But oh it was a very, oh memorable bloomin' day as far as I can recall. I was with this French fella who was talkin' to everyone in French. I don't know what he was saying but yackin' to the locals in Frog and we just had a very enjoyable day. A very long day and a very pissy night too.

**Do you remember where you were when you heard the news that precise moment?**

13:30 Well apart from the fact it was in Cannes no, 'cause everything sort of happened so quickly after that. No, I was just in the town of Cannes or the city of Cannes, yeah Cannes.

**Was there anything that sticks in your memory about that long day and rather pissy night as you put it?**

Yeah, me French speaking mate had

14:00 left me for dead and gone around talkin' to all the Frogs in the local scene and he was, Muggins, who had his school boy French which wasn't two bob there just left me his own, havin' a few snorts here and a few snorts there. And talkin' to Yanks and Frogs as best as I could and tryin' to make up to a French sheila that wouldn't have anything to do with me because the Yanks had a lot more money and that was the day. No,

14:30 the precise moment that I heard it, I can't really recall, no.

**Did you have to go back to work shortly after that?**

Yeah, the week off, went back to Brussels where we were stationed at the time to be told that I was out of work there now too. I'd finished me time there and to, they'd booked a plane, booked a seat on a Dakota for me the next day and just pack me things up and go say 'ooroo to the fellas as quickly as I could, which I did and I almost

15:00 missed me own navigator and he was out doing something and I was battling to get hold of him to shake his hand and say thanks mate.

**Was that an emotional departure for you?**

Yeah it was, too right it was, yeah especially with him. Like he'd got me through 44 operations, he'd done it beautifully too and I think probably without him, well certainly with the other bloke we wouldn't have lasted or with the three other blokes rather, we wouldn't have lasted.

15:30 **Can you explain that feeling of how do you feel after you've formed such a close camaraderie in such trying circumstances and suddenly it's all over? Must be a real mixed bag of emotions?**

Oh Christ it was.

**Can you talk a bit about what those emotions are?**

Oh gawd, well I got back to England, was on a train back to, down to Brighton, the embarkation place to come home with

16:00 thousands of other bods there. Didn't know a soul there, no so, God how are you with, it's just like, say you and me goin' to Darwin now. We don't know anybody at all and we, well not you and me, you or me goin' to Darwin not knowing a soul, I mean what the bloody hell am I doing here or what can I do here to make life a bit easier? But all we had to do was to front up every day till we got a posting somewhere and as I say I was tried to be posted to this bloomin' Air Accident

16:30 Prevention thing but talked me way out of that and I couldn't get on a boat quick enough to get home then.

**When did your thoughts first turn to home?**

Oh well, I the I'd no it was when I, when the VE Day was on and I knew well there's nothing more to be done over here. I've got to get home at some time, it's only a question of how quick I can get there and how do I find Mum and the kids when I get there too,

17:00 yep and how do they cope with me? Well the kids didn't cope too well as a matter of fact. They'd had a nice lovin' mother looking after 'em and in comes this bloody stranger tellin' me "Go to the toilet and come back" and havin' the kids call out from the toilet "Daddy, I'm ready" you know. You married?

**Let's talk about that home coming. How long were you in England before you got a chance to come home?**

17:30 Oh only a few weeks, yeah. Well there were you know thousands of blokes wanted or had to get somewhere and to get all over the bloomin' world, they had to go back to Canada and New Zealand and India and South Africa and all that, so we were in the queue the same as anybody else to get onto a boat and it was just a question of waiting your turn. From memory it was only a couple of weeks though.

**You mentioned the ship you came back on was slightly less luxurious than the one you went over on?**

Oh Christ yeah,

18:00 Christ yeah.

**Can you tell us a little bit about that journey?**

Oh yeah, well instead of having our waiter service on the thing there were shifts for meals and you went on your shift. I think there were two or three shifts on ours. There were thousands of people on the bloody boat and it was a cafeteria style thing where you got your plate, your knife and fork, you went through the bloody queue and then sat down.

18:30 You had, you did have an allotted table space and I fed with the same people every day on the way home but you know the quality of the meal was nothing like it was on the way over. It was real bloomin' rough stuff, I'll put it that way, anyway it was edible enough but it wasn't nice tucker one might say. But oh, we just sat down and we won the war all over again.

19:00 Comin' home it was very easy then too.

**Was it a little bit lonely?**

Oh well yeah, yep. I had another, oh three, two, three other squadron leaders in the four berth cabin with us. One bloke had just, he'd only been over there for about four months and he'd done a tour on

Lancs and another bloke was a head office bloke from London and he told me about all the new dance steps

19:30 he'd learnt in London during his two years or whatever it was there too. Must have had a wonderful war and god I forget the fourth bloke, just can't place him anyhow. But anyway we didn't have a lot in common any of us, anyway the other squadron leader bloke and meself, the other flying bloke and meself. There were two flying fellas and two non flying blokes and we spent a bit of time together but not a lot. Colin, oh Colin

20:00 Jackson.

**And yet when you came back to civilian life you would have had more in common with those guys than most of the people you were coming back to, in civvy street?**

Yeah, did too yeah. I went back to work as a clerk in the Sydney County Council and the County Council always took a very liberal view of these poor bloody ratty diggers comin' home and if you want to go out and not have a beer but if you want to go out and walk around the town

20:30 a bit and then come back, then they didn't mind that long as you weren't away all day you know. But anyway I undertook a secretarial course that's, which is like an accountancy course and set about organising a block of land and building a house and that kept me occupied up here too much to be worrying too much about what had happened in the last couple of years.

**Can you tell us about one of these walks**

21:00 **around town that you took? Well what was in your head then?**

Oh I didn't do any of it. I just stayed at work but some blokes did, they just walked around the block as far as I can remember and came back and put their heads down and grabbed their pens and went back to work but I didn't take any of that, didn't do any of that yep. Matter of fact I took the view that the more I got stuck into buying a block of land, building a house, doin' me secretarial course the more likely I was

21:30 to recover from whatever trauma I'd been through during the war and I didn't look at it as really as much of a trauma at all.

**It was a readjustment maybe more than a trauma?**

Yeah it was, yep.

**Well what was the hardest thing coming home?**

Don't know, think just settling down to nine to five again I think was the, was it yeah I think it was because there'd been

22:00 none of that while I was away yeah.

**What about seeing your wife and these now three-year old children. Can you tell us about the moment that you first saw your young family?**

Oh yeah, well we were taken by from the ship we anchored, oh somewhere in the harbour at one of these dolphin things and took us ashore by

22:30 launch and then by bus up to Bradfield and my wife and kids were there waiting for me. Oh no, it was quite an emotional time of course too but the kids didn't have a bloody clue who I was and they didn't recognise or didn't accept me for quite some weeks afterwards. Tried to be nice too but it's hard when you're, well I didn't have any experience in that sort of business either and it was just

23:00 a question of getting to know them and them getting a bit of confidence in me I s'pose.

**How long it take you to become a father?**

Oh gawd some time, some time. I used to think that if we had dinner at night and put the kids down that was going to be the end of it for the night but no such. There'd be almost every night one of 'em'd be awake havin' a bit of a cry or

23:30 wanted some support some way or other. I couldn't give it to 'em because they wouldn't accept it from me for quite a while, which meant that Mum was up and down you know most nights when I was, all I was thinkin' was Christ you're interrupting me sleep you know. Which is not a very nice thought when that's happening to somebody else but we were sharing a, we were in a flat at the time which was half a house in Chatswood, Victoria Avenue Chatswood and until we got into a place

24:00 of our own it was a bit more difficult. Once we got into a flat down at Manly while our house was being built out at Padstow and that was a bit better being on our own. Going to work by ferry was quite nice too. Getting accustomed to me own family, which was in Parramatta again and my wife's family we'd, who were in Manly in the first instance and then moved up to East Hills.

24:30 Just getting into the routine of in civvy life was wasn't easy but it had to be done and

**Your experience was also interesting in that you hadn't really had any experience of married life, you were in the air force the whole time?**

No, that's right yep.

**How long did it take you to become a husband?**

Not too bloody long by gee cause I dropped from me very good squadron leader's salary to

25:00 a, just a bloody pen pusher's salary, which was I think about a bit less than half and I can recall having to adopt what I call me tobacco tin system I had about four tobacco tins and one was for money to go into the Building Society, another one was to pay this, another one was to have to pay the recurring expenditure - your electricity, gas and all those sort of bills. And I had to just guess

25:30 what we'd have to put in some of those. Mum'd take, oh Mum'd be given the majority of the change and I had very little left to buy me pipe tobacco and fares to work and not much for grog up either then, so it was a pretty sobering business to get back to civvy life and to civvy

26:00 money as well but I think overall that I would have probably converted to a reasonable sort of father after oh probably three months or so.

**Was there a part of you that was still a squadron leader?**

Oh Christ no, that went out the door with the pay and the uniform and the life of living that sort of

26:30 luxury life I s'pose as far as an airman was concerned.

**Did you miss the close male friendships?**

Yes, very much yeah.

**How did you deal with that?**

Not very well, I don't think. I tried to keep up with people. Matter of fact my mate Tony Tuck and his wife and my wife Eve and myself went to a nightclub - Carl Thomas' night-club down where that toaster is in Circular Quay now

27:00 and we could barely afford the night out but as well as that me misses took a dislike to Tony's wife, which meant that when, no as they were, they weren't married at the time they were married shortly afterwards and he asked me to be best man and when I showed this to me misses she said, "I don't want to go to that" or words to that affect, so I not only declined to be his best man but didn't go to the wedding either.

27:30 And after he didn't talk to me for quite a while after that and his wife told my second wife Pat, that's the girl up here that nearly broke Tony's heart because we'd been so close together during the whole, during the, our time together in the war and he raised it with me on an occasion too and I said "Now look mate, that's all very well for you but I had to live with her and it was, I made a judgement at the time that I either went there and

28:00 alienated her to that extent or I stayed good friends with my wife and alienated you which is what I did." And I was stuck with that then. Well it was wasn't until my first marriage broke up and Pat and I got married and we were living over at Mosman and Tony was catching the same ferry as me to work, that was 20 years later and he sat down next to me, he said "G'day" and we well by that time he knew that Evie and I had split up, so there was no reason not to

28:30 sort of get back on friendly terms and we got very friendly then with my second wife and Tony and his first wife got close enough to be swapping dinner visits and whatnot and now they live up at Bowral and I, every time we go through there we don't go through without calling in and having a cup of tea and occasionally stay overnight with 'em too.

**Do you think that the pressure that was established on your first marriage from you being away those first three years**

29:00 **was something that carried on through that?**

It probably did a bit, yeah it very likely did as a matter of fact, yeah I'd say.

**What about your relationship with your family seeing them again was that a very difficult experience coming home after being away for so long?**

Oh yeah, quite yep, well just settling down to family life was

29:30 difficult after being in service life with all fellas and you know, you do your day's work and you have a few beers and go to the cot or alternatively go on leave and live it up a bit but you're with fellas all the time and that's quite different to home and family life.

**Do you remember seeing your parents for the first time when you came back?**

Oh yeah my wife and the two kids and meself

30:00 went up to Parramatta by train and had lunch with Mum and Dad and me sister and her eldest boy. Me young sister was still in the air force in the WAAAF in Melbourne and me brother was overseas with the army - he was in the army up in the Islands and went to BCOF [British Commonwealth Occupation Force] in Japan eventually.

**Did your parents look different to you?**

Oh gawd yeah.

30:30 I thought they were aged considerably. I s'pose, well they'd only had away three years but it seemed, they seemed to be a lot older. I was probably a lot older, a bit older in me thinking anyway, too then. I'd left home at say aged 21 and or something like that and got home at 25 and yeah it was different.

**They're very important years in your life I think for maturing that?**

Yeah. they are too yeah.

**Do you every look back negatively on that and find that you've had your youth**

31:00 **somehow taken away?**

No, not so much on that as the failure of my first marriage. Evie had a very early change of life, what do you call it?

**Menopause?**

Menopause, yeah used to pick on me, used to get cranky and have a go at me about everything and nothing and there was a limit as to what I could take about that

31:30 oh and I finished up goin' down to the boozer and findin' a couple mates to drink with instead and she got sick of that too. And so eventually she'd have nothin' to do with me in the long run and we were still living under the same roof but I was goin' out with a couple of blokes who weren't or drinkin' with a couple of blokes who weren't married and they, they'd always know where to find some sheilas too, so I finally got tied up that way. But

32:00 we tried to get back together again but didn't do any good but and so we just busted in 1963 yeah '63. We were married in '42, yeah '42 and busted in '63 and I was five years on me own before I started goin' out with Pat then and we were married 31 years when she passed away with Alzheimer's.

32:30 **The coming back to the war after the lifestyle of male friendship**

Yeah.

**and going out and that had, was a big change to come back to civilian life. Were there any other changes that you'd noticed in yourself during the time spent away in Europe?**

Well I s'pose I didn't really recognised them but I s'pose there must have been. I can't say I noticed any though, no.

**Looking back at**

33:00 **your entire life I guess since the war, how do you look upon it now?**

Well, I had 30 beautiful days, beautiful years with my number two wife for starters, even when she had Alzheimer's and I was, she was entirely dependent on me. They were still good times. Mind you she got very incontinent and

33:30 that was about the worst feature of the Alzheimer's. Changing sheets in the middle of the bloody night before I got the wrinkle on what to do but I got a lot of satisfaction out of looking after her right up till the time when I couldn't any more after she had a massive epileptic thing in the middle of the night here in one January. And by the following July she'd tried, we'd tried to get her rehab in the hospital next door and couldn't, she would, she didn't respond

34:00 and I just borrowed a wheel chair and took her over to the nursing home but I fed her morning and night there for the six months that she was there, five or six months that she was there too including that Sustagen I used to feed her with a bloody plastic syringe. Sustagen and orange juice, that was the only way to get going but I think I profited very much from the failure of the marriage number one. With marriage number two there was never any suggestion of us busting or if we ever had a

34:30 blue it was a very short blue and we overcame it 'cause I reckon that I was at fault in the first marriage for not recognising what was going on and then doing the wrong thing about it rather than accepting the fact that there is such a thing as a menopause and Evie was going through it, so I profited from that and there was no bloody way I was going to make any bad judgements or mistakes like that in the second time and I didn't no bloody no way

35:00 but now Pat's been gone for three years and for the last two years I've had a girlfriend in Sydney and

she and her husband and Pat and I used to travel a lot together when we retired, oh about the same time we liked travelling, we liked bird watching, so we did that, did a round Australian trip. Went to Kangaroo Island where that was done and bird watched and then even after Patty died for, I s'pose about the best part of a year or so I was going down to Sydney on birding

35:30 outings. And the only person I knew was Joan and the vice versa thing happened and after oh some yeh months of this, I said to her one time, "Geez, I like your company, Joan", she said "I like yours too, Ern". I said "Give us a kiss love", half expecting a slap over the ear 'ole which didn't come and so we've been spending weekends together ever since and we go on holidays together. Been to New Zealand recently, went to oh, was telling Rob earlier that we went to Christmas Island out in the Indian Ocean

36:00 a couple of years ago on bird watch or a year and a half ago on bird watching and she comes up too, she'll be up tomorrow to our bird night up here, stay the night but she'll be off in the next morning 'cause she's got a bush walk or something to look forward, lead to. I've the, what I'm telling you all this about is that I've enjoyed life a lot better since I recognised me own bloody frailties and dealt with 'em and now I've gotta

36:30 good partner for two days in the week or for every weekend and there's no way I'm goin' to jeopardise that either.

**How do you feel about your role in the war these days? Do you ever have 'cause to think about it or talk to about it?**

Oh yeh, well I talk to me air force mates every week about it.

**That's just that, oh we won the war again kind of talk or**

Oh yeah.

**do you talk about the difficult times as well?**

Oh yeah, too right we do yeah, at times of,

37:00 oh well any difficult times you can talk about and I can't quite - well one almost bloody really difficult time was when we were at Thorney Island over Christmas '44 when there was snow on the ground and we were still under bloody canvas on the outside of the aerodrome and half a dozen other, we used to go over to the mess every night to have dinner and we'd have,

37:30 we'd get into the hops too and on this particular occasion old Charlie Foster, who only died a couple of years ago, English bloke was, come trampling across the bloody paddock on the, across the aerodrome to where our tents were and he, when we got to the tents we realised he wasn't with us and we tramped back along in the snow and we found him face down in the bloody snow. He would have suffocated if we hadn't gone back for him. He was pissed as an owl

38:00 but we got him back to his tent with a fella named Farrelly. That, well the point I'm makin', no forget Farrelly, what I'm making there was, could have been a tragic thing if we hadn't gone back for him. He was a one eyed bloke too, we used to call him "One Eyed Foster" anyhow.

**Have you ever had any dreams about the war?**

No I don't think any, no can't recall any. I dream about the fellas

38:30 and the people that I knew during the war quite often but I don't recall any dreams no.

**Overall, are you proud of what you've done?**

Oh well, I wouldn't say proud so much as satisfied I think. Well people had all sorts of jobs to do. I was glad of the one I did. I'm sure it would have been better than

39:00 walkin' around in mud like up in New Guinea and that or being on a bloomin' boat and maybe gettin' torpedoed out in the middle of nowhere, so it was I'm quite satisfied with the role I played.

**Did you talk much to your second wife about what you'd done during the war?**

Oh yeah she was very friendly with

39:30 all these mates in Melbourne and Sydney and Queensland. We used to stay with a few of 'em. Always stayed with at least two in Queensland, maybe more and with one bloke in Melbourne and then Tony and his wife in Bowral yep.

**And your children and grandchildren?**

Who mine?

**Yeah.**

Oh yeah I got, my twins have each got a boy and a girl. My daughter's

40:00 kids are 31 and 29. He's in Melbourne now, he's a musician. He's a drop out from everything but he's a

bloody good musician too and he's got a heap of sound equipment too and he hires out his sound equipment and he sometimes, they hire him as well to look after it. He plays in a band. He can play just about everything. Doesn't get much playing business now but he's also teaching a couple of days a week, teaching music down there, he's a qualified teacher.

**Does that generation ever ask you about the war?**

- 40:30 Oh not often, no - me own daughter and son mention it quite a bit but the grandkids don't. The other grandkids, there's a girl and a boy there too. They're 22 and about 18, I s'pose they are, me son's kids, they're, my son's not as close as my daughter is. In between no - after Pat died my daughter was on the phone two or three times a week
- 41:00 "How are you Dad? Anything all right, are you all right? Anything you want blah, blah. Once Joan came along and that, that went from two or three times a week down to about once a fortnight but she still rings to say, "Oh how are you Dad? Are you all right, anything I can do for you?" Very, very attentive and caring little girl.

**What's your message about war then? We'll just run the tape again. How do you feel about war and what do you have to say**

41:30 **about?**

Well, I'm basically an anti war bugger and I disagree entirely with what our government led us into in Iraq for the very same reason that other people would too. We were led in under false pretences and over there, see we'll go and get the Al-Qaeda, we haven't got 'em, we'll go and get Osama [Bin Laden], we haven't got him. We'll get the weapons of mass destruction. There aren't any. It's all bullshit that they go on with to get us in there and then only for other people

42:00 to control other people, nothin' to do

42:03 **INTERVIEW ENDS**