# Australians at War Film Archive

## Anthony Flint (Tony) - Transcript of interview

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## Tape 1

00:38 **Okay, we're recording now, so if you'd like to give us that introduction, please.**

My name's Anthony Flint. I was born in Western Australia on 14th of January 1952, and to a relatively, very poor family. I was the only child, my parents had lost a couple of children before me, I think, so very pleased to have received

01:00 me. And then I was educated, oh, we lived in Como in South Perth, and I was educated first of all at the Holy Family Convent down in Como, and then at year four, the one thing probably my parents could give me was good education. I went to Trinity College, which at that time for the first year was CBC [Christian Brothers College] Perth, and then it moved after my year four to, down to the Swan River to new buildings

01:30 and became Trinity College. I did my matriculation, all my education at Trinity then and matriculated, and then worked for a year, and also attended the West Australia Institute of Technology doing geophysics for a year, part time while I worked, and then joined the navy. I actually joined the navy in 1972 in the Naval Academy at Jervis Bay. And from there I

02:00 went, completed my training in 1974 and then proceeded to the United Kingdom for officer, what they call officer of the watch training, and returned to Australia on completion of that, that was six months of navigation training and officer watch training, preparing us for being an officer of the watch at sea . And then from there went to HMAS Stuart, where I got my primary qualification of bridge watch keeping certificate. From

02:30 there I then had a number of postings to HMAS Perth and then on to, from HMAS Perth on to being selected for flying training. I wasn't quick enough learning, I could fly but I didn't, wasn't quick enough learning in the flying to progress there. And I went back to patrol boats then and I was the second in command of HMAS Buccaneer. And from there I

03:00 went to HMAS Leeuwin over in Perth as a communications officer and a training officer over there. And then was selected for the air intercept controller, fighter controller's course, and that developed the rest of my career stream right through my life, with going then to HMAS Melbourne, where I controlled the fighters on HMAS Melbourne. And from HMAS Melbourne a short stint as a recruiter,

03:30 I was speaking, actually speaking to schools about the Naval Academy and generating interest in that. And from there I was selected for the Principal Warfare Officer's Course in England in 1980 and successfully completed that course, and returned as a direction officer, or an anti warfare officer on HMAS Brisbane, and that was followed by a short time at HMAS Watson, and then

04:00 to HMAS Hobart, where I was the operations officer as well as Direction Officer. And from there, probably one of the greatest postings of my life, I went to the United States, I was selected for a posting on the United States 3rd Fleet as the surface operations officer or, and also the USS Missouri battle group officer for 3rd Fleet,

04:30 which was a great experience. And out of that subsequently generated a couple of other postings, but I returned to Australia to Jindalee Project in, from memory 1988, the end of '88 the start of '89, and the Gulf War was starting. And I was crash posted from Jindalee Project, rung on a Friday after a bit of

05:00 bartering with my boss, who wasn't happy that I was, he was gonna lose me for a while, I then bartered my way in to preparing over the weekend and getting the inoculations and leaving on the Monday. And I then connected with my past life in 3rd Fleet on board USS Blue Ridge, where the admiral in charge of that was actually one of the officers that I knew quite well from 3rd Fleet time, and he integrated

05:30 me into his staff, which was a great experience for Desert Shield and Desert Storm. And from Desert Shield and Desert Storm, I was there for six months through the initial naval and air operations, and then the land operations. And then left and came back, went to Jindalee for a short time in command of HMAS Brisbane in 1982, December 1980, ah, December 1992, I'm sorry. And then that was probably

also

06:00 one of the greatest postings of my life, great ship, great crew. And from there I was selected for the first inaugural course of the Australian College of Defence and Strategic Studies at Weston Creek, which is the senior military officer course, which had been established in 1995, and then selected out of that for command of HMAS Success, which was also a fantastic posting. And from Success I

06:30 was then selected in '98 to command HMAS Watson and also be the Lead Authority Maritime Warfare, in charge of maritime warfare across Australia. And then I was promoted out of that job as commodore to be the Director General of Maritime Development, and that was also a very challenging position. And my last job in the defence force was director,

07:00 general industry capability, and I retired just on a year ago in April 2003.

**Great, okay, that was in the navy, your last job?**

Oh, it was in the defence force, yeah.

**I see.**

It was in the defence force, it was actually in the Defence Material Organisation that I, was my last job as Director General Industry Capability.

**And what did you do after you finished with the**

07:30 **Australian Defence Force?**

Yeah, I retired and I've joined a company called Rates in Australia as a director there, and it's specifically looking at assisting the navy to, with its future projects of the new ships that are coming along, so yeah.

**I see, okay, great, that's an extensive career. Now what I'll do is we'll go back now in time again to your**

08:00 **early days in Perth. And if you could tell us firstly about your parents' background.**

Yeah, sure. My parents were, are quite poor. My mother actually came from a wealthy family once, but through a number of misfortunes, I suppose, my mother and my father married, and were quite poor. So,

08:30 and but you're never really aware of that as a child so, or growing up, and you never really wanted for anything. So, and so my life was always pretty happy and, although as an only child I probably regret not having brothers and sisters, but at the same time there was always plenty to do around the neighbourhood and the kids were all pretty good. That's where you form probably some of your lasting relationships from those early childhood friendships, which I've still got in Perth.

09:00 And from that life, which was in a great location, in South Perth, in Como, really that was their sole, major possession was the house. We then, I went to school at the, in the Catholic system at the Holy Family Convent down in Como and that was also great, and I did my first three years of primary

09:30 education there with the sisters and we had a tremendous time. And I think there probably are lasting relationships that I've still got, in fact I'm still catching up, catching up with one of my friends in about a month's time, who's coming over here, so that was a great experience, I think, and a very formative experience. And from there, boys only went on really to that

10:00 stage and so, and, but, whereas the girls continued at the convent. So I then had two choices, my parents could've sent me to the state education or on to the Trinity College, which was really a lot less expensive school than the other premier Catholic college

10:30 which was there, which was called Aquinas. So I went on to CBC Perth originally, and that was in St George's Terrace and a magnificent school, and quite a change for a young kid.

**Christian Brothers.**

Yeah.

**I went to Christian Brothers school.**

Christian Brothers are magnificent. And so into that, discipline and all that, which my parents obviously thought I needed too, I think. And from there they were obviously

11:00 given an offer they couldn't refuse for that building and land in St George's Terrace, and so they built a new school called Trinity College down on the river banks just near the causeway. And so we moved down there at the end of year four, and my schooling was at Trinity right through to matriculation. And in those days Trinity was just become, had just become a member of the PSA, the Public

11:30 Schools Association, and so it was a great time for Trinity and, you know, growing and that. And one of the great memories I have is that I played hockey, and there was so many Olympians who came from

Trinity, all came back, and they all taught the young kids and spent time with them. So the Pearse brothers in particular, the three of them were, always came back. And so the hockey in particular was a very strong sport, rugby never did that well,

12:00 because a fledgling sport and not well supported in WA [Western Australia], but it was also a requirement of the Public Schools Association, so. But, you know, Trinity was out there trying, and to be part of that was great. Education was very good, and I think there's no doubt I would not have got the education that, or the standard that I got, without being there. And my parents afforded that,

12:30 although they were fairly poor, that's one thing they always said they could give me was a good education, so, and I'm probably very thankful for that. Yeah. So I mean, that went right through to matriculation, and then I was a prefect at the school, lost my badge for a little while over some, well, a number of us did, but at a cadet camp

13:00 I was given it back after time in purgatory and then yeah, continued right through. And I think they were very memorable years, and also you forged great friendships, lasting friendships. And my best man was one of the students from there, and certainly probably one of my couple of really enduring long time friends is also from there, and we went right through the convent and

13:30 the school together. And being an all boys' school you do form very, I think, good relationships too. Sometimes you wish it was co-ed because, you know, that was probably, you know, especially now it'd be a more normal environment. But at the same time there's benefits of an all boys' school, the sport, the concentration on sport, the friendships that you develop and, you know, growing up together is, I think, a great experience. So right through

14:00 there, I matriculated from there with a fairly good matriculation, got a couple of scholarships. And those scholarships I, because once again I didn't have too much backing behind me financially, I knew I had to work, I couldn't just go on a scholarship. And also my mother had become quite sick at that stage so, and she'd had, she'd had breast cancer before and that was when I was young, but then

14:30 she had a very bad stroke, and was in hospital permanently for a long time. So during those last couple of years was also difficult, because it was only my father and I. And so we then, you know, I kind of cooked and did all the stuff and also went through school, so I knew at the end I really had to generate some income, because he wasn't pulling in too much. So that's what I did for a year, and then

15:00 I thought, 'I'll probably need a better career than this.' So I then moved on, 'cause I was also working for the PMG [Postmaster General], that's where I worked, and I was going to the West Australian Institute of Technology doing geophysics, but it was pretty tough doing both, and geophysics demanded really full time study. So I thought, 'Well, I better sort myself out and get a profession.' And at that time Mum'd just come home from hospital so I thought it was okay, so I applied for the air force and the navy.

15:30 And the interesting thing was, I knew I wanted to go to the academy, and I knew I wanted to, I wouldn't have minded flying and that, but I also applied for the navy and I didn't consider the army. So I got through the selection processes for both, but the air force took their cut off on the birth date of the 1st of January, which made me fourteen days too old for the air force.

16:00 And the navy took it at the 28th of January which made me fourteen days under the navy's cut off for the Naval Academy. There were other avenues if I wanted to go direct entry. But, and so I took the navy and I went to the Naval Academy and once again I, you know, the people are the things you remember, and the friendships you made, and the Naval Academy, quite a change for me, I suppose. It was, yeah.

**I'll just stop you there and ask you a**

16:30 **few more questions about some of the things you've just drawn on. Trinity College, that was, you said that wasn't a co-ed school, that was a, all boys.**

No, it was all boys, yeah.

**I think generally Christian Brothers were, yeah.**

Yeah.

**Now they had a cadet system there as well, I take it?**

Yeah, I was in both cadets at the college. Initially the air force cadets, where I became the warrant officer after one, and thoroughly enjoyed it. The air force

17:00 did provide a great and very interesting kind of activities, including the camps, where you went to Pearce and you always got a flight and all that, and for young kids that was tremendous experience and very, very interesting and motivating, I suppose, for the air force, who were trying to generate interest with the young people too. So that was a great experience, but the school decided that it, all it, it was going to only go with one cadet system, and so

17:30 the air force was closed down and we were offered transfers across to the army. And I moved across to the army and was an under officer in, one of the CUOs [Cadet Under Officers] in the army cadets for the final year and which I found, once again, very, very interesting and, you know, great activities that you

normally don't get a chance to do, so

18:00 yeah they were great days. Yeah and blended with sport, the sport, you know, the cadets, the sport and the academics were all great. The sport I, I played hockey for Trinity College and that was always a strong sport for Trinity and we had a lot of, we had probably more than our fair share of Olympians, so and they couldn't help but affect the boys who were going to the school. And so

18:30 we continually had visits back from these champions who even were in the Olympic team or had been past champions, and we were, we were encouraged and given a number of, you know, activities where we, the old boys would actually take the current students off to either watch high level international games or train

19:00 the teams. And so I was the vice captain of the first eleven at Trinity and I found that a really, a great activity and a tremendous sport. And it's one that's flowed through, my son plays hockey now and I think that interest, he's probably shares just as much as I do, the enjoyment of the sport.

**Just curiously, did you have any family members who served in the Second**

19:30 **World War II or the First World War?**

Yeah, my father was a member of the Royal Australian Air Force and he became a sergeant, and he was a mechanic artificer, a fitter and turner for the air force. Served in New Guinea during the dark days of, when there was the Japanese threat that they would come through New Guinea to Australia and that. So he didn't speak much about his wartime experiences, but

20:00 what he did was very interesting and obviously, you know, they felt under great threat there and knew they were the last kind of barrier before the Japanese would, if they were interested in coming to Australia would…so yeah, he had, he did the Second World War in the air force and then left the air force and returned to civilian life and set up his own panel beating shop

20:30 with one of his mates. And they had that business for quite a long time where they were fixing cars and that, and it was a successful little business and that. And I remember as a child going there a number of times, and the great enjoyment was it was next to the Peter's ice cream factory, so we always used to get the new products before anyone else did, 'cause Dad was great mates with the guy who ran, or one of the guys who ran next door

21:00 and the operation next door. So we always got, I think I was one of the first to have a Drumstick in WA but…so that was a great experience, and I used to go and knock around with him there and he used to… he actually built our, one of our cars for us, which was the last car he built that from, a number of parts of scrap cars and all that, so he had great skill, I think. Yeah, and then from there he got quite sick, so he also got sick so, and I think it was hard

21:30 but they, he had to give up that business. So then he became a labourer and a maintenance man around a number of properties and hotels and that in Perth where he obviously, his skills were much more than that, but it wasn't that strenuous job. But it paid low wages so that caused my mother to work, and so they both worked throughout most of my childhood life, yeah.

22:00 **Did your dad ever talk about the Depression years?**

No, not that, I mean, not that much. He used to mention them, but only because it was so hard and the fact that virtually no one could afford cars or anything like that at that time. And I think the way he generated money in that time was to participate at the local speedway at Claremont

22:30 in Perth, and he used to drive sidecars on bikes or be on bikes and sidecars and some car racing to generate extra income. But I remember he and my mother both talking about the hard times and that, and very much the lack of variety of food and the quality of food and not being able to afford too much, yeah. So it wasn't, yeah, that's about all, but he used

23:00 to, didn't say too much but I know all his friends and certainly my relations could remember it quite vividly. And I think that used to cause them to always be aware of, you know, having money or savings and trusting banks and, you know, and having some money, but which was for emergencies and all that.

**What about your, you know, any of your father's brothers, or your mother's brothers if they had any?**

23:30 **Did they have any sort of war relations that served in the First World War?**

Oh, I know there was relations, but there wasn't, the family tree is not that well defined right now, although there's a couple of us trying to, you know, work on it and indeed, back in WA…so I know there was a couple who were killed on my mother's side in the First World War, and I'm not too sure

24:00 about my father's situation with respect to the First World War. But he would've been about four or five at the time and my mother was about three when it initially started so, you know, they were quite young children themselves but, as it was going through. But no, you know, I'm not too aware, I know they had good friends, I mean good friends of my mother,

24:30 a man called Bricky Meade, he was a great character and became a trainer, a well known trainer in Perth of racehorses. But he went through the First World War and lost a lung and a number of other things during the First World War. And he, probably my experience of the First World War and what happened was more through him, who was a very good friend of my, he was like a bit of a father figure, I think, to my mother. I always remember him and some of his friends who'd

25:00 been through that horror, and survived, and lost a lot of good friends at the same time. My other experiences, I mean, my mother had four sisters and so my Aunty Pat was married or met an American sailor in the Second World War who was on a submarine tender out of Fremantle. And she ended

25:30 up marrying Alan Spangler and then moved to the United States, and I have two cousins in the United States, and that was basically a, meeting Alan on the submarine tenders during those days of the Second World War, operating out of Fremantle. And my, the other two sisters both married on a, I'm pretty sure my Aunty Edna's husband either died,

26:00 I think died of results of the Second World War. Yeah, so.

**Now you, being born in 1952, you would've started to become conscious about, oh, you would've definitely about, you know, the Vietnam War, of course. How big a role did that play during your youth, in a sense of your awareness of what was happening and its impact on Australia?**

26:30 Yeah, Vietnam War was interesting and you couldn't help but at that time, you know, the '60s and that, of being aware of Vietnam and the varying positions that were being taken in Australia with respect to Vietnam. I always believed Vietnam was an

27:00 honourable war and as, I did that even though I was facing conscription like so many of my friends and that. And going through school and you, you know, you obviously thought as you were going through school, 'Is Vietnam going to catch me and we're going to end up,' you know, 'is conscription going to get me and we're going to end up over there?' So I was in the ballot, my date didn't come up, my birth date didn't come up, and so

27:30 I wasn't up for conscription, but I'd already made the decision that I was going to the Naval Academy, so I still would've gone to the Naval Academy. You know, it was, my memories are that it was a confused time for Australia, it's part of, although a difficult time. It was a very difficult time, but it was also forging our national identity, I think, the country was very divided. And

28:00 I just, probably over and above everything, even as a schoolchild, I felt that it was wrong for people to be out there and withdrawing support for the troops who were overseas. And so, and you couldn't help but feel that some of the kids of some of the soldiers who were over in Vietnam were roughly my age at that time, and yet there was a country which is basically

28:30 walking away from them, and I thought that was difficult. It was also, I thought it was a disappointing time, in that it's one thing to agree with government policy, but the way you treat the troops and that who are loyally serving and implementing a policy of the nation at that time, they shouldn't have been treated that way.

**How did your parents react to Vietnam?**

Never really discussed it, to be honest.

29:00 I think my father, he, I think my father probably had the same opinion I did, you know, because he never really said anything against it, I think we were generally agreed. My mother was too sick really to appreciate what was going on so, and she, you know, she became very sick and mentally degraded for

29:30 quite a while, so she wasn't too aware of it. My father and I were fairly busy, obviously, just getting on the fly for that time but we, I think he, we probably had similar views about that. And, you know, I mean the post-mortem of Vietnam will be, you know, I don't know whether it comes out that we should be or we shouldn't be, I think communism was a real threat at that stage, there was a strong opinion that you had to stand up and stop communism somewhere or else, you know,

30:00 whether Vietnam was right or wrong, I suppose that, you know, history will tell. But the fact is that the troops loyally served and did Australia proud and they should've been recognised that way. And I, yeah, finally they have, you know, finally they have, I mean Australia's taken a long time to heal over that, it was very divisive. And I think that was a poor part of Australia's, Australia at that time in the way we treated the troops

30:30 who did nothing more than serve their country.

**Did you know any Vietnam, people who were serving in Vietnam at the time?**

Yeah, I mean, yeah, I did, and indeed they used to come back to the school because of the army cadets once again. You know, one thing about Trinity College was the strength of the old boys, and the old boys used to come back whether hockey players, you know, rugby players, Aussie Rules, had produced a lot of good Aussie Rules players and

31:00 you know, right through, Malarky, who used to play was, who, he was champion at school and in the Aussie Rules and that, so they all came back and they all gave a bit back to the school. And indeed the same with the soldiers, the Vietnam vets came back and they were honoured back at school and all that. So yeah, you did meet them and all that and I suppose there, you never really got a true sense of

31:30 what they were going through or been through, but it was great to actually, you know, to see them and know they'd been through that experience, I suppose. Excuse me.

**And the school was largely supportive of their effort at the time, Trinity College?**

Yeah, yeah, it was, yeah. Yeah, I mean, we had at that stage a pretty strong military tradition, I think, at Trinity, and the cadets were excellent, you know, and had been a part of that school for a long time, CBC Perth

32:00 and all that. And, you know, I mean there was a number of people out of all that cadet system who joined the services too, of, you know, with me, and obviously before me and all that, so there was a lot who came through. In fact Rear Admiral Smith, who became maritime commander, he was the, at Trinity with, just before me and there was a number of others, so it was supportive of, certainly of the troops and all that. I mean, what the brothers' opinion was with

32:30 respect to the government policy is probably another thing, and I don't think the students were ever, became aware of that, because it's no visible sign of support or otherwise for Viet, for the policy of Vietnam, but that was never there. But certainly with respect to the returned servicemen it was always a matter of, yeah, welcome them back and honouring them and that, and for young students, once again, you know, it was

33:00 a great opportunity to see these people.

**When you came to the decision that you wanted to have a stable, more professional sort of career, why did you choose the armed forces?**

Yeah, it's an interesting question. I suppose, one was I had a belief that

33:30 it would be a great career, although I didn't know too much about it and, but, you know, I thought, well, I might fly, and certainly the navy, I thought, would be extremely interesting too. I think the second point is financially, I knew that I probably had to change my life in WA. I continued to be mediocre at everything and

34:00 drink a lot of beer and have a great time, but I thought at the end of that I would probably wake up one day at, you know, twenty-five, thirty or something and say, 'Well, I've got nothing to show for the last seven or eight years or so.' So my thought, it was important to make a move which would actually set my life with respect to a career and from that

34:30 perspective, you know, I knew that I had to have also a paying career, because the family support was not there and wouldn't be there, so I chose somewhere where I would not only get a good career, I believe, but also one where I could be supported to attain that career. Otherwise I could've easily, have

35:00 continued to be a clerk in the Commonwealth service right through my life, as indeed a couple of schoolmates still are. And there's nothing wrong with that, because they actually wanted that career, but I always knew that being a clerk in the public service, I knew that I wanted more, it just didn't challenge me. And I thought an administrative job at that stage was not something, I wanted something more, I wanted a real career, so

35:30 a more active career is probably the best way of describing it. And, you know, my mates who've remained in the public service and done very well have obviously enjoyed it a lot, but it just wasn't for me, so I had to make that big fundamental change. To make that change I probably also knew that I needed someone probably to guide my career and life a bit, because I was enjoying partying and beer a bit too much. So I did all that and I went into the, a kind of a monastical

36:00 kind of life at Jervis Bay for a while, where they locked you up and didn't give you any beer or anything for about six months, and actually you buckled down to establishing a new career, which for me was probably ideal.

**So you were twenty years old when you first joined up the RAN [Royal Australian Navy]?**

Yeah, I was a bit older than that, because I'd worked that year and that. So I then went to Jervis Bay and, you know, I mean I, after about the first day I thought I'd made a big

36:30 mistake because there I was and it was, you know, you were treated, you were purposely treated pretty tough. The discipline was fairly tough, and it was all a part of getting you used to being an effective member, I suppose, of the college and the academy, and getting you all together and to act as a team and all that. So physical training was quite high on the agenda and there was a lot of

37:00 marching and you had to wear boots and you had to run everywhere around the college because you didn't have the privilege of walking. And so all these things were to, I think, break you down a bit as an individual to make sure you're an effective team member. And so, yeah, I mean, I had a number of thoughts over the first six months or so that, whether I'd made the right decision. And, excuse me, and

37:30 I actually resigned during that first six months, I think, three times. But each time, there was a captain called Stevens there who was a great man, and he, for some reason Stevens took an interest in me. And the XO [Executive Officer] used to ride me pretty hard 'cause he knew I was a bit older, and maybe I was a bit of a troublemaker down there, 'cause I used to find ways of getting around the system if I had to.

38:00 And, you know, I mean, we used to have our own little supply of alcohol that'd come in over back gate and a couple of other things if we wanted to have a beer, so we knew how to do the system a little bit. And having said that, I thought, 'Well, maybe I've made a mistake,' so I did resign, Stevens came and got me on three occasions and walked me round the quarterdeck. And by the end of that walk he'd talked me out of resigning,

38:30 and I stuck it out, and he got me over a kind of a trough, I suppose, and then I really did buckle down and made the navy my career. So by the end of the first year, you know, I was very positive and very motivated and enjoying it. And by that time your privileges and, because the regime of the college, you start with nothing and then you, as a senior entry, which I was, I was a

39:00 matriculation entry, and there were still junior entries at the college too who were the, who'd joined after what we called the junior certificate back in, yeah, after year ten, so they were quite young. But those who'd joined two years before us had, were in charge of us, you know, just once again to, that was the regime of the college. So it was a bit tough in those first couple of months to take the

39:30 orders and, you know, the kind of, the discipline and the riding of these younger guys who had been at the college for two years but hadn't yet, they were doing the matriculation that year, and so that was all part of the structure of the college. And then after three months you had the privileges of that, the first lot of years, and then after six months you were then equal

40:00 with those junior entry cadets who were two years your senior at the college, and then after nine months you're in charge of them. So it was an interesting thing, and the junior entry cadets who gave us a hard time the first three months learned how to moderate it as we were getting closer to being equal, to being in charge of them. And then by the end of the twelve months we were, you know, we'd completed the first year, and we knew at that time we had another six months to go

40:30 at the college. Because I did the Creswell course, not the university course, so it was based purely on getting your seamanship skills, navigation skills, everything up to standard to get you to sea, and then by the middle of next year we knew we'd be at sea doing our midshipman's, or cadet midshipman's training crews first.

**Okay, I'll just have to stop you there, because we'll just have to change a tape.**

# Tape 2

00:31 **Just to go back in time a touch, growing up in the '60s and '70s and so on, we've read a lot of things and we have a lot of media and sex, drugs and rock and roll, and party life and all that, what was the reality for you?**

It was a fair bit of alcohol, I think, in growing up in those days. Also my mother was, had been a barmaid, and so all her friends were barmaids,

01:00 so I used to get beer pretty cheaply and for free. So, but I mean, drugs in my, with the people that I associated, just weren't there, we never experienced drugs and we never had an interest to. I suppose, you know, we would, we certainly enjoyed going out on a Friday night and playing pool and drinking and all that and, you know, and we had a great group of friends. So, you know, the girls and the guys all mixed very well and

01:30 we all looked after each other and all that, and it was a good social life. So, yeah, the drugs certainly wasn't there, it was alcohol and that, and that was really the way of socialising more than anything else, I think. People were all off getting their uni degrees or working or doing whatever and studying pretty hard for your matric., which you knew you needed to get, and get done and that, so. I remember the Beatles and all that, I mean,

02:00 they're great memories, is the Beatles. In fact I just bought a CD [Compact Disc] the other day of 'Master's Apprentices', and that took me back a number of years. My son actually likes my music too, and he's a musician and my daughter is too, so both of 'em, but my son more will associate with that type of music and, you know. And so the Beatles and that, I remember classically, 'cause I used to sell papers outside a pub to get a bit of

02:30 money, and the Beatles were all the thing then. And when they came to Australia and that, that's, you all know where, kind of when they came to Australia, generally that generation knows where you were when they come to Australia and you remember it because they were so big. And the local groups around too were pretty big, the 'Master's Apprentices' and Billy Thorpe and the King and all that. So all

of ’em were, you know, music was

03:00 really a big part of your life, socially and in your quiet times too, so you remember all that, yeah.

**Do you think in films and so on that we see it’s more the American experience rather than the Australian experience?**

Yeah, it is. I think very much so, it’s the American experience rather than the Australian experience. I mean, in Australia, my childhood, you know, was very much good friends, certainly socialising. You know, the beach

03:30 was very big in WA, you’d always head for the beach and get down there and body surf at Cottesloe or Scarborough or one of those and that, so that was a big part of your life, you know. And fitting in school, sport, cadets and a number of other things, so it all came together and socially you did a lot of things together, whether it be sport, swimming, you know, and all the other activities. So yeah, I think generally our generation

04:00 is characterised by the American experience, but it’s not that true for Australia. That, you know, I just wasn’t, I wasn’t even aware of drugs. And it’s probably, it was probably only after the navy, where you knew the navy’s policy that you actually became aware that drugs were out there, because the navy’s policy was very hard on drugs, and rightfully so. You know, and it should’ve been, because of the safety and all the other

04:30 impacts of drugs on life. So, but really I didn’t become aware of them and that, and I didn’t have a sheltered kind of upbringing, but it’s just, they didn’t really have any part of your life.

**And the cadets that you went through, and then you went through navy training, how well did the cadets prepare you for that training period?**

Yeah, to a certain extent I think they, they only do a certain bit, but I mean the cadets, the cadets is more about camaraderie and,

05:00 I think, encouraging and allowing people to have a good time. The activities are purposely outdoor, especially the army cadets and all that, it’s great stuff, it’s about mateship, you know, enjoying nature, getting out and doing things that you normally don’t do, like bivouacking and camping and all that stuff. So, and they teach you some basic skills, and even my son went through Waverley cadets too, and he equally

05:30 enjoyed it, you know, the basic bush skills and how to survive out there, you know, CPR [cardiopulmonary resuscitation] and a number of other things. You know, reading a map and all that are great skills that you take right through your life. But they only prepare you to a certain extent for a military career, but they get your interest up, that’s probably the main thing. You know, your interests are certainly there, you, it’s not completely undisclosed, a military career, you know there’s going to be discipline, you know the rank structure, you know that there’s a hierarchy

06:00 in, or hierarchical system of rank, and all that. And so that part is not that new to you when you join, but it doesn’t disclose really a career. Except for the army, I suppose it’s extension, if you’re infantry, of what you’re doing in the cadets. In the air force cadets you would probably say it was more about aircraft recognition and aircraftsmanship and a number of other things. But if you were going to be a pilot or that, you didn’t

06:30 get a great insight into that or the technical side of it either, you know, if you were going to be an engineer or an aeronautical engineer in the air cadets you wouldn’t get a great insight. And the same, I never, ever knew there was a naval cadets, because they weren’t high profile over in WA, it’s either air force or army. The navy, the naval cadets, which I know exist and are here in Canberra and all that, and they do a great job, but they weren’t prominent over in WA. So,

07:00 and I’m not sure you’d get much of an insight into your future career there, or of the ultimate career of what you’re doing, especially seaman officer and all that. But you do know the fabric of the organisation, because the fabric flows through from the regular service into the cadets and all that. And I think, you know, I strongly support cadets, there’s a big debate going on about the cost of cadets in Australia. I think the country owes it to its younger people, to allow them to

07:30 have the choice of cadets, because it trains them in a number of things, and a number of things including, even if they never go near a military career, it trains them in being good citizens and it trains them in integrity, honour and ethics and a number of other things. You know, it asks a standard of people which you’re gonna be, you’re gonna meet, you’re gonna have to face up to some time, you can’t, in your life. So I think cadets are good

08:00 for children and young Australians and that, and the country really should get behind ’em and support it.

**And was navy your first choice or you preferred it, to go in another service?**

Well, it was air force or navy. I suppose at that time if air force had’ve offered me to fly, and I wasn’t too old, I had in my mind that I wanted (a) to go to one of the academies. You know, I don’t, I’m not

particularly sure why

08:30 I wanted that, but I think, I knew there was always direct entry, but I always wanted to go to the top, which was the academy. I wanted, and probably the recruiter done a very good job on convincing me that was the way to go, so I was fourteen days too old for the air force so, you know, that was closed off as an option. If they had've, if that had've been open and that, I may have gone to the air force, I, distinct possibility. If I had've been going to the Air Force Academy and

09:00 a flying career was attached to that, I probably would've, but gee, I got no regrets, and the, you know, the naval career's been a fantastic one. I think I, I mean I can stand back now, different levels in my career and look and that, and I think the naval career offered me a lot. Both offer you different things, but the one thing about the navy is it offers you, it's a people thing

09:30 right through. Whereas air force, you're a pilot and you're, to a certain extent you're an individual, you got a team that supports you on the ground, but realistically when you get in the air it relies on your professionalism and capabilities, because you're the one who's actually at the front end of that organisation, you know, in conflict. And whereas the navy has always been a team, you have to be a team to be successful. And

10:00 so I probably really like that aspect of the navy, you know, you have to succeed as a team, individuals can't do it. Now that's not a criticism of the air force, it's just a comparison of, between the two services. I mean, you know we, what they, I mean, navy ship takes three hundred and fifty people, as HMAS Brisbane did, three hundred and forty people, and we all had to, knew we had to be good to survive. Whereas

10:30 the pilot knows he's gotta be good, 'cause he's in an F18 and he's on his own, but he's got a very good support team back there, but. And so, you know, it's just a different way of approaching, kind of, you know, the extension of arms of military service, which is, you know, armed conflict.

**And earlier you were talking about the hardships you went through in those, that first year, particularly the first six months.**

Yeah.

**Can you give us a couple of examples of the hardships for you?**

Yeah, I think it's, that first year was

11:00 a, character building, I suppose. It has to make you make the adjustment of coming from civilian life, where you had certain things you were used to and you'd grown up with, and bring you into a military service where discipline has to be fairly much up there, and you all, and once again in the navy you have to be part of that

11:30 team, you have to be part of a successful team. And really your personal prejudices and your personal requirements have to be secondary to, well, your prejudices you should leave at home, but your personal requirements and, you know, your selfishness and all that has to be very much left aside too. Because you have to do what's good for the team, and ultimately it was training you in the first year to operate

12:00 as a team, really for your full naval career, because wherever you went you were part of a team, and if you were weak then the team was weak. So, and it, the extension obviously is military conflict, and there you've got to be successful, so everyone has to be hitting their peak, and they have to be working hard, you know, have to train hard and be certainly motivated, and you really can't take passengers. So that first

12:30 year was a moulding year, it was a character building year, it was also giving you a lot of, I think, pride in the organisation of being in the navy. I, to be honest I don't think nobody makes enough of that, the Australian Navy's got a very proud heritage, and a couple of times I was honoured enough to get exposed to that, in one way or another, you know, the Battle of Leyte Gulf, where I was in the Philippines on Brisbane, as captain of Brisbane.

13:00 And what those, the heritage of the navy that, you know, and what the ships did and what the crews did there, you know, is huge. And I don't think we make enough of that in the navy, I don't think people are proud enough of their history, because the organisation doesn't do enough to honour its past, and you know, I've, I think we've got to honour the people and the past. And so, that very first year, while it's given you a bit of naval history it's given you a lot of your naval

13:30 requirements, navigation and all that. But you know, I mean the real experiences which kind of shock you into reality of what you were joining was, you used to have to do, in those days, boat training, but at night you were required as the coxswain and you'd have a couple of, some of the lower or the younger cadets there who were still doing the matriculation, they'd be the boat's crew, and you were on your own. And you used to go, have to go out to the middle of

14:00 Jervis Bay in all types of weather and dark, extremely dark and get your way out. And you had to be professional enough to get out there, get alongside the ship, pick up the passengers that they wanted, and this is at any time of night, 'cause some of the ships would come in with an emergency, and they'd come into Jervis Bay. 'Cause (1) it was a good shelter from the weather, although you'd get, you'd get a

lot smaller waves in there, you'd still get quite big waves in there, but you'd go out there and you had to get alongside, get these people off and that was a lot of

14:30 responsibility for, you know, six, nine months in the navy, and doing that, but that was character building too. And the leadership, they were always looking for, you know, for the leadership, it was always big down there. It was a great year for that, I played hockey again down there and certainly with, you know, the rugby was paramount down there and that, and the naval college played all the, you know, public schools and all that. So that was always big, but sport

15:00 was always a big part of your life, and that. And you know, I mean and I think as you went through taking, you know, taking charge where you had to and taking the responsibility, it was all part of, it was compounding effect. You know, as compounding effect of your character and also setting you up for your future career. Now some people fell by the wayside, our separation rate in that first year, it was more than half. And

15:30 I think, I did the sums once, I think out of about, we had about thirty, it was probably, there was probably about sixty or, sixty or so there, maybe a bit more, of which I think after the first year we were down to about twenty-something who had separated, so a lot of people had either decided that wasn't for them or, you know, they were going to go and take up another career.

16:00 And a lot have been extremely successful in the careers they went to too, some went into the police force, back to uni, you know, we've got people who were successful everywhere, but they left. But, you know, that, so it was giving you exposure to your future career and asking you to make a decision, I suppose, at the same time. You gotta make that decision for the right things, and I think that's what Captain Stevens was saying to me was, 'If you're going to leave, leave for the right decision, don't leave because

16:30 the XO or, you know, or the second, the commander was, seemed to have a little bit of a bias against you 'cause you may be testing the system now and again.' And I think he thought that was good in someone, actually, that I, they were trying to test the system a bit while not doing anything that was terribly bad. So from that point of view I, you know, that first year was very formative, very important for the navy and in getting people to the right,

17:00 the right level. But when you think about it, that Naval College had a huge tradition as a naval academy, 'cause they used to take thirteen-year-olds, you know, and so these young kids that go there. And some of our greatest naval officers were thirteen-year-old recruits through there, you know, 'cause it went back to, you know, the second, really I think it was about 1910, 1912 that the Naval Academy started up. And you had

17:30 some of the heroes of the navy in the Second World War and all that, were graduates of theirs, so huge history. And I, once again I think the navy should make a lot more mileage of that, because young people can actually inherit that, they can inherit the heritage, get a good feeling for the heritage, and that kind of guides their actions too, I think. If they're proud of the organisation generally they won't do anything to, against it.

18:00 Yeah.

**How did you try and test the system?**

I probably was a bit of a rebel. I remember when I got off the plane, 'cause I'd never left WA, up until twenty I'd never left WA except once my parents drove across the Nullarbor, which I remember, and we went across for a wedding when I was quite young. So I remember driving across the Nullarbor, a lot of dirt road at that time, 'cause it wasn't sealed,

18:30 and having to open the cattle gates and all that to go through, and then you'd close the cattle gates, and you know, that was the main arterial kind of road for Perth to Sydney. So as West Australians we always felt a bit isolated, I suppose, and when you drove it you actually realised you were isolated, because no-one had even tarred the road. But at the same time I'd never left Perth seriously until I got on that 727 to go across at midnight and

19:00 arrive in Sydney. But, and I'd had a big haircut before I left, and they singled me out as one of the troublemakers from the start because my hair obviously was still too long. I'd had a, quite a Genghis Khan moustache and long sideboards and fairly, my hair's curly anyway, as my son's is, so it goes very curly and all that, so I'd had all that cleaned up before I went. And I thought, 'Right, you know, this is probably a bit of overkill,

19:30 I've got too much cut off, but anyway it'll grow back.' And I got over there and people identified me as soon as I got off the plane as being a bit of a rebel, 'cause I'd arrived not fitting the, kind of the conformist image of what should be going to the Naval Academy. And the word'd already gone down the naval college by the time the bus left Sydney that I was the first one into the barber shop when I got there. And the barber said, I always remember he said to me, he said, 'I've been waiting for you, they've been ringing me every hour saying you're arriving.' I said,

20:00 'Oh, that's good.' And so I then got the regulation, no hair on the sides and not much on the top, just to prove a point to me, I suppose. But, and so that was kind of the way it started and I was a bit older than the rest, and then we, you know, I decided that, you know, I mean all the rules were there and that, but

you gotta test the system a bit. So it didn't take us long to work out that although we couldn't have a party, we still could have a party down there, and we'd organised a,

20:30 through a certain source there, that we could have a regular supply of alcohol on ice, brought in at a bit of a premium, we had to pay, but it would be brought in. And on a Friday night we'd all get together and have a couple, well, some of us get to be together and have a couple of beers, others decided it was too risky. So a number of us used to go down to a beach called Whale Beach and we'd have a bit of a fire and have a couple of beers, and that was all part of it too,

21:00 nothing terribly dangerous or terribly bad in that. Except that the rules were for the first three months you were locked up, you weren't allowed out, you weren't allowed to have any alcohol, certainly no girls were allowed, and the whole thing, and then you'd be given a weekend off after the first three months. Well, I think it took me a week to crack that, crack one of those, but obviously the word must've got out, because the XO once

21:30 again identified me as a bit of a troublemaker. But that was alright, I mean we never did it, we only did it two or three times, it really proved we could do it more than make it a regular kind of, you know, flagrance of the rules. But so that was one of the things, I think all the rest generally, you learned that you had to really obey the system, 'cause your system, the rules were there for a reason, and they all made pretty good sense. I mean, and

22:00 generally academically you had a high workload, sport you had a high workload, you had to get up about five thirty or five o'clock in the morning, and you'd go for a run and a swim, even in winter, and it used to be pretty cold. And you'd, you would go down there and they'd mark off your name and that to make sure that you did it, and then, and so it was all part of that and you'd go cross country in the afternoon. So I don't think I was ever fitter than when I was there, I certainly lost,

22:30 I had no fat on me whatsoever, and it was a very healthy time, I suppose. Academically it was good, the instructors were interesting down there, very interesting, and a number of those instructors had been there for a long time in the Naval Academy, so they had taught admirals at that time, you know, they'd been there that long, so they were interesting people and that, and they could tell, regale stories of all of them.

23:00 Sometimes some didn't update with technology too much, and I remember we were being taught about valve theory, when transistors were well and truly here, but at the same time they didn't change the training too much, but it achieved what it had to and it certainly prepared you for sea, that first year. And then you went away and went, you had leave, and I remember the great thing about that was that it was at a time

23:30 when officers still travelled, even though you weren't really an officer, officers still travelled first class by rail. So I worked out that I could fly economy on the plane or I could have first class on the rail on Indian Pacific, which I thought was fantastic, I mean, why would you fly? And so I just loved this, because you had someone who brought you a cup of tea, you had five days on that train, the food was magnificent, you

24:00 know, and it was a great way of seeing Australia. The Indian Pacific was brand new at that time, it was going through the Nullarbor and you didn't have to suffer the road, which still wasn't bitumised, so it was a great opportunity and so I always wondered why not more people did the Indian Pacific. Admittedly you gave up time, you know, the time was the thing, whereas the plane would get you there in five or six hours, but it was a tremendous experience and something you probably couldn't afford later in life when they changed the rules.

24:30 **How much of that first year in training's about weeding out those guys who couldn't handle battle conditions, so to speak?**

Yeah, I think it is that, I think it's the discipline and they were certainly, they had a thing called OLQs, officer-like qualities. Now it was nebulous kind of quality, no-one, there was no clear definition of what officer-like qualities was, but it identified things that, you know, they thought an officer needed. So, and it ranked very high, if you failed officer-like

25:00 qualities you had to improve or you're out. So it was, I think that covered some of what your question is about, but it was looking for, you know, the temperament, the character, the qualities, personal qualities that were required of a naval officer and, you know, a Naval Academy graduate. So by the time you got to sea, generally they had gone through the first kind of

25:30 selection process, I suppose. And, you know, I'm surprised sometimes that, well, I mean, I suppose I wonder why I didn't get weeded out, because I was a little, you know, I always used to test the system, but at the same time, obviously someone saw some good in it. And so when you went to that training cruise you'd already, you know, a lot of people left by their own choice,

26:00 not too many, there was one or two who left because the system said, you know, 'Navy's not for you.' But generally it was by their own choice and, that one left, but once again I think the system was saying, 'Well, this is the standard, either come up to it or go,' and so it did. And it was good preparation, because when we left the naval college to go to the first training cruise, the conditions were pretty tough. You were, you had to be a team to survive, really, and you were,

26:30 you went to an old ship called HMAS Anzac, which is one of the old Second World War destroyers, and it had been converted into a training ship. And we were the only ones who lived in hammocks, and so the rest of the crew had bunks and, but we lived in Three Mike Mess [mess/sleeping quarters], I remember. And everyone had to string their hammocks every, you'd lash your hammocks at

27:00 night, sleep in them and then you'd stow them in the morning. You had to take them all down, you actually ate in that mess too, so there was barely enough room for all the hammocks, well, there was no, fairly, not much room when you put all the hammocks up. So once again it was teaching us, you know, making sure that we were prepared for that kind of condition, but it was also a continuation of the college, where it was actually putting us in a situation where we had to accept the conditions and

27:30 be very much a team in order to achieve what we had to and really survive, I suppose. I mean, half the time on that ship, 'cause you used to have to carry your meal from the galley across the open deck into the mess deck where you ate, you'd lose half your food anyway because the wind and the waves were just pounding across that deck and it was open, it was completely open. So you'd, you know, especially breakfast with bacon,

28:00 I remember you never came back with bacon, you'd be lucky, the eggs were rubbery so they always stayed on the plate, but the bacon was always gone. And so by the time you got down there you were, you know, you're juggling a drink of some type and that, and by the time you got down there, you know, you certainly knew you were on board a ship, that was rolling and rough and all that. And so, you know, it was all part of that, I suppose, grooming people for you know, the naval life, you know, it's just

28:30 a graduation.

**Bastardisation is a term that's bandied around the media a lot, did you see any of that happening in your time, or…?**

No, I, look, I don't, I don't really understand bastardisation, to be honest. I don't know how the pack mentality can make people act and do things to other people that just isn't

29:00 acceptable, and they don't deserve it. The only thing I ever saw at the naval college and this is, you know, and I mean it is when one cadet actually, I suppose dobbed in his whole year. And his whole year, and it wasn't for much, I can't remember what we did, maybe, I think it was because we didn't go for a run, but one of our people was marking it off.

29:30 And so we thought, 'Right, we've got another quarter of an hour in bed and we won't go for a run this morning,' it was raining anyway so, and anyway the, instantly someone told. So the, the kind of, the group said, 'Well, you know, we just got to, you know, it's happened, we'll take the punishment,' we got punished pretty severely, but all just to demonstrate that it really wasn't part of the code,

30:00 the guy who told ran around the quarterdeck. Once. And we all stood there, and we said, 'Right, all finished,' all went off. And we said, you know, he knew, we knew and we said, 'Just go for a run around the quarterdeck, come back,' and he knew, we knew and that was it, you know, he was back in the group. And we said, 'Right, let's get on with life,' and that was it. I never ever saw any bastardisation, not like the army at Duntroon, not like any of that. I mean, we were kind of, we were

30:30 more, I think, you know, just really people who tested the system or tried to, you know, play tricks or that and be a bit light hearted. I mean, I remember they always used to, the rugby team always used to go off and steal the army's flag, and once they'd stole the army's cannon and all that. But, you know, we weren't in, I mean, it just didn't exist in the naval college that I saw. And certainly not

31:00 in my year, we were a year that kind of looked after each other, we didn't do anything else. And we had no interest in doing anything to the younger kids, 'cause the younger kids coming through are the new…I mean, you would make sure within the system you, they knew that you were the year in front of them and, you know, they had to stand to attention before they went to dinner and all that stuff. And you'd ask them questions and that, and if they got the question wrong, well, then you'd send them to the back of the line and say, 'Well you can go

31:30 in last,' or something, but that was about it, I mean it was all very innocent. And we, I mean we just wouldn't, I mean it would've made life very un, it wouldn't have made the experience of the naval college very nice at all if there had've been bastardisation, 'cause you were isolated, you know, completely isolated down in Jervis Bay, and you had to be a community that got on with each other. You had to enjoy the experience or you left and that, and if you had bastardisation and that going, well then, it just would've

32:00 kind of split the whole place down the middle.

**Do you think some people get lost in the definition of bastardisation? Although some people would say a guy yelling at someone would be bastardisation, whereas is it people see more difficult circumstances as it, do you think there's not a clear definition of what it actually is?**

I, well, I don't know, my definition's always been where it's unacceptable or cruel to someone, you know, where you actually go out of

32:30 your way to make their life misery or something like that, and therefore by my definition I never saw it. Sometimes you gotta yell, sometimes you actually gotta take charge, the problem is when people don't take charge. And so the naval college had to teach you that, I think, at the same time. You had, you know, 'cause it's a difficult thing, you got your peer group and sometimes you pulled out in the middle and you gotta charge of them, you know, and people find that quite difficult. And so you have

33:00 to, I think, you have to grow into that role where you're actually, you know, because, ultimately when you're in command of a ship or indeed some of the other positions, you know, the responsibility really hits you, you got three hundred and thirty people, every one of those lives depend on you getting it right. And so naval college had to prepare you for that, you know, because, you know, I used to always say when I was in command of ships that

33:30 everyone can make a mistake on board, I don't care, you know, they can all make a mistake and that. But where it really got dangerous is, and where it was dangerous was when I made the same mistake, as captain. And so I think the naval college is preparing you for that, you know.

**And that first training ship that you went on, you've described a bit of it, can you tell us where you went and how you found it compared to your expectations?**

34:00 Oh well, it was adventure. Yeah, it was an adventure because basically, you know, you're on board this very fast destroyer, was Second World War destroyer and you're going to an overseas port, you know, and all that. We did our training cruise up in the Barrier Reef first and that was very, you know, doing these polo ditch training where you went from, every one of us had a leg and we would,

34:30 you know, all kind of, we'd take the ship through a couple of course changes and then anchor it in a certain position getting around the reefs and all that. You had a very experienced navigator who always kept a check on what was going on, and a training officer there too, so you were under complete supervision, so it would never become dangerous. But at the same time you had to do it, you had to take charge of the ship, and once again it's, you know, it's teaching you to actually take charge and be in charge of people and machinery and

35:00 all that, and the safety. And so we did that in the Barrier Reef, which was just phenomenal because, you know, the Barrier Reef's such a beautiful place at the best of times. It, beautiful water, you know, I mean, sheltered, the islands mostly are uninhabited, you know, the white sand and all that so, and the weather was lovely at the same time. So we did that and then we went off to Fiji, from memory, and we went for a port call in Suva, and you know, our first

35:30 port overseas, we had a great time. And a friend of mine and I, well, I think there was two of us actually, there was Gerry Pickle and I think Pete Debnam. But we went off and we just hired, 'cause we had a bit of money in those days, so we hired a taxi and this guy took us around on a tour of Suva and all that for the day, and we thought it was relatively cheap and he provided cold beer on ice, and

36:00 we went on this guided tour in this taxi. And he became quite a good fellow, he used to come and pick us up for nothing after that, he obviously made so much money on that first day that he thought riding relaxed for the rest of it, so he used to pick us up for nothing and take us around. But he became quite a good friend and he introduced us to his family too, and, which was a great honour. And that, so that was Fiji, we went to Fiji and then we came back, and that was really three months of fairly dedicated at-sea training, it was on the job training.

36:30 You know, the theory of the college was there supporting you in what you had to do and then, but the college is very much behind you, the theoretical, the classrooms are gone and you are now actually implementing your training. And if you, once again if you failed on that training cruise you didn't progress, so you had to get your polo ditch, astronavigation, all those aspects of being a officer at sea, a

37:00 mariner really, being a mariner, you had to pass all that, and so you're under pressure at the same time. At the same time, on that ship it taught you, it was the one time where you weren't an officer, you were a cadet midshipman and you're probably lower than anyone on board. You had no real privileges, the crew looked on you like they didn't know how to take you, because they knew you would be an officer if you passed it. So some of 'em used to give you a really hard time, 'cause they knew you had no real

37:30 authority over em. We used to clean the crew's toilets and all that, and urinals, I can remember doing all that with steel wool and that, so they actually shined. And the first time they'd been cleaned since the previous year when the cadet midshipmen were on board, I think. And so we used to do the worst of the jobs, once again to teach us what everyone had to do on board, and getting experience. And realise that when that, when you actually

38:00 send someone outside in bad weather, 'cause we were doing that, you know, on Anzac, when you actually send them outside, how you've gotta be concerned for their safety and all that, you know, you've gotta know where they are. We, I remember on Anzac we were actually sent underneath the boilers while it was operating to clean out the boilers, so we went down there with buckets and that, clean out all the bolts and everything that was there and, you know, these boilers were quite hot. And so we used to stand engine room watches on it, you know, it was an

38:30 old boiler ship, turbine ship. So we did all those things, painting, chipping, all that stuff, when we weren't doing our polo ditch officer training, we were doing this, what the crew would normally do, and that. And we probably, you know, we were experiencing probably worst conditions purposely to teach

us. So that you always had respect for everyone in the crew and made sure that everyone's condition on board, and they were treated

39:00 properly and they were looked after and all that, so it's a really important time, that time. And then at the end of it we lost a couple, I think, from memory and then we went off and did our midshipman's board which were, which were quite intense because they were in all the subjects of your future career. From aviation, you had to know about aviation all that, so I mean they were all, the cadet midshipman boards were all…In fact, no, they

39:30 were dummy boards from memory and then we, you know, but at the end of it, but there was still a pass, go, no go, at the end of the training crew. Yeah, and I think at one stage, I remember the customs department identified us up off Townsville or Cairns as being a potential drug runner so we, you know, or smuggling, so that we were impounded, we were kind of told to anchor and customs circled us for about ten hours,

40:00 going through searching the ship trying to find out…I think that was back from Suva when it happened. And so one of the Kiwis on board, we had two Kiwis, he decided that he'd had enough of this, and he actually wrapped up, we used to have old sugar soap or sandstone soap which you used to clean the decks with, which was the old way of cleaning the decks, very coarse and all that. Well, he wrapped this up in brown paper and then threw it out of one of the scuttles, and most of us only knew about it after the

40:30 fact, 'cause we saw all the customs running from everywhere, 'cause they thought the big mother lode of drugs had been thrown overboard and they finally had it. And in fact they opened it up and we all looked at the customs and they just held their hands up like that and shook their fists at us saying, you know, 'We are not impressed.' And we only found out later it was one of us who did it, but anyway the customs never found anything, there was nothing, I don't know where they got their tip off from, there was nothing on board.

**Alright, we'll stop there.**

# Tape 3

00:31 **While you're doing all the training and on the cruises and so on, I guess there's a special relationship between particular sergeants and crew training you up and a bit of respect there or…?**

Yeah, there is. I, you, I think you tend to form a healthy respect for the senior sailors, in particular, and also some of the junior sailors. Some of the junior sailors

01:00 were extremely professional in what they did and you could learn. If, the trick was, as long as they allowed you to, you could really learn from 'em, and that's what, that was, I think the real secret was that you had to learn from 'em about their job, and that would stand you in great stead for the rest of your career. So, you know, it was a lot of things you had to do which were new to you on board,

01:30 including, you know, getting boats off the ship and operating boats and chipping and painting and all that stuff. So, you know, you really build up a big respect for all those tasks, but the senior sailors in particular, you know there's so much experience there and they've come up through the lower decks and generally you really do come to respect them. Even in naval college, the chief QMG [Quartermaster General] who had us for all

02:00 the military kind of parade ground training was a tremendous guy, called Taffy from memory, and he was ex-British fellow, just a tremendous trainer. He knew when to yell and he did, and he used to yell and, but you all knew that his yelling was really just a front. And in fact after a while it had the counter-effect with you, because you actually would smile, which'd get him going even more.

02:30 And I think he used to go home and say, 'They've worked me out, you know, now I've gotta change tack.' So you had a tremendous respect for him and, you know, when you ultimately graduate and that and you see all that put into fruition, you know, the graduation parade and that, you know, he's probably, he was probably more proud than most, actually. So you do form those great relationships right through and that, not ones that're lasting

03:00 to a certain extent. And then the officers too, the navigator you had to really rely on because he's, his professionalism is the thing that was saving you if you made a mistake. The captain's certain, who was a Commander Salmon at the time, a great respect for him and he had every one of us up to breakfast with him while we're on board, which was always a great experience. And, you know, the mystique of being in a wardroom, where the officers kind of ate and socialised, wasn't open to us, you know, so that was

03:30 still quite mysterious to us, but a little insight was to go to the captain's cabin where you'd have breakfast. And you know, in the Australian Navy the captain and the rest of the officers is completely separate, we don't have any kind of crossing over there, the captain entertains and eats on his own, and I think for the right reasons, whereas the officers are in the wardroom, so all that was still unknown to

us to a certain extent. But yeah, you do, if you use your time

04:00 effectively, and probably that's the secret, the ones who didn't get through didn't actually form those relationships or learn quick enough. Some just didn't have the reaction enough in the navigation to be able to react quickly enough or interpret what was happening, and that's probably a quality or something you really can't force, you've either got it or not. It's like, you know, it's like a lot of other things, flying and all that, where if you don't know that it's not going according

04:30 to plan and correct it, well, then it can go terribly wrong, so…

**And after graduation, where did you head to from there?**

After graduation I think we went back the Naval College, I think, for a little while, but I think generally after that graduation cruise, I was then posted to HMAS Melbourne and to do my cadet midshipman's year

05:00 on Melbourne, and for me that was just tremendous. I mean, you know, I'd been interested in aircraft anyway, to go to a carrier, an operating carrier was just mighty. And there was a lot of us on Melbourne, we were all in what was called the grot, which is a big kind of midshipman's mess deck or mess, which had two or three bunks

05:30 high, and all that, but, you know, we're all in there and down the aft part of the ship. But the experience on it was tremendous, 'cause you had, in that midshipman's time, you had to do a task book, and the task book was very much, required you to do all the departments. So you had to do the supply department, aviation department, seamanship, you know, and you had a number of things you had to get signed off as you went through plus you had to do astronavigation

06:00 training and all that. So on board Melbourne it was just tremendous, 'cause you also stood bridges, bridge watches as the midshipman to the watch on the bridge, and you saw all the operations, you know, in such a small carrier. It was only twenty thousand tons, but I don't think Australia ever realised what it lost when it lost that ship. We went from a ship, which I think was really a power projection navy, even though it's a small

06:30 old ship it had the capability of airpower, organic airpower at sea, which we lost, and not many navies have, and it was a very efficient ship and very dedicated. I mean, the aircrew were extremely professional, so you were learning all that, it was kind of a mixture of, it was kind of fusion of this huge amount of influences. And also you lived in the wardroom for the first time, so

07:00 you ate in the officers' dining room and you, you know, you socialised in the wardroom. And a lot of the pilots kind of, the aircrew, a lot of the aircrew got them associated, were very good to you, because (1) they were a bit of rebels themselves. They liked the midshipmen and they liked the fire of the midshipmen in that, you know, we would, we could band together pretty quickly, we were pretty good on a sports field, at that time we were very fit

07:30 and we could drink some beer if we had to and we could certainly cause some havoc too if we wanted to. So, I mean, you know, and havoc was good havoc, it was good fun. I mean, the aircrew used to all defend, they used to have carpets and you know, one had a big tiger on it for the Tracker squadron and there was a red and white chequered one for 805, which was Skyhawk Squadron. And sometimes, if they really wanted to stir,

08:00 they'd bring them in, stand on them and defend the carpets and have a beer or two, and then and we were always up for it, we would take them on and try and get that carpet. And we actually did, we got the 805 carpet for about a week before we gave it back to 'em, they searched the whole ship, couldn't find it, and they were really mad. And then at other times there was a fellow called Ralph McMillan, who's probably the best A4 pilot, or one of the best. He

08:30 used to, he was a very good pianist so he'd be able to, we'd carry the piano, you know, the midshipmen'd carry the piano into the bar for him and he'd just play all night, I mean, it was tremendous. So as midshipmen it was a pretty good life. Unfortunately Ralph died in a crash while I was on board, not long after that actually. He was flying against Melbourne from Jervis Bay and he went into the water and that, so,

09:00 yeah, so they brought his body back in bags, I always remember that. And so that's part of the life, I suppose you've gotta be prepared to, for, too, in the navy, in the, you have these tragedies.

**Is that hard when it's not even a wartime tragedy, it's…?**

Yeah, oh very hard, yeah, very hard. He was extremely well liked, yeah, so

09:30 yeah, and really befriended the, he really befriended the midshipmen so that people were, people really liked him, so he didn't have an enemy in the world, so…But it just so happened there was a fault with the aircraft, the aircraft then went in, so he speared in. And I don't think he knew too much about what was going on once it happened, obviously it was so fast, but he was actually flying against Melbourne to test

10:00 Melbourne's reaction to the thing. So, you know what I mean, all those things happened on Melbourne and then you had this task group, task board and that was, oh, your task book that you had to progress as well as standing watches. And I remember, you know, I mean our watches used to be once every three days, so, 'cause there was so many of us, so we'd lose track of days, so…And you could sleep a long time on Melbourne generally if you wanted to, and you kept kind

10:30 of different hours, 'cause you'd stand your thing, so you could sleep at different times. But, I mean, you, generally your watches were only once every three days, so that was…The training officer fellow called Tim O'Sullivan, now Tim O'Sullivan, who's still a friend of mine now, he probably is responsible for giving me more stoppage of leave than anyone in the navy, because I didn't get ashore for quite a long while. Because Tim used to have

11:00 quite high standards with respect to the completion of work and signing off of tasks, and he used to have a rule of the road exam which is your mariner rules of how ships avoid each other at sea and anti-collision rules and all that. He used to have one of those on a Friday, if you didn't pass it, well then, you'd, then you would stay on board and study all weekend, so, and when you were in port, and quite often we were. So he, Tim, yeah, Tim's standards were very high, and it's probably one of

11:30 the reasons I got through the board so easily is that I knew rule of the road pretty well, and probably everything else pretty well, so by the time I got to the midshipman's board it was fairly easy, 'cause Tim'd really prepared us very well. And so, you know, I mean Melbourne was a great thing 'cause, you know, you'd be operating aircraft all times, day, night, helicopters, had Trackers on board, A4 jets and all that. And so by the time, you know, not only

12:00 that, but you had overseas trips in it, we went to RIMPAC [Rim of the Pacific, military exercise], and so first time to Hawaii, which would come back later in my life. And we went in there as midshipmen and we just had a tremendous time, you know, getting around and seeing things and being part of, you know, being part of the aircraft and everything on board. And Melbourne was, you know, really impressive, it never allowed anything to defeat itself.

12:30 I remember going into Fiji on the way up there, there was no tugs that could help us get alongside, so Melbourne didn't worry about that, I mean, because all it did was put some trackers on. It put, from memory I think, three or four trackers on one side of the deck and then two on the other side, and the trackers on the starboard side were, as Melbourne pulled up, about a hundred

13:00 feet or a hundred yards off, the trackers would start up, and they were anchored to the deck, and they would just use their engines, controlled by the navigator, to pull itself to close the distance. And then, obviously with something at twenty thousand tons, when it gets too close to the wharf, you gotta start stopping or else it's gonna smash the wharf up pretty bad, so the other two trackers were to slow it down, so it just had a nice little coming alongside, so you didn't need tugs. I mean, well, it was just

13:30 a tremendous ship.

**With all those planes on board did you wish that you could've been a pilot again, or…?**

Yeah, I, and I aimed to be a pilot at one stage but, you know, later on in my career I'd get that chance. And, but I found when I got the chance I was probably too, my reactions weren't good enough compared to the younger kids, and so I then found

14:00 that, you know, I just didn't learn quickly enough. I mean, I went solo, I could fly and all that, and I did fly for a little while after it, but I just didn't learn quick enough for the military, I didn't fly precisely enough for the military requirements and that. So that's put me on another career which was very rewarding, you know, but it was, you gotta be able to react to these career changes so, but yeah, that's where Melbourne, I became very interested. And subsequently my career actually stayed in aviation,

14:30 but from more from a ground control, fighter control aspect and then air warfare rather than physically flying the plane. And, you know, there's pros and cons of each, you know, so Melbourne, I just loved it. So at the end of that we then, having done all that time on Melbourne we did engineering time and Melbourne, the engine rooms were so huge. And the catapults

15:00 were, you know, the catapult was tremendous too, and recovery of the planes was something on such a small deck that, you know, the pilots were very, very experienced, yeah.

**And on the, your friend's accident, were they a common occurrence, or uncommon or…?**

No, there wasn't that many. I, oh yeah, there was a couple. We did lose an A4, yeah, sometimes your memory blurs, 'cause I was on Melbourne a couple of times,

15:30 but I'm pretty sure on that trip we lost an A4. And the pilot was a fellow called Evans and he, yeah, he got a bad catapult shot and so he, or the engine failed, it was one of the two, but he went off the end. And I remember talking to him after it, and he went off the end and went, and Melbourne was doing about twenty knots, but he blew the cockpit as he went and so the cockpit filled with water

16:00 pretty quickly as he went straight into the water. And then he said he could saw, he looked up and saw Melbourne going over the top of him, so he was down enough for the Melbourne to go over the top of him. And then he panicked as he went down with the plane, because he, and, you know, this is my recollection of it, so it's…And I remember he said he just had to think how he strapped himself in to

unstrap himself, and he did. And I remember

16:30 I was on the quarterdeck at the time, I just saw this head pop up in the wake and that, the helicopter was straight on top of him, recovered him. 'Cause you always had Pedro, who was the rescue helicopter, flying at the stern waiting for an emergency like that, so it was straight on top of him, had him back on board within about five minutes. And they had him flying straight away, they, the next day, as soon as he was medically fit he was back up in the air again. Because, you know, that's something you've gotta get, you know, you just gotta continue

17:00 flying, you can't ponder it. And so he was flying the next day, and the Skyhawk unfortunately was a one seater, so you had to go on your own, so, whereas a Tracker you could put him in with someone else, but he was Skyhawk pilot, so…

**And I believe on Melbourne you went to Sri Lanka for a time?**

Yeah.

**Can you describe that experience?**

Yeah, on that cruise, we did a number of cruises, we ended up in Colombo and that was just a tremendous

17:30 time. Although at that time Sri Lanka or Colombo was, I think, in those days a bit unsettled, there was some unrest, and so there was a riot and we were told to remain on board one night. But the people were, you know, as with all our visits wherever we went, but people were very friendly, and it was a great experience, because once, you're touching history wherever you went. And you know, as Australians that's one thing we

18:00 lack, we can only go back two hundred years, whereas you go to some of these countries and you just, I'd just stand there and try and appreciate the history. And so there, I remember Sufu was great, and the second thing was that gemstones, uncut and all that, but you buy a bag of stones which you didn't know whether they were any good or not, you buy them very cheaply. And although I didn't, I remember one of the chiefs [chief petty officers] obviously did very well,

18:30 because he came back and a couple of the stones were very good quality, so yeah, so it was a very interesting visit once again, to go there. And I remember we also went to Cochin, but I went to Cochin, but I think that was later on when I was on Melbourne the next time, and that, so…In that midshipman's time, not only did you get really very interesting places to go, your training was fantastic, you were involved in real time

19:00 operations, you know. 'Cause Melbourne was operating with the US [United States] Navy, which had big carriers and all that, and they integrated perfectly and all that, even though she was old, the capability was great. And that's what people in Australia forget, I think, sometimes, especially, I think, the federal government of the time forgot that no matter how old the ship is, it's the capability that counts, and it's the people on board with that, who drive that capability that counted, and they were forgotten, yeah. So when we got rid of Melbourne,

19:30 as was the aircrew, unfortunately, I think we treated them very badly.

**Just a couple more questions on Sri Lanka. How did the locals take to the Australians?**

Well, I think…although, yeah, well, where we went, but obviously there was some political unrest that was happening, so we didn't, you know, we didn't get involved in that, we were told to stay clear of certain areas and that, and then we remained on board one night. And

20:00 so, you know, it was just, I mean you just, wherever you go, you are always a bit careful about where you go and make sure that you, you know, you don't put yourself in a position where you, may become dangerous if you can avoid it, sometimes you can't avoid it. You know, but I mean you can do that as a tourist too, can't you, wherever you go you've gotta be careful.

20:30 And there's areas that you should avoid and that you shouldn't, or you know, and I suppose in Australia, too, there's certain areas that we, as locals, would know that you probably, are a bit more dangerous than others, you know, so.

**Was Sri Lanka an important port of call, strategic-wise or anything like that or…?**

No, I don't think it was that important strategically. It, I think, you know, Australian government was looking to maintain

21:00 friendships and relations and military relations around, so it was just part of an Indian, from memory, it was just part of the Indian Ocean deployment that we did at that time, where we were in the Indian Ocean for quite some time.

**And on Melbourne you were just saying that was mixing a lot with American crews and ships and so on. That was the first time that you were interacting with the US, and how did you find that?**

It was overwhelming,

21:30 really. Yeah, the Americans just have such a capability, and especially in those days where, you know, the carriers and that. They had more carriers, I think, in those days than, and ships, and you had the, all, you know, the number of ships and the various capabilities that they had, so it was just overwhelming. But at the same time you're not that aware of the capabilities, you're more impressed by your own capabilities when

22:00 you're a midshipman and starting off, and certainly, I think, we packed a great punch for our size. And we were, we certainly had the respect of the Americans, 'cause we were very professional. And on that cruise up into RIMPAC I remember we decided, because there was the first part of the exercise was to arrive in Hawaii and our intention was to arrive undetected and fly a mission when we got there, and that meant

22:30 leaving Australia and going up to RIMPAC basically undetected. And the Americans had a lot of capabilities that could detect it, so the decision was taken that we'd operate silently and turn off all the radars and lights at night and all that. Now that was a task group, I don't think many navies around the world would've done it in those days, but we did it and we certainly arrived up there undetected and

23:00 surprised the Americans when we did. And, you know, so if we didn't admit anything they couldn't detect anything unless they visually saw us, that was the only way they were going to find us so, and so we were very disciplined in what we did and, you know, and no radars. But it developed another side of yourself, seamanship skills or your mariner's skills that you didn't have, which they must have had in the old days, you know, on, before radar and before technology, modern technology. And that very much was, you really

23:30 find that you can see a lot at night, once you turn lights off and all that and you don't have radar that's telling you that someone's, you know, a couple of miles off your starboard beam. You can actually develop your eyesight and your skills with binoculars, that you can pick out ships and you know ships and you start gauging the distance of ships with all the old techniques that people used. The Japanese were masters of this in the Second World War from what I've read, you know, where they had excellent binoculars and all that,

24:00 but they used to very much be able to gauge distances and all that, and ranges and all that, by using what God had given them. And I found that quite revealing, actually, that you don't, you know, if the radar falls over, doesn't mean you have to stop everything, you can actually, you don't have to worry that much because you've still got in-built skills that will keep you safe, yeah.

**And the integration with the US Navy, was it seamless,**

24:30 **or any problems there?**

No, it's generally, I think seamless. I mean we, since the purchase of the DDGs [guided missile destroyers], I mean Melbourne wasn't an easy ship to integrate because she was different to everything.

**Can you just explain DDGs for the transcriber?**

Oh yeah, the DDGs were the guided missile destroyers, Perth, Hobart and Brisbane, that we bought from the United States. And that was a big change for Australia, we went to

25:00 American built ships built on the Great Lakes and we went away from the British ships which we had before, that, Type Forty-fives, the Derrings [?], destroyers, etcetera . Anzac was one too. So we went away from that style and we went with American, and that decision in the '60s was a fairly fundamental one for Australia, because it meant that we've changed, we'd completely changed and we put inter-operability

25:30 and American equipment and all that at the forefront of what we were going to do. And it also was a foundation for our future fleet so, 'cause the, the frigates after that were American designed and all that. So it was a pretty important decision but, so the guided missile destroyers Perth, Hobart, Brisbane, they're easy to integrate 'cause they were American, they had American communications, all that stuff , you know, and so they were American designed, it was harder

26:00 for Melbourne . But at the same time she had American planes, which are trackers, she had A4s, admittedly A4s were pretty old then and so were the trackers. But they were very, very effective and, you know, the pilots overcame the disadvantage of technology, I suppose, with their skill.

**Did you do any major operations on Melbourne or...?**

Yeah, that RIMPAC was a major one, and then we did an Indian Ocean cruise, I remember,

26:30 we did a lead line, I think, up in Southeast Asia too. So it was a number of operations where we met up with regional navies or the, you know, the RIMPAC's the major bi-annual exercise with Australia, United States, and it's grown so significantly now, with probably about ten nations participating now. But that's done, generally centred on Hawaii or around somewhere in the Pacific, 'cause it's called RIMPAC for the

27:00 rim of the Pacific nations. And so we did that and then there was other ones up in the Southeast Asia and that which were also probably less operationally intensive as RIMPAC, 'cause RIMPAC, you have the

whole 3rd Fleet and that from the United States Navy there, so you have that capability. But it's still important, because regionally we had to learn how to operate together and do everything so there's various,

27:30 various navies who we operated with from memory. The Indonesians, I think, brought out the Rigas, and the Riga destroyers, which were the ex-USSR Russian destroyers and that, that they had and operated them very effectively, as did the other countries that were around, yeah.

**With exercises like those, and especially involved in places like Indonesia, how important are they in just keeping up good relations with those countries?**

Oh, I think militarily you,

28:00 they're very important, and sometimes that's the first form of improving relationships between the countries, you start off low key and you do something and build on it each year and that. And, you know, the Starfish exercises that we do with the nations up there in Malaysia and Singapore and all that each year improve and increase in intensity and complexity and all that. But it's very important if we're going to all be neighbours

28:30 and that, that we do militarily work together, commune, you know, just communicating between ships is sometimes horrendously difficult. And so it's important that you actually can and you…and what language do you use, for example, you know, what are the frequencies you want to use, and all that. So you have to have some standard operating procedures if you're ever going to operate together. And I think as a region it's important that like-minded nations can operate together, because there are certainly

29:00 challenges where, you know, and challenges to our stability and security that as a group in Southeast Asia we can address. I, you know, Timor was, I, probably a good example of that where, gee, so many nations came together, operated very effectively, and look at, it was a great success for the people of Timor, you know, what a great outcome. Bougainville, I think, oh, Bougainville we did with New Zealanders

29:30 and that, and the Papuan New Guineans but, you know, that was, that's tended to be a great, I think there's probably more nations there now, but that's tended to be a great outcome too in Bougainville, and bringing stability. And just, you know, the people of Bougainville are so much better off, because regionally we acted and we did something, and same in Timor, and no doubt that the quality of life and that of the people of Timor will, is so much better because a group of nations, they actually cared.

30:00 **And so how did your time on Melbourne finish up and where did you go to from there?**

Well, I did the midshipman's board, and the midshipman's board was pretty daunting. And you, you know, you go before, you do written exams, and then in those days you did written exams and then from there you went off and there was a table, which it's supposed to be imposing on you. I mean, and there was three or four very experienced officers

30:30 in the subject that you were being examined in who would give you verbals. And you would come and sit in a chair, lone chair, bit like I am now, I suppose…and, but a lone chair, and you would answer these questions, which you didn't know where they were coming from or what was coming up, so you had to know your stuff, and so, you know, and there's no way you could avoid that. I mean, written exams sometimes you can mentally prepare, but this was about pressure, how did you react

31:00 under pressure, the questions, you know, and the questions were searching to try and find a weakness. So once you got past those, you had to pass every one of them, well then, you were, you then, you went back. You were a midshipman at that time and you, yeah, you're a midshipman at that time for that year on Melbourne, and then, and you lived in the wardroom and that. But, and then the midshipman's board, and that meant if you got through the

31:30 board you went back to the college to graduate in the final term, and which is the last term of the third year. And so that was very much the regime you were under.

**Were your parents very proud when you finally got through everything?**

Yeah, my Mum really didn't know what was going on, still mentally she was, yeah, still very sick,

32:00 and yeah, physically she was very sick, she was very paralysed, but my father came over and that, so he came over and that. And the Governor General was Sir John Kerr, who officiated at the graduation and, was just one of those great days. We had three months of preparation, finishing your subjects and that at the naval college, and then, and you were back there

32:30 basically at the top of the heap. You didn't have too much to do with the rest of the, well, you had a lot to do with the rest of the cadets in that they always thought you were the salty old seadogs who'd come back, you know, having done your time at sea and that, and you walked around and they all aspired to be there, you knew that. And so you came back and you would assist them wherever possible, and tell them

33:00 what it was like and all that. But generally you didn't have too much to do with the running of the

college per se, you were kind of the class back there to graduate, and the rest of, you know, kind of, the interaction of the different levels of the cadets was below you. So, you know, the ones who'd just been there and all that, that was all happening below you and you knew the regime and that, but generally you, we just, we, it was a lot less restrictions on you then. You

33:30 were treated as, you know, you were treated as someone who had won the kind of respect of the college, and so you were there for a couple of things, to prepare for your graduation, get your graduation done. Very intense on parade ground drill, and that's where Taffy, who was the chief QMG at the time, really did interact with us and all that, and you could feel that you had the respect of the college. You'd done it, you'd been through it and that

34:00 and, you know, everyone was kind of sharing the celebration, I suppose.

**And your first posting after graduation?**

After graduation we all then were told to go to United Kingdom, those who'd graduated. The end of, see, we had two halves, one of the uni students were still, some were still finishing their degrees, the others of us were, the rest of us

34:30 went to England and that. So after, I mean, the graduation it was tremendous, we had a big ball, we had a big parade, my father came across for it, he was pretty old then but he thoroughly enjoyed it, and we had a big table and the ball that night was just tremendous and Sir John Kerr and Lady Kerr were there. And then, you know, all the flag officers [admirals] and the Chief of the Navy,

35:00 or at that time it was called CNS [Chief of Naval Staff], was there, and so they all came, you know, it was kind of, you know, I suppose honour, you know, welcoming you into the naval officers, you know, being a naval officer, so it was a great event. And then after that we were told, given a day or so to pack up and everyone was told to be in England. In those days, and we all had different courses to go, and that meant

35:30 we were broken up over three courses in the United Kingdom to do our officer of the watch courses, which once again built on the experience of Anzac, Melbourne. And then this was more difficult navigation training in England, in the English Channel and around the Isle of Wight and that. And so we're all told, we're on three courses, so that decided how much leave you had while you had to get across. And you're all, in those days you were sent first class again

36:00 so it was quite amazing that, some sailed, took a cruise up there, first class, which isn't bad for, you know, their age, and then others flew but had a, went through the States on the way or on to England. My parents were pretty old and sick, so what I did was drive back with my father to reduce the cost, and so we drove back from Sydney to

36:30 Perth and took a mate's car back, Raydon Gates' car back, and we took his back and delivered to his brother, 'cause he was giving it to his brother over there, and I drove my father back across the Nullarbor on the dirt again, three hundred miles of it. And so, and then we ended up in Perth and I flew out of Perth, on a 707 in those days, and it was just phenomenal, first class, couldn't believe it. You know, there you were, you know,

37:00 on this plane, where you were treated very well, but also there was cognac and cigars and everything and it was all happening, and I couldn't believe this, so. And I was meeting up with my mate Gerry Pickle in Germany and we decided we were gonna have a bit of time seeing Germany before we landed in England and that, and we did, we had a great time. And then eventually landed in England, and in England I,

37:30 we then went down and commenced these OW [Officer of the Watch] courses with the British Navy for six months so, you know, and that was the start of a new adventure really, it was tremendous, you know.

**What were the British like to deal with?**

Oh, tremendous, 'cause our navy was grown out of the British Navy so, you know, and extremely professional, a very professional navy. So they operated, I mean we inherited all their traditions and all that and you know, I mean, right down to

38:00 our swords, if you've ever seen a naval officer with his sword, he's not allowed to hitch up his sword. And it comes from, so whenever you march you have to throw your sword up and make sure you catch it and, you know, and that, and carry it in a most definite way. Now the reason for that was 'cause mutiny of naval officers in the Royal Navy

38:30 a hundred or so years ago where they mutinied. And I think it was Queen Victoria or one of them who said, 'You've brought dishonour on your service, and so forever more your swords will drag in the dust.' And so Australian Navy came from the British Navy, it's really significant part of our heritage, so therefore we found, we, you know, there's no difference, you know, the wardroom and all that. The only difference at sea is they have baths and we tend to have a shower a lot, so, you know, but generally all the operations,

39:00 there was no acclimatisation. And so that was really building on the, you know, the training again and doing specific, you know, more intense courses, all building you up to a time when you're actually

qualified I suppose, as an officer at sea.

**Were the British very welcoming of Australians?**

Yeah, very. And yeah, very, and went out of their way. I think training was a big

39:30 part of, to them too, they wanted to do this training, but generally very welcoming a lot of us, and we made some very good relationships and friends. You know, you tend to make friends right through this, through the career so the friends that you made on that six months going through OW course of…You know, you watch those guys go through the British Navy as you're going through the Australian Navy, so the whole thing is,

40:00 the whole thing's very, you know, kind of, you just grow, and I mean each service, and you always keep those relationships as you go, so yeah.

**Alright, we'll stop there.**

# Tape 4

00:37 **So after you finished your watchkeeping studies in the U.K., how did you get involved with the USA [United States of America], HMAS Stuart?**

Oh no, I came back from United Kingdom, and in fact the six of us came back and that, and there was, and then we came back and we all went to HMAS Stuart

01:00 which was a destroyer escort, and that's where we had to get our first primary qualification of being an officer of the watch. So the six of us posted straight back into that ship, and there was Gerry Pickle and Peter Debnam. I remember Peter Debnam's now the member for Vaucluse in Sydney, and after a successful naval career has now been elected there in state parliament. And

01:30 we were all on Stuart, and generally that took about nine months to work up to where you had the confidence of the captain to operate the ship at sea in day or night unsupervised and be responsible for the ship. So, you know, and that really is a confidence building exercise and one I appreciated more when I became in command myself and was responsible for giving those qualifications. So Stuart, yeah, Stuart was

02:00 very enjoyable time, also a number of overseas deployments, that's where I met Russ Crane and first time, and a number of other people on there. So it was pretty good young band of officers who got on and really enjoyed life as well as having a great time at sea and very professional at the same time, we certainly enjoyed life and partied hard. And people like Charlie Biscoe, who was the navigator and that, certainly taught us young guys how to party hard, you know,

02:30 so yeah, I mean, that was very good. And then from there, from Stuart, very much having attained my bridge watchkeeping certificate I then was crash posted to HMAS Perth, 'cause they were sailing for RIMPAC. And it was my first time on a DDG, or a guided missile destroyer, which I subsequent was to come back and command one of the sister ships, Brisbane. But, and that was a great time under a very famous personality

03:00 in the navy at that time, a Captain Eric Eugene Johnson, who became the administrator to the Northern Territory when he left the navy. And he was very famous for what he did during Cyclone Tracy in getting the whole of Darwin behind him as he organised people after, in their immediate aftermath of that destruction that happened during Cyclone Tracy. So he was captain and was larger than life and a tremendous mentor

03:30 and a very personable fellow at the same time. Knew everyone's name on board, all three hundred and thirty, all their first names, he was very good and a very personable fellow, great rugby player too. So that was, and we did a RIMPAC during that time, and a number of times, and that's really where you really cut your teeth as a seaman officer because you've got your primary qualification and then it was really consolidation, so a very responsible time.

**Just one thing,**

04:00 **RIMPAC, what does it stand for?**

Rim of Pacific, so it's all the nations of the Pacific who participate in the naval exercise. Co-ordinated by the US traditionally but, and generally operated around Hawaii 'cause it's the central place for people to go to. And they've got large exercise areas, they've got great areas free of a lot of shipping so, and firing areas, missile firings and all that, so the US support it very well out of

04:30 Hawaii, out of Pearl Harbor there in Honolulu, so, and Oahu. So we went there and did that and did a number of other things before I then, having consolidated my air, my bridge watchkeeping certificate, then I was selected to go off and do aircrew training. Which I did for, oh, about six to seven months before

05:00 I finally, you know, and other people realised, I suppose, through one thing and another, that I probably wasn't, didn't have the reactions required of a military pilot. Fly quite safely, but there's a lot more involved in military flying. And so that then took me to Buccaneer, which was a patrol boat, and that was really a great experience, second in command on...

05:30 And once again I met up with Biscoe, Charlie Biscoe, who was the navigator of Stuart and he was then the captain of Buccaneer, so we were in those days involved very much in the interception of illegal fishing and enforcing the customs quarantine laws and that. And you really, it's a tremendous, they're tremendous opportunities for young junior officers who, to be in charge of about twenty-four crew. As the second in command you not only, you're standing

06:00 watch about [alternate watches], navigation-wise and that with the captain, but you're also responsible for a lot of other things on board and the crew's fairly closely knit normally. And life, I mean life is pretty good because patrol boats up through the reef and where they operate in the north of Australia, the climate's pretty good and generally the, you know, the water's pretty good, and it can get rough and that but you, you know, the fishing and all that.

06:30 **What are the major naval bases in, or minor ones in the north?**

Well, we were based in Sydney, but we used to deploy up to there and for about three or four months at a time and so we'd go up through Cairns, HMAS Cairns there where the, most of the patrol boats were organised and go on to Darwin where the next naval base was, and we'd operate between the two. And we also went to New Guinea during that time to

07:00 do an exercise with the New Guinea Navy. And the New Guinea Navy and patrol, they had patrol boats that we had given them from Australia so we did an exercise with them, which was very enjoyable and memorable. And also memorable for the, you know, navigation and the charts and all that were not as detailed as we were used to, so you had to be quite careful in the waters around New Guinea with the reefs, and a number of other things. And the tidal flows through

07:30 a number of ports were quite significant, so once again it brings its own challenges. Yeah. So that patrol boat time, yeah, was a great opportunity once again.

**At that stage you would've been coming across refugees from Vietnam?**

There weren't too many refugees at the time, it was more the Taiwanese fishermen, who were generally fishing right on the limit or in, just inside

08:00 sometimes the, our restricted fishing zone. So it was very important, and also you bring a lot of the quarantine concerns and health and all that with them. So we were boarding them a lot to check their catch and make sure that what they had and also making sure they were fishing where they were allowed to, rather than inside our protected fishing zone, so yeah, so it was very interesting up in the

08:30 Gulf and that and operating around there. And, you know, and life is different on a patrol boat, you, it's quite demanding, but at the same time you enjoy the kind of, that, you know, life of being up in the Great Barrier Reef in quite tropical waters and all that, so yeah, I thought it was very good. Yeah, and then after the patrol boat I then, from memory,

09:00 I'm just trying to remember where I went, I'm pretty sure I went over to Leeuwin which was...And I went to HMAS Leeuwin as the communications officer, and that was mainly because my parents were quite sick at that time. So the navy decided to send me back over there and fulfil a position at HMAS Leeuwin, which was the major junior recruit training base. And I was

09:30 communications officer, also training officer, or one of the training officers for the junior recruits, so I had to quickly relearn all my seamanship before I went there because, you know, the young recruits were looking for all the basics of seamanship and knot tying and splicing and all that, that you, the seamanship skills. So that was a very interesting time, and also coached the hockey team there which was interesting. They were great, the young recruits, and with a huge amount of energy,

10:00 and very committed too.

**So you were at, Leeuwin is a, HMAS Leeuwin's a shore establishment?**

Yeah, a shore establishment in Fremantle. And the navy subsequently gave it up to the army a couple of years after this and it's no longer a naval base, but it's a prime location in Fremantle. And it was good, yeah, it was excellent actually, yeah. Yeah, so that was, yeah, that was Leeuwin and

10:30 then from, oh, and in fact on the patrol boat was, through Charlie Biscoe I suppose, was where I met my wife too. Which was a blind date lined up by a girlfriend of hers, 'cause she didn't particularly like the girlfriend I was taking out at the time. So his future wife lined up a friend of hers, who happened to be Mary, and I probably, you know, that was probably the best thing she ever did. So Mary and I met and we never,

11:00 never looked back from there, so that was a relationship started from that patrol boat too. So it's, I look back on Buccaneer, it was very friendly times. And then Leeuwin with my parents, and then the captain of Leeuwin was a Captain George Unwin. And George Unwin was the direction officer and he looked at

me and said, gave me some good advice and told me to go and follow a direction stream as a warfare officer and, which I subsequently took his advice. And from Leeuwin I was posted to

11:30 the air intercept controllers course at Williamtown with the air force, where I gained that first, that qualification of fighter controller. So that made the connection back with Melbourne and the fighters and all that, and that so, which was a number of years previously, and from there I was, having completed, successfully completed that course. And it's an interesting career as an air intercept controller because you're actually, in those days the planes didn't have radars as

12:00 sophisticated weapons or that, so you were the, really the eyes and everything for the pilot. And you took control of the pilot, identified where the enemy aircraft was, and then you controlled the pilot in his aircraft, at about Mach-1 you controlled him into a intercept, so he would roll out, he would roll out about a mile to two miles astern of the enemy aircraft so he could release his missiles. And generally the pilot

12:30 sometimes didn't see the enemy until they were rolling out in the stern and you were doing it all from a radar on board a ship, so it was a very interesting career. And then from that course I was posted back to Melbourne and was a fighter controller on Melbourne, and I was D-3 from memory. And so you had a direction officer and three or four air intercept controllers, and we manned the air direction room and took control of the fighters after they were launched from the carrier

13:00 for whatever mission they had to do. So you build up a very close relationship with the pilots, the aircraft, the operations and all that, and that. And you also knew that in the end, their lives would depend on you getting it right if they were to succeed because they didn't have any great sophistication inside the cockpit, so that was a very interesting time and Melbourne, once again I enjoyed being back on Melbourne. My cabin was interesting because it was below Number 3 Wire,

13:30 right below it on the flight deck, so every time they landed they normally picked up 2 or 3 Wire and there was this almighty bang as they did their controlled crash under the flight deck and that. And that noise was, you know, probably, well, separation's probably only six to ten feet, realistically, but you had a big piece of steel in between you and that, but where your bunk was only probably six to ten feet. So he used to bounce off that

14:00 pretty well and pick up the arrester wire and through night operations and all that. But once again it was a very good ship, but that was coming towards the end of the life for Melbourne and the government was considering the future of it. And at that time we were offered HMAS Invincible, if you remember, the British offered us Invincible to replace HMAS Melbourne, which I think the Liberal government accepted, but it was quickly, very quickly cancelled when there was a change of government. And the carrier was lost forever for the navy, which it's,

14:30 I think one of the poorest decisions our government's made, because it didn't realise the capability it was giving up.

**Yeah, that would've been interesting experience for you. But it came down to fundamentally a cost-based decision?**

No I think, I don't think it was cost based as much as, I think the government just didn't realise the capability or

15:00 the fundamental change of naval operations with the loss of organic air power. You know, at that time there was a very persuasive but, I think, erroneous argument that air force would protect naval forces wherever they are. Time has proved that to be wrong, but because of the sheer geographics of air force and land locked capabilities and where they operate

15:30 from, their ability to be able to get and respond to an aircraft, ah, to a ship which needs air defence is a lot more difficult than having planes with you that are very focused on the threat that's at hand. The other thing is, if there's priorities, well then, air force has to decide the priorities, and if it's defending its own air base it may well choose to do that over and above the ship that's at sea waiting for the protection. Whereas if you've got aircraft at sea, not only can you

16:00 project power overseas, 'cause it deployed on this floating base, but the aircrew are very focused on defending and protecting their landing strip, because if they don't do a good job, well then, they've got nowhere to come back to. So, it's a fundamental thought process, I think, but yeah, disappointing decision, yeah. And I was disappointed by the quality of the argument from the navy too, I think at that time there were some naval officers who were defeating us too.

16:30 They, for one reason or another, were driving an agenda which didn't argue for an organic air capability, and I'm not sure what their motives were, but it was a pretty stupid argument. Yeah, so I mean that, from there and that was Melbourne, and then I was selected for, I went to recruiting for a little while, just six months they needed a promotional tour of the Royal Australian Naval College and, at that time. So I was a graduate

17:00 of the college and of the academy, so I was then selected to go to, go out to New South Wales country and speak at all the schools, and in fact metropolitan schools too, and promote and, the Naval Academy as a worthwhile career, which it was, and it was a great opportunity. Especially in the country, 'cause all the country kids really warm to this, because they were

17:30 considering their options as they got towards the end of school and they were therefore saying, 'Well, what can I do?' And there weren't too many options other than following in their parents footsteps of the farm or something, so for careers, unless they went to uni back in the city, which was very expensive. So the Naval Academy tended to, I think, offer an alternative which was a good alternative, a good career, and so I really enjoyed that.

18:00 And getting, you know, there was a petty officer and myself who used to tour around in a car and go everywhere and he would talk about enlisted careers and that. And you could see it especially for the women in the country too, they saw this as a really, a viable alternative to their, you know, the jobs that are available in the country at the time, which could've been the supermarket, but there weren't too many of the careers, you know, I think it's changed now to a certain extent.

18:30 But, so there was a lot of interest and it was good, a good interaction, very interesting time, seeing Goodooga and, you know, back of Bourke and, you know, we went there and we did all that. We went up and even over the Queensland border, that was part of our territory, so all those country towns that you'd normally, I would not have normally seen, I really enjoyed. So, and that was six months before I then, I actually got married,

19:00 Mary and I got married towards the end of that year, and then I was selected to go to PWO-41, the Principal Warfare Officer's course in England, which was once again just under a year of fairly intense training which was, had quite high standards. And in fact a couple of Australians weren't finding it that easy when I joined, so we went over there and there was four of

19:30 us on the course, Fisher, Patak [?] and myself and Gerlach [?], and we went to England and did the PWO course which, principal warfare officers course, which made us the, one of the four principal people on board for defending and fighting the ship, under the captain. We had to know all the

20:00 basics, and in fact all the strategies of warfare so that we could operate the ship very effectively in a time of war. So that was a really hard course, but a good one and it was broken into three parts, gunnery, where we did a lot of gunnery off Gibraltar on a ship, and then also from a shore establishment in UK [United Kingdom]. And then there was an ASW time, an anti-submarine warfare time where it was quite intense, and probably you saw more assets

20:30 and that, more aircraft and helicopters supporting those PWO courses than you'd see back any other time. And we're assessed at each stage and you had to pass each stage to go. And the ASW [anti-submarine warfare] time was quite intense, against a little German submarine which was very difficult to find in those conditions. And then the last time was multi-threat time, where you were in simulators but it was like

21:00 World War III and they could bring on, they could bring on everything from ASW to missile threats to everything, and simulate fighter aircraft and everything at sea with you too. So, and you had to pass that, and which we all did and then we, and then that made us qualified as warfare officers and we were one of the last of the general-trained warfare officers we were trained in all the disciplines. And then

21:30 they started specialising in gunnery ASW about two courses after us. But we returned and that's where I went to HMAS Brisbane for the first time, which was DDG-41. And Brisbane was great, I just loved that posting. I was under a captain called Jim Dixon who, which is interesting, 'cause it went a full circle, he was the XO of the naval college when I went to the naval

22:00 college. And I don't think Jim had remembered some of my little things that I might've done at the naval college, because he certainly welcomed me on board and treated me as a, as one of the professionals on board. And that was a very happy ship, and we operated that ship very well and it was a learning time for me, you know, a consolidation time as a warfare officer, under some pretty experienced

22:30 warfare officers on board too, who were in their second job, PWOs, all that. You know, Brisbane, and I always liked Brisbane, and subsequently I commanded Brisbane, and it stands out as one of the great highlights of my career. So Brisbane, I found, and we did a number of deployments and that, a number of firings and everything, so it was an excellent time for me on board Brisbane, and I found that

23:00 very good. And then from there we moved, and it was just during that time, it was a return to, that our first child, Amanda, was born. And so, and she was christened on board Brisbane, so yeah, it brought back a lot of great memories. Her name's still in the bell at Spectacle Island, even though Brisbane's now gone. They have a, navy has a tradition of putting the children's names engraved inside the ship's

23:30 bell, and we found it when we went to Spectacle Island a while ago, so that was pretty good. And then we, and then I went to HMAS Watson as, to, as the senior instructor officer, and I worked under a great naval officer called Hugh McFerran, who recently passed away, but Hugh was a tremendous man and

24:00 a very experienced fellow. And so I was in charge of the A-PWO training, assistant principal warfare officer training, and I was also senior instructor of the action information school.

**Is Watson a shore establishment as well?**

Yeah, Watson's a shore establishment at south head in Sydney, so the army used to own north head in Sydney and the navy owned the south head, which has got HMAS Watson on it.

24:30 And the army subsequently handed back North Head to the national parks, but Watson's very much a working, and very important naval base for us, and it has all warfare training on board, on there, or a lot of it. So, and it did have all, I think, at one stage, but the submarine training's now moved. But, so it was important and we were growing young junior officers in being

25:00 assistant principal warfare officer to go out and understudy the principal warfare officer at sea. And they were very competent, they were good, and that, and it was a good step in preparing them for their PWO course too, the Principal Warfare Officer's Course. So we, I trained those guys and that, and then a decision was taken that we'd repatriate all warfare training, all warfare officer training back to Australia. And so they decided to close down that

25:30 assistant course so that they could establish the Australian Principal Warfare Officer's Course, which was disappointing, I think and probably it was resource, it was a resource decision. But once again I think it undervalued, you know, the, for a very small investment, it undervalued the benefit of the course that was being given to these kids. And they really were getting experience, which I think insulated them from failure

26:00 later on, because they were getting the training experience to really allow them to grow in the principal warfare officers course, so. But the decision was taken by (Gr...UNCLEAR) and I, and so that was done. And I then posted to HMAS Hobart as the operations officer, which is the person who just directs the operations or decides the operations, plans the operations of the ship for the captain, and is

26:30 probably the senior warfare officer on board, and co-ordinates, you know, the ship as well as the direction officer on board, so. And Hobart was once again a DDG, so I'd done all three DDGs then. I'd done Perth originally and then Brisbane, then Hobart so that was great experience. And I suppose that's the tenure, kind of the, I tended to specialise in the guided missile destroyers, then coming back to command Brisbane later on, but

27:00 it was very much another consolidation period, an interesting time and that. But the major thing out of that, I think, is I was selected for the job at, with the commander of the United States 3rd Fleet, and that was supposed to be my shore estab, my shore posting. And in fact my, as I went over there, Mary and I expected with, 'cause my

27:30 son had just been born in '90, in '85 and that, so we had two small children. And when we went to the US that was our shore establishment, our shore time, and we thought, 'What better time, tropical paradise and all that.' Unfortunately my predecessor forgot to tell me that the United States had taken the decision to reactivate 3rd Fleet and base it at sea. So my,

28:00 as I joined I, my predecessor told me that, he pointed to a ship out the window and said, 'See that ship?' I said, 'Yeah, it's USS Coronado.' He said, 'Well, that's where you're moving to,' And I said, 'What are all these boxes?' And he said, 'I'm packing up for you.' And I said, 'Oh, that's interesting, Gordon, thanks very much for that,' so we moved on board 3rd Fleet. But probably the value of the posting went up two or three times because the operational experience of being in an

28:30 American fleet at sea doing the business was, just couldn't be underestimated or undervalued I think. And 3rd Fleet was a famous fleet, it was one that Halsey had and all that during the Second World War, it used to rotate in the Second World War , so they would swap in and out and rotate fleets between the two of them, so that 3rd Fleet'd take six months, I think, and then come back. And that allowed them to pursue the Pacific campaigns, so it was a very famous fleet,

29:00 and one that had a lot of assets even when I joined. So the posting, 3rd Fleet, on board Coronado for Vice Admiral Hernandez, who made me member of, instantly made me a fairly, you know, he gave me great positions on board inside the fleet. So I think the thing with the Americans, and you gotta just prove that you're capable of, like everyone giving you work,

29:30 and certainly I found it that way. So with 3rd Fleet I was the surface operations officer, which is N-311 in their code, but also I was the Missouri Battle Group cognisance officer, they call it, but the planning officer inside 3rd Fleet, and I found that very interesting especially being associated with a battleship of that size. And, you know, you're touching history, with Missouri, that's where, I believe, the Japanese signed the surrender,

30:00 and, on the quarterdeck and all that, so I found that a tremendous experience. And it also allowed me to see American operations from the inside, which was particularly, it was an experience I drew on the rest of my career because I always tended to understand what they were doing, whereas other people who hadn't had that experience probably weren't, were a bit more confused by what they were doing. But, you know, I, and they do

30:30 operations at such a large scale that they, that you don't, you know, I mean you just have to, you have to stand back and appreciate it and let, and just watch how it happens, I suppose, and learn. But, you know, the carriers, the aircraft operations and, you know, the loss of aircraft at sea, I saw a number of aircraft either lost at sea or, and that, and how they have to keep on going, they will search and that, but they have to keep on going, and they

31:00 accept that their, the business they're doing is dangerous and there will be some losses through the

nature and intensity of that, those operations, so.

**So some aircraft actually were, the carrier-borne aircraft, you're saying, had got lost somehow?**

Yeah, there was a collision between two of them up in Alaska during one of the exercises, in really bad weather, it was horrendous weather. But, I mean,

31:30 the reason the Americans reactivated from, I believe from, reactivated 3rd Fleet, was to prove to the Russians they were on a slippery slope and they were, just weren't going to win. And once they reactivated 3rd Fleet with all its resources and put it to sea, the Russians in the Pacific, not only had 7th Fleet based in Japan, they also had 3rd Fleet based in Hawaii. And so if there was going to be any conflict or that, you had two huge fleets, which could

32:00 fight their way both north and south, and basically meet up on the peninsula up there, with 3rd Fleet coming across the Aleutians and the 7th Fleet coming up from Japan. So I think, you know, the Russians must've thought, you know, 'my goodness,' you know, I mean, 'it's just got more difficult again,' you know, 'cause you've got such a complex war fighting plan if anything did happen.

32:30 So one of the reasons those aircraft collided was because 3rd Fleet was proving that it could operate in the Aleutians in bad weather, and particularly bad weather, and the visibility wasn't too good, and there was a collision of a couple of aircraft. And I also, we were going across the Pacific at one stage and I remember on one of the carriers, a young kid was in one of the planes, they were moving, they move them around the decks so that…And this young fellow was there and he obviously was there for the break,

33:00 and all that, while they moved this plane around with one of the tractors. And unfortunately it was dark, not best of weather, and they pushed it off the side with the young kid in it and they never found him. The plane went to the bottom and they searched and that, for quite a while and that. But most of the fleet steamed on and they, the ships remained to do the search, and that. And I just thought, 'Gee, you know, I mean there's a level of operations that you never see

33:30 back in Australia,' you know, ships, aircraft, everything happening, and so it was great experience. And the other thing that set me up, probably for later on, events later on was, I was in charge of, for 3rd Fleet, of RIMPAC, co-ordinating and organising the exercise that I'd participated in so many times before, and so that was, that required co-ordination of a number of nations and getting that all organised. And I had to go and brief

34:00 the commander of, the commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet, and his deputy was an admiral called Mauz, Hank Mauz. And Hank Mauz subsequently was the, became the commander of 7th Fleet and, during the Gulf War, and that was, and so he'd known me from a past life. So that made my integration into his staff on board Blue Ridge during the Gulf

34:30 War so much easier because he knew me and he'd known how I'd performed in 3rd Fleet, so that kind of opened the door and made it very easy. So 3rd Fleet, I just look back on, and although I didn't get the shore time with my family, from an operational warfare officer perspective, as Australians, tremendous opportunity.

**How long were you there for?**

Two years. Yeah, two years.

**That's a long stint, isn't it?**

That was two years, from '86 to '88.

35:00 And…

**Yeah, that's quite a while.**

Yeah, and I, I mean also was the time when we lost the America's Cup from memory, too. So I remember I was, we just pulled in at San Diego, and in San Diego and the yacht, we had a cocktail party, the Americans just brought alcohol back on the ships for a cocktail party, 'cause they'd never had it. So they had a cocktail party, and a fellow there and his wife invited me

35:30 to come and watch the America's Cup. And I didn't realise he, until we got to the San Diego yacht club, he was actually the second in charge, the deputy commodore or whatever. So I had a fantastic time, unfortunately it was a race where we lost the America's Cup and, but he, and so they were looking for the token Australian and he lined me up a interview at the yacht club with ESPN, who's their big sports station.

36:00 And so unbeknownst to me that he'd done this until he told me halfway through the night, and I was interviewed by ESPN about how I felt and that, about the America's Cup loss and I said, 'Well, we'll be back in four year's time,' just hoping Australia did make the challenge, because I'd committed them that night. But it was a great event. And then, and I always remember, 'cause the commodore or the guy in charge of all Australians in the US over in Washington

36:30 rang me up the next morning and said, 'I saw you on TV, what were you doing at the yacht club?' And I

said, ‘Well, I was invited, I was building good relationships between Australia and the US’ And he said, ‘Yeah, well done, I hope you enjoyed yourself.’ So it was amazing how that got around, but yeah. So, I mean from 3rd Fleet we then came back and I came back to Canberra, first time in Canberra.

**Actually, before you go on, just a few more questions on the 3rd Fleet. How did you find the US way of**

37:00 **operations, as opposed to Australia?**

It, where we, I think we’re good at detail, and so we tend to, I think professionally, as individuals, be quite good in Australia and the Australian Navy, I think. Because we don’t have the assets the US has got, so we tend to ring every last bit of advantage out of the

37:30 assets that we’ve got. Whereas the US are good at big-scale stuff and, you know, and they, they’re extremely professional in what they do and, you know, I mean I witnessed the Desert Shield operations, and no one else could’ve done that in the world. So I think, you know, the US is always operating and thinking in, in big asset, you know, a lot of assets,

38:00 and they plan operations that way. Whereas in Australia we can be one ship steaming and all that, so we tend to have to place a lot more emphasis on kind of individual performance and individual ship performance rather than as a combined force or a big force. But, you know, I mean, I have the utmost respect for the Americans, they do huge, huge job all the time, the servicemen are very, very good and that.

38:30 And they’re very good at the operations they do, and they do a lot of difficult stuff.

**Is their ranking system actually quite different to Australia’s Navy?**

What, the rank?

**Yeah, they have different titles and different, they seem to have a more, I mean, it just seems to be quite different in their names and the size of the chain of command?**

No, they, generally they have just about the same rank

39:00 structure, uniforms are different, but they have, we tend to specialise a lot more, we tend to specialise more deeply in warfare and all that. So they generally would not have someone who was my equivalent in the US Navy, because they tend to broaden their officers so that they understand engineering as well as warfare as well as, you know, supply. And so their officers have a more general

39:30 kind of experience, whereas we tend to deep specialise, and we have separate engineering officers who are professional engineering officers, and we have warfare officers who are professional, etcetera. The US doesn’t do that, they do have engineering officers who specialise that way, but generally they tend to keep, broaden their experience of all of them. So I think in warfare and all that

40:00 we tend to study and know more, certainly at the junior levels, because we’ve deep specialised.

**Okay, we’ll stop the tape there and change over.**

# Tape 5

00:32 **After you finished up with the US Fleet, the 3rd Fleet, you said you came back to Canberra. What took place for you?**

I came back to the Jindalee Project and as, yeah, in the project requirements phase, which is your operational project requirements part of Jindalee. Now Jindalee at that stage was a project which

01:00 was really growing, and it was breaking new ground all the time. And it, you know, the Jindalee is over the horizon radar, based on HF [high frequency] transmission and you bounce those transmissions off the ionosphere so, you know, it’s complex and, you know, it was really kind of breaking technology at the time developed by DSTO, or the Defence Science Technology Organisation

01:30 of Australia. They had developed Jindalee as a prototype out of Alice Springs at the time. So come back, it was quite an exciting project, and I joined about the same time as then a recently promoted captain called Shackleton, who later became the Chief of Navy, the previous Chief of Navy. He joined and we worked in Jindalee there, pursuing and

02:00 advancing that project which was really at the, just about the approval stage and all that. And so, and it was working out the prime contractor who was going to do it, etcetera, and what was the actual capability requirements for the radar that had to be built. What did the government want, defence force want out of it, etcetera. So it was a very interesting time in dealing with, you know, kind of a lot of technology which was moving, and computers were

02:30 improving exponentially all the time so, and based on, it was using a lot of computer power. So the whole thing was very interesting, and looking at very much from the war fighter's perspective rather than the engineering perspective. But it was during that time that, you know, the conflict in, well over in the Gulf was just starting to heat

03:00 up, and the government started taking the decision that they were going to support, you know, the initial Desert Shield actions over in the Persian Gulf, and in particular the interception of shipping, which, and they were going to send ships. And they'd taken the decision, and the Labor Government had taken the decision that they were going to send ships over to the Gulf to support the Americans and really apply an embargo and a searching regime

03:30 of the ships that were steaming around the Gulf, to make sure that there's no weapons and all that stuff, and oil and a number of other things. So the, this is where really the connection with 3rd Fleet came back, in that there'd been a request, or someone'd mentioned my name or the maritime commander certainly had known about my experience in 3rd Fleet. And in particular, as Admiral Mauz had been promoted

04:00 out of CinCPac [Commander in Chief, Pacific] Fleet, he was now the commander of 7th Fleet and about to become, well, go into the Gulf to take charge of all the naval operations inside the Gulf area, on board Blue Ridge. And so the request came for me to go to the Gulf to be in advance of the ships and to get there before the ships and to sort out how they were going to operate, to liaise with the

04:30 Americans and that. And join up with another team which had gone over there previously, headed by the Commodore, Robert Walls, and to join up with them, and then I was to become the liaison officer and the interface with the Americans for the operations of the Australian ships. And that was not a, the request was, not Walls, Wallner, received by then Captain Shackleton. And he

05:00 initially refused the request and didn't want to lose me out of Jindalee, and I think for obvious reasons, in that he knew he'd be one man down for quite a time, and a busy time in Jindalee. But he had the courtesy of telling me at about ten o'clock in the morning, I can remember, and I reacted quite badly to him telling me that he'd refused it and not even consulting with me. And

05:30 so I then rang postings and said, 'Well, is the offer still open?' They said, 'No, we've had Jindalee and so you're not even in consideration,' and I thought that was the end of it. And I wasn't too happy with David Shackleton at the time, and then subsequently, about midday a phone call came in and said, 'If you're still a volunteer,' you know, 'we want you to go.' And I'm not sure what transpired or why they

06:00 changed their mind again but I was then given Friday to go and get vaccinations, when they'd rung the medical thing, so I got all the six or seven or ten vaccinations, I can't remember how many. And then I was told to go to Sydney on the Saturday and to fly out on the Monday morning, and I was going to Sydney for briefings at Maritime Headquarters. And subsequently my family and everyone,

06:30 you know, jumped in the car and we went up to Sydney. I arrived at Maritime Headquarters to find really no one was expecting me, which is fairly typical. So having jumped through all the hurdles and everything and arrived there, and then one commander turned up and gave me a briefing for a while. I really had no money, no nothing, I didn't know what I was getting into, 'cause there was no real briefings of what I had to do, who I had to meet up with, where I was

07:00 gonna stay, and someone did book my plane ticket out, but that was basically it. So, and I was told to go and get the gear I required and just buy it, so I went and got a sunhat, which was an Akubra, 'cause that's all I could get. And so I had a sunhat and there I went, and I went on the Monday morning and flew out. And I arrived in Bahrain really not knowing anything, and I thought accommodation wouldn't be a problem.

07:30 Unfortunately everyone and their dog was in Bahrain and it was just jam packed, and so I couldn't find any accommodation. And so I managed to talk a hotel operator into giving me a back room at the Intercontinental and, which he didn't want to release, but he did in the end, and then so I at least had a room. And then I tried to find Commodore Walls and his captain, at that time Captain Cox, who were

08:00 in Bahrain somewhere, and I found them and then we linked up and we started to get a plan together for the ships, and that. And that time there was a lot of discussion, multinational discussion, they were deciding how they were gonna do the interception of their civil shipping and working with the nations that were there, which was, you know, the…There was a lot there, there was the Dutch and the British and all that, so it was really the co-ordination, the initial setting up and all that. And then,

08:30 after discussion with Admiral Walls, we decided that I would go on board Blue Ridge and go and work for Admiral Mauz, which was interesting. And Mauz was tremendous and he asked me what would I like to do, and what could he do for me. He remembered me from 3rd Fleet, which was easy because it opened the doors for me, but I said, 'Well, integrate me into staff, 'cause

09:00 I'll go mad as a liaison officer.' And he said, 'Yeah,' he said, 'I'd love to.' So I then became one of the battle watch surface warfare officers on board Blue Ridge as well as Australian liaison which could do, pretty, you know, didn't demand that much time as well as everything, as, if everything was sorted out, if there weren't problems. But, and generally there wasn't problems, the Australian ships looked after themselves to a certain extent, once they'd

09:30 integrated into the supply network and all that stuff and got their operations sorted out. So I became one of the battle watch officers on board Blue Ridge, which is tremendous, just one of the great experiences. You know, during Desert Storm we used to stand watch about, there was three of us from memory, three or four, and so you'd have watch and you were responsible for, you know, basically the surface operations of all the friendly forces. Because Mauz

10:00 was the supreme naval commander and just about all the allies chopped operational control to him, so they came under a co-ordinated, co-ordination of US Fleet. There was a British officer at the same time who joined, who was, also joined in the same capacity. For one reason or another he didn't integrate, and I'm not sure whether Mauz didn't let him or what, but he only remained for a

10:30 couple of weeks and he found he just couldn't do his job, and he left Blue Ridge, and so I was the only one on board, the only foreigner on board. And, but he, the integration of the staff was great, because you actually got the insight into what was going on and all that. And you did a number of different jobs that you, you know, you were doing everything from watching for ballistic missile attack from, well, any of the missile attacks out of Iraq into that. The Americans had different sensors that

11:00 would pick them up and you had to confirm that and then pass it on so everyone got warned of likely impact area of those missiles. And one of the other jobs, which became a difficult job at times, but certainly during the peacetime or the lead up to it was good, was you, you're responsible for co-ordinating the,

11:30 the, as well as the service operations and where the ships and what they were doing, you're also responsible for co-ordinating the rescues of, the rescue of downed pilots. If a pilot went down then you would go back, and each pilot had his own identifier, or a code that would say that it was him or validate that it was him. And you had to, once you knew the pilot was down you'd go back to the respective carrier

12:00 and ask them to open the envelope, and they would then give you unique questions which were specific only to him, and which could be asked back to him to prove his identity so it wasn't a trap. And that was an interesting time, it was more difficult when pilots actually started getting lost and that, and you knew pilots were waiting on being rescued, unfortunately not many of them got rescued so, for one reason or another.

12:30 But that, so that was in Desert Shield where people were organising, getting co-ordinated and, you know, the French were there and we had a lot of multinational meetings and that to get all the naval forces organised, and then Admiral, or Commodore, Walls and his team left, and basically the ships arrived. And at that time it was also quite, we'd, the

13:00 navy had initially set up with the government that they would operate in the Straits, or outside the Straits of Hormuz, because that's where the major amount of traffic was, all the ships and all that. But there's a lesson that we learned, I think, I hoped we learned, was that you don't, you build in flexibility in to your operational plans that you get the government to endorse. Because the situation changed quite quickly where the focus went inside the Straits of Hormuz into the

13:30 Gulf of Oman and, but the government had only agreed to Australian ships operating outside. And so it became difficult, it was just impossible to get the ships inside where all the rest of the nations had gone because that's where the business was going to, and it wasn't too much for ships to do outside the Straits of Hormuz. And so there, the navy had to then convince the government of why

14:00 it needed to go inside and what were the operational reasons. And so I was brought back to Australia to speak to the chief of defence force, and at that time the assistant chief of operations, Real Admiral Taylor, and explain to them why we needed to go from outside into inside, join the Americans and the British and all those who were in there, because we looked fairly

14:30 stupid outside, as one of the two nations who couldn't go in the Straits of Hormuz. And so I was brought back, and in the end I got to speak to General Grayson, who was the Chief of the Defence Force, and explained it to him, and he then carried the argument and everything to the government and put the position of the government, and the government reacted quite quickly and the ships were allowed to come in. So you know, I mean,

15:00 there's a lesson there in how you write operational plans, I think you give yourself the flexibility so you're not locked out when the situation changes. And then the ships did come in and that obviously brought them in with the Americans and then they were working towards the next step which was to prepare for Desert Shield. Which the ultimatum of the British, sorry, of the American President was, if Saddam Hussein didn't,

15:30 Iraq didn't leave Kuwait, well then, they were going to go in to the next form of military operations in January. And obviously Iraq didn't leave Kuwait and so everyone was preparing for that. And it was a very interesting time in, well, (1) having Christmas, I suppose, in Bahrain was very interesting, where I had to arrange it for a

16:00 couple of ships, but also trying to organise Christmas in Islamic culture is a little bit different, but people in, you know, I mean the Bahrainis and that certainly recognised those, certainly recognised that Christmas was celebrated by a lot of the people there and they made provision for it, and all that. And I

found Bahrain quite fascinating anyway as you got around, I,

16:30 as was Riyadh and a number of other places. And then the decision was taken, I think, towards the end of the month in December that we would sail to sea, all American ships that could get under way would go to sea because of the terror threat, and we would remain at sea for, until everything was finished. And so we sailed at the end of December and we

17:00 remained at sea throughout, and I left the ship at sea to come back to Australia, so…And everyone then was preparing for the next stage, which is Desert Storm, and Desert Storm was, I found, extremely interesting. The planning going, leading up to it was something that you couldn't comprehend as an Australian, and I don't, I still,

17:30 there's still not too many Australians who have exposure to that level of operations and what it requires to run a theatre like that. The American intelligence and battle damage assessment and the co-ordination of those and the linkage between them and the prioritisation of targets every day for the aircraft, and so that they make sure that they're bombing new targets, etcetera , was really something to behold. But we remained at sea, there was another

18:00 two weeks, I think, before Desert Storm started and then I came on watch, I remember, at midnight on the first night, having known that they were going to do something, and they were going to go ahead with this, and that. And I came on forward, I came on watch in the admiral's operations room at midnight and they'd already launched the first Tomahawks, so they were

18:30 committed about an hour before that by launching the Tomahawks. And then the aircraft took off, I think, at about midnight or one or two o'clock in the morning or whatever the designated time was, and I, that's where, I mean the Americans just operate at a level that is unprecedented. Looking at the radar scopes and looking at the screens, they'd launched so many aircraft

19:00 and they all had corridors to fly in to Iraq, but on a large screen which was on the wall of the operations room, for the air plot, you could not make out a single aircraft, it was a sea of blue. It was just a highway starting in, basically around Bahrain and it would continue, it was into Iraq, and then another highway coming out as they egressed out after completing the missions. And each, that

19:30 highway of blue on the plot, or on the screen, represented just hundreds of aircraft, you know, and they, there was so many of them that it just joined together to make a blue kind of highway, it was just phenomenal. And how they de-conflicted all that, the job done by the Aegis [air defence radar] crews who was up there at the time, who was looking at every aircraft coming out and making sure it was friend and not enemy, and they were ready to take out any enemy who were coming out. How

20:00 they did all that, it was just on a scale that not many people could, or no other nation could've done. It was a great tribute to them, and they really didn't have any blue on blue, what we call blue on blue, which is friendly attacking friendly, incidents during those initial days, and yet the level of operations and intensity. And I remember Admiral Mauz saying to me, I mean, there was a great argument, you could, could you bring one carrier in to the Persian Gulf,

20:30 into the Gulf of Oman. And he, there was a kind of a great reluctance because they thought there wasn't enough room for a carrier to operate in there and launch its aircraft and recover 'em. They brought one in, it worked well, so then they brought a second one in, and these are both hundred-thousand-ton, you know, ninety aircraft carriers, and they operated that with the first one. And everyone said, 'Oh well, that worked alright too,' so they brought a third one in, and so they had

21:00 three inside the Gulf. And they had one in reserve all the time and two fully flying, so that amount of aircraft alone, and then you had all the shore-based aircraft from Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and, you know, UAE [United Arab Emirates] and all that, it was just a phenomenal operation. And those aircraft all got in and got out and, you know, they didn't have any blue on blue and it was very successful in what they did. And that just went on and on and on until

21:30 they were sure, General Schwarzkopf was sure that it was then safe to start land operations, but that was some time after the, a naval and air bombardment, you know, air attacks. And I remember beforehand there was, Schwarzkopf came out to Blue Ridge to discuss the final plans with the admiral, and I wasn't in that meeting, but I know one of the great points was whether the US marines would do a landing

22:00 at, on Kuwait. And Kuwait at that time was probably the most heavily defended piece of coastline since the Second World War. And the Iraqis had built up everything along that coastline, so it was problematic. And they'd mined off Kuwait too, so to get the landing ships into a position where they could do the landing and to get them in would, probably would've meant a great loss of life.

22:30 Because to get the ships in safely without hitting mines, you would've had to do minesweepers first, minesweepers would've had to clear it, and then you would've got the landing ships in, you would've had to anchor them, they were stationary, lot of missiles on the shore, all that. And the navy argued very strongly at that time that they needed to do it, 'cause they thought they needed to do the amphibious, an amphibious landing. Admiral Schwarzkopf, ah, sorry, General Schwarzkopf wasn't convinced, and I remember when he flew off

23:00 Blue Ridge after the meeting, the admiral said, 'Well, we didn't win that one.' And General Schwarzkopf then pursued his own strategy of bringing the marines up through, up from the south, up through Saudi into Iraq and that, rather than doing the amphibious landing. And I think in hindsight you would say that had to be a good decision, their loss of life was minimised compared, I mean, compared to the potential

23:30 of the threat that could've been there. So then, I mean, you know, they continued those operations a long time. The Australian ships were basically around the carriers, protecting the carriers, you know, retained back there to protect the carriers, if there was any attacks or anything like that, and it was continual, Tomahawks threats. And a good mate of mine was driving a submarine, the Louisville, which was brought into, I think,

24:00 into the Red Sea from memory. But he certainly brought his submarine, he was the first submarine to fly, ah, fire Tomahawks in anger, too. And so even though I never, I didn't know him at that time he, we subsequently connected later on, and it's interesting to know who was commanding that submarine too.

**Was there much tension between the army and the navy?**

I didn't see too much of the army, it was more, we had a lot of marines on board, 'cause I shared

24:30 a cabin with a guy who's running, well, running the P3s [patrol aircraft], but also the marine officer next door, and that. And no, they get on very well, although the US Marine Corps believed that they had to do that landing, they really wanted to do the landing because that was their, you know, that was their whole reason for being at that stage was, you know, to do amphibious operations, and this was a real time operation.

25:00 So they were very keen to do it but they didn't convince the commander, General Schwarzkopf, so, I mean they did it but they did it by landing down in a safe beach and then coming up through the south. But yeah, so, it was very interesting, I, the battleships also were engaged there, that was the last time they fired their weapons in anger, so you had,

25:30 from memory, two of them, you could've had three of them there, but you certainly had Missouri and… [USS Wisconsin]. The Missouri was there, and she fired just about all her ammunition there and they went, took them back and retired them after that, and that. So they were phenomenal things to see fire their guns and basically pushing out a Volkswagen

26:00 or something at the other end of that barrel every time they fired, was tremendous. And the, I mean, you know, the firepower of them was, you never see again, and they were operating very, very well up there so, you know, there was at least two of them there. So the whole thing was very well co-ordinated.

**Were there any problems with the Iranians, Iranian Navy or Revolutionary Guards?**

No, I think the Iranians

26:30 watched their territorial waters quite strongly. But I don't think, I don't, I think there was one intercept by some Iranian forces, but generally they, I think they just sat back and watched because they, yeah they sat back and watched, because I mean, you know, Iran hadn't got on with Iraq too well for a long time. What was happening

27:00 was, you know, probably not opposed by Iran anyway, to see Iraq being, you know, put back out of Kuwait, so no, they were generally quiet. And remember that Iraq also flew all their planes out of, at one stage, which confused us for a while, we didn't know why they'd done it, but they flew all their planes, or a lot of their planes

27:30 out of Iraq and landed them in Iran. A lot of people were suspicious then and said, 'Well gee, you know, I mean, is that just holding them back for, you know, until they want to use them?' In the end, it seems like the Iranians just locked up the planes, and no one'd understand why Iraq did that, you know, flew all those planes out. But they did and, but they never came back so, you know, it was very interesting, you know, and obviously there was a lot of weapons flying around the Gulf,

28:00 so…and, you know, and so I don't know how many would've gone over Iranian territory, but obviously some did, and they would've had to but, you know, the Iranians seemed to accept and, what was going on but they were very cautious, they didn't want any ship penetration through the territorial waters and that.

**Were there any incidents at all?**

No, not that I can remember with the Iranians. No,

28:30 no, it was mainly with the Iraqis, you know, I mean, and they fought quite hard and there was, you know, I mean, there was a number of, it was kind of complex warfare. Because at that stage there was a minesweeper that was dropping a lot of mines in the Gulf and they were floating down the Gulf, and they were just floating down the Gulf. And so that was a tremendous threat, and remaining at sea was obviously dangerous,

29:00 so you had to work out where the currents were and then make sure you remained out in the middle and away from the currents and all that, 'cause you didn't want these mines steaming down onto your…

and they finally caught that minesweeper, but took a long time to get him, and then there was obviously a lot of sabotaging of the oil rigs off Kuwait too. And that was difficult, and so the British certainly had a lot to do with that and using their Sea Skuas on, their helicopters to take out the small boats or the, you know, some of the

29:30 Revolutionary Guards who were on those things. We also, on board, the Americans brought out a lot of, you know, the guys who work with, I think it was Red Adair or something, but they understood oil production, how oil refineries work, and all that. Because there was a big concern that what Iraq would do is blow the manifolds on the pipelines out of the, or just turn on the

30:00 pipes out of the refineries and flood the Gulf with oil. And there was a lot of oil that'd gone into the Gulf initially, so the, these guys knew it back to front and obviously designed some of these refineries, and they knew that if you blew up some of the manifolds the whole system shut down and you couldn't start it again. And so they'd worked out how to prevent, you know, that kind of,

30:30 that disaster that would've occurred if Iraq had've been allowed to just turn on the, you know, the oil and just flood it into the Gulf and do all that stuff. So, you know, these guys, they brought out a lot of experts who knew the specific bits of what they were trying to do. You know, and the most difficult thing, I mean, I, you know, you look for the missile shots and all that, and trying to pick the impact point and warn people and that and get the warnings out was

31:00 one of the functions we initially had to pass on. But the other thing, as well as the surface operations side of it and where the, all the ships were and what they were doing and all that for the admiral was… Also, this bit about the downed aircraft, and that's where I saw some of those pilots, you know, who I later saw on TV [Television], they went down. But it was regrettable that you couldn't convince the people who should've gone and rescued them that they were actually,

31:30 actually weren't captured. So even though we went through that process of, you know, 'What is your girlfriend's first name?' And, you know, they had pretty simple questions, but only you would know them. Like, you know, 'What was the make and model of your first car, or what was…?' You know, and so we'd get those answers back and then we'd pass that to the aircraft, the P3 or something who was in contact, 'cause these pilots had gone down and that. And I remember

32:00 one specifically on one the islands, where the pilot and the observer were down, and they were talking to the P3 and I got the questions back and passed it on and P3 said, 'Yeah, it's him, he's answered all the questions correctly.' But it was, then became very disappointing that we could not get the organisation that should've gone and rescued them, we couldn't convince them they weren't captured, and they said they always suspected it was a trap. And so it was one of the lessons out of that,

32:30 I think, it was one of the lessons out of that war or that conflict, you had to really improve how you went and rescued your aircrew. Because unless the aircrew believe they're gonna be rescued, they're not gonna take, you know, they're not gonna do their mission properly, I don't think, 'cause they'll always be worried, so you have to give them confidence that you're gonna come and get them. And they did, I think for this most recent thing in Iraq and Afghanistan and

33:00 that, you know, the special operations teams and that, were right on. They were there, they got them, they picked them up, at great risk sometimes, but it was very pleasing to see because that, you just couldn't get it done. And I suppose in those days they didn't have the specialised platforms that they've got now either, which gets them in quickly, it's protected and all that. And they have, you know, so they're really focused on the rescue part of, you know, the operational rescue part of this, and vitally

33:30 important for the aircrew to believe they're gonna be rescued if they go down. So yeah, that was probably one of the down points for me, but otherwise, once again it was one of those experiences you'll never ever forget. And, you know, the scale of operations and just, I mean, just amazing, the amount, number of aircraft and the airpower. And the logistics of it too, when you think, you've got

34:00 all those ships at sea, you've got aircraft flying like that all the time, and you're supporting it all from, you know, sea base. One of the things that was, it just, unbelievable, was the American, the way the Americans can activate their logistics chain, they have ships in different stages of dormancy ready to respond. So they have some ships which

34:30 are basically on seventy-two-hour notice, and they're kept just about ready to go and the crews are there, they have a small number of those. And then they have some on fifteen days, some on thirty days, some on two months, but, you know, they started activating all these ships, and some of 'em were old steamships and they…I was talking to Vice Admiral Donovan, who was the commander of military Sealift Command, at one of the dinners that we had

35:00 when the Chief of Defence Force came up, and he said, 'The hardest thing was not activating the ship but finding the crew.' 'Cause some of them were old, and so these steam people and all that were out in the community, but finding the kind of, the older engineers who knew how to operate these ships, but they found them and they used to…And so they just had this kind of logistics highway running from the States, and it was activated and these ships were just plying across, just

35:30 unbelievable, and they were all packed correctly for offload and all that, and it was huge, huge thing. After I came back to Australia I then talked to the Chief of Defence Force, a couple of things happened,

which I'd forgot. One was the Chief of Defence Force came up to look for himself, before he…And so General Gration came up, and certainly he

36:00 appreciated the situation and all that, and that, and obviously went back and advised the government, and also Vice Admiral Hudson, came up as the Chief of the Navy, and he also came up and he looked at the operations and that, and he was going to retire shortly after that. And so both of those happened and there was the interaction at the right level with US senior command and that, and the government obviously then appreciated all the reasons

36:30 why the ships should enter the Gulf and, which they did, and operated very effectively.

**What sort of intelligence were you getting through about the Iraqis, you know, the Iraqi armed forces in Kuwait? Were they seen as having any potential offensive strength against the fleet in the Gulf?**

Oh yeah, I think,

37:00 within the time before, the time leading up to Desert Storm, we attributed a tremendous capability to the Iraqis. Had a lot of aircraft, they had a lot of missiles, they had a huge standing, oh, they had a huge land force, so it was a hell of a lot of capability attributed

37:30 to the Iraqis. And as it transpired, either the strategy of the Americans was so successful or we over-attributed the capabilities of, to the Iraqis but, you know, the potential threat was huge. I mean, just the amount of artillery and weaponry on the Kuwait beaches, waiting for that landing, was huge. And that's why the kind of,

38:00 the other plan of coming up from the south and coming in behind them was so successful, but you know, the Iraqis, the intelligence was that they had a huge amount of capability there and it wasn't going to be easy. And everyone expected, you know, I mean, expected it to be a hell of a lot more difficult than what it was.

**Yeah, the stretch of beach from, the Kuwaiti stretch of beach, how large is that,**

38:30 **approximately?**

Oh, I don't know, from memory twenty or thirty mile. Yeah, and there was kind of palm groves and all that, and there was a lot of weapons in there. Very hard, they were all mobile so it's very hard to, you know, kind of launch an attack against them, because they're all mobile, they've been moved around every night. I mean, even a lot of the missiles the, were moved around regularly

39:00 so that they couldn't be targeted. So it was, you know, it was a large amount of troops and everything there, so it was huge, yeah. And, you know, we all thought it was pretty, I mean, we all thought it was, this was gonna be quite difficult. And, you know, yet what goes through your mind, you know, I associated with, you know, the guys in the Second World War, Vietnam and all that, because

39:30 you don't worry about your personal safety, to be honest. I don't, certainly I don't think you do, but you do worry about your family and you worry if something does happen to you, what's gonna happen to your family. And I suppose that's the bad thing or the thing that worries you is that you don't wanna cause any grief or sadness to your family or that. I mean, it's not really concern for your own personal welfare, it's,

40:00 if something does happen to you, well then, you really, you know, you really regret causing that kind of pain to others.

**Did you by any chance come across people in the services, the US Forces, where the navy felt that it could win the war on its own, or the army felt that? Was that the kind of competing attitude existing? I remember an air force chap got sacked, a senior air force commander, because he said**

40:30 **that air force could win the war on its own.**

Yeah, I, it's certainly, see, in the navy, navy would never say that and, because in the navy in the US is a complete force. It's an air force, it's a marine corps and it's also a, the ships, and so it appreciates what each brings to the table, it appreciates, certainly the US Navy appreciates the real

41:00 value of airpower in, how do you effectively use airpower. Appreciates why the marines are there and why they've gotta do their job and what a job they do. You know, and they do a huge amount of just, not only kind of the shock troops, which they are, but they do a lot of the other stuff, the protection stuff and a million other things, you know, so…and, you know, and then you've got the ships which are there, with all their various capabilities, from the submarines firing, the Tomahawks through to the aircraft

41:30 carriers that's got all the aircraft, through to the Aegis anti-air warfare. You know, I mean, that guy, if he had've been British, the guy that was commanding that Aegis destroyer off Kuwait, they would've made him a Lord overnight I reckon, because he did one of the greatest jobs I've ever seen in, you know, in my whole career.

**Alright, we'll have to stop, unfortunately, we've literally run out of tape.**

# Tape 6

00:33 **Can you just outline Australia's involvement in Gulf War I?**

Yeah, we had three ships there, from memory, yeah, the Brisbane, Success and an FFG [guided missile frigate], I believe it was HMAS Adelaide

01:00 which was there. And so we had three ships in support which were allowed inside the Gulf and were in, basically in defence of the carriers and the main assets, and then also had a clearance diving team there, which was operating with the US forces. And the clearance diving team were essential, because the US Navy really didn't have the

01:30 demo, the shallow water demolitions experience of our diving team. So once again it's, we Australians tend to deep specialise, and the diving team had that shallow water deep experience, it was one of the capabilities they asked for when I came back to Australia to see CDF [Chief of the Defence Force]. The Americans asked me to request or say if, you know, if there were any systems going to be offered, obviously the ships were there,

02:00 could they have the shallow water clearance diving team, 'cause if they did the amphibious landing they worried about the shallow water mines that may have been placed there. And so the diving team would've been essential to go and clear those before hand. And then they also said, 'We would appreciate F18s or F111s,' and so I passed all that on to the CDF at the time. At that time the air force,

02:30 I don't think was, the aircraft weren't in a preparedness that would allow them to be deployed, so the aircraft, with the exception of the Hercules and that, which went up, did not eventuate, but the clearance diving team did. And they operated out of Menis Alman there, which is just outside of Bahrain

03:00 and the American base there, which was the base of the commander of Middle East Force, excuse me, and that was, you know, a very good team, you know, and they complimented the Americans well. And then we, obviously, you know, the ships which were there and operating and Success was supporting them very well by going and getting the logistics that was required and keeping them at sea,

03:30 etcetera. And the Success was commanded by a very capable person called Captain Sloper. Sloper was just one of the great characters of the Australian Navy, so everyone watched where Success went and what it did all that stuff. So no, it was very interesting, so the support was quite significant and the Americans always recognised that we have supported them very well in these major activities and we bring a level of

04:00 competency that, and competence that they certainly value.

**In that operation where you're working with Americans and so on, what's the chain of command, so to speak?**

Well, in that situation it was, the supreme naval commander was the Admiral, Vice Admiral Mauz, who was Commander, US

04:30 CommUSNavCent., Commander US Naval Forces Central Command, and he commanded all the naval forces wherever they'd be. And then, and around, involved in that operation, and then you had the, each country had its own national command but and for, we had our own task group under the command of

05:00 Commodore, then, Oxenbould, Chris Oxenbould. And Oxenbould then, I'm pretty sure, chopped what was called tactical command, ah, tactical control to the US at the required time for the operations. So they were integrated in the operations and so therefore there was no chance of confusion or anything like that. And he still retained, Oxenbould still retained

05:30 command of the Australian forces and all that, but just to control, and so they could integrate into the operations that were ongoing, was with the US and so that was basically the level of command. And then Oxenbould obviously controlled his task group in that, in the operations, so he had three ships and that, task group plus the CDT too, or the clearance diving team, so yeah. And then

06:00 within that, also the American commander, then had a, you know, an air commander for the aircraft and that, and, you know, the naval air component commander, and he had a, you know, an ASW commander, a [air] surface warfare commander, etcetera . So he had all those different commanders which were his underneath, which were controlling different facets of the operation as they went through, you know, the special operations and

06:30 all that stuff, so that was all there. And the interesting thing was, the Americans actually changed command of that Admiral in December, and Admiral Mauz was an extremely, I think, likeable and competent admiral. But they had, you know, obviously years before, it'd, the rotation of Comm. 7th Fleet had been pre-ordained for a certain date.

07:00 An indication of their confidence, I think, was that they actually changed out their commander of, in, I

think about 4th of December, from memory, so you had a change of the top man and they didn't extend him, and that surprised me for a while. But I think it just indicated their confidence that, you know, of the competence of the people they had in the job, and Admiral Mauz had to go and take up his next position.

07:30 And he subsequently got promoted to four star and become a CinC [Commander in Chief] in his own right on the east coast, so…And then you had Vice Admiral Stanley Arthur, who came in and he took over, and he was an amazing man too. I mean, you'd always, you know, with either of them, you'd go to war with them, because they were both so competent and that, Arthur was different to Mauz, but each was great in his own way. Arthur had a lot of experience from Vietnam War,

08:00 he flew in the Vietnam War, he'd been through all that and he'd built up, and obviously subsequent postings built up all his experience, but he was just a tremendous and a very affable kind of friendly man. And, you know, and many a time when I was on watch at midnight and that, he'd come in 'cause he was, he used to average probably three or four hours' sleep and that's all he'd get each day. But he'd come in about midnight before he went to bed and he'd just talk for

08:30 ten minutes, and you really got to appreciate the experience and the very genuine nature of the man. In fact he was just a great man and he'd built up all his experience, he'd built up everything that he believed in, tactics and all that, through experience, which is, you know, rather than textbooks. And so it sometimes was a benefit, probably or not, deep specialising, because he'd done it by experience as he'd gone along, he'd learned from

09:00 the job, and he'd picked out the good bits. And so he was an expert in just about in all aspects of warfare, and yet, and really a great commander. He was one that you would go to war with, any time, and just very personable. And he became, I think deputy chief CO in there, yeah, so he got his four stars too, so he was a great man. And he led, he took that job

09:30 right through to completion, so…but it was always something I look back on that I probably, most countries wouldn't do that, it was, just shows the confidence of the Americans, I suppose, that they were even gonna change their highest man a month before they started the operations, so…and I remember the small change of command on board the ship where Admiral Mauz left and flew out and he said goodbye to all of us and he was gone. He wasn't very happy to leave, but at the same time,

10:00 you know, that's the way they did business, yeah.

**So for the American commander at the time that wanted an Australian ship to move to a part of the Gulf, say, he couldn't order that directly, he would have to go through the Australian commander?**

Yeah.

**And then it would be discussed, I guess?**

Yeah, he'd go through the Australian commander. And generally the Australian commander would do it, but it was kind of, I mean, that's why we had those meetings and co-ordination meetings and that before. It,

10:30 the ground rules were all worked out as to what people, what degree of tolerance people had and that. And by that I mean, degree of tolerance is, you know, what their national permissions were, I suppose. So Commodore Oxenbould at that time, he would've, and he did tell the Americans exactly what he was allowed to do and what he wasn't allowed to do. And the Americans employed them

11:00 within those constraints, you know, but did, you know, did basically assigned roles and Oxenbould would then get the ships there and do all that stuff. So, it was a matter of each understanding what their national kind of restrictions and guidelines were, yeah so, I mean, it worked very successfully, some countries left. After Desert Shield,

11:30 I think, I think the French left and went out of the Gulf and that, and a couple of countries did leave, and then that left, you know, kind of a…most countries remained, but it left a core of nations which are, you know, like-minded allies who were going to get on with the next stage, which was Desert Storm. Yeah.

**And during your time in the Middle East, did you have a chance to stop at port and mix with**

12:00 **locals or anything and get their view of what was happening?**

Not too much of their view. I was ashore a lot for those co-ordination meetings and that, which used to happen once every month for a while, and then they became quicker as we approached some deadlines. So, but, no, you didn't get, you didn't get the opinion of locals too much. I mean, the locals in

12:30 Bahrain were very supportive, I think, they didn't like what was going on in Kuwait. I suppose because they, one thing was, they could fear that, you know, if it happened in Kuwait it could've happened in Bahrain too. But generally they were very supportive and I didn't see any resistance really to it. But you're always, you know, you're always aware of the terrorist threat and that, and

13:00 it was alive and well then. And, you know, these, it didn't happen, but gee, it could've happened. You

know, and there was a great threat of a lot of things, like some of the chemical weapons that the Iraqis were supposed to have, and so there was you know, some big vaccination programs going on and all that. And yeah, so you're always aware of the potential threat of what they could do

13:30 with some of these chemical weapons, and that. I remember one of the ships flew up, oh no, came up without any, I think it was smallpox vaccinations, and that, but I had to scrounge around in Bahrain and find the necessary number of vaccinations, or I think they were the, you know, the little things that you put on a sugar cube or something. But I think it was smallpox, but I remember having to fly out with all those,

14:00 so it was a bit of a mad rush to get everyone organised and vaccinated and all that, because it happened fairly quickly, but it did, I mean it all worked and it happened. And luckily we didn't see any of those chemical weapons used, and I suppose the Americans really had Iraq a little bit worried about using any of that, because of retaliation. You know, not chemical retaliation,

14:30 but they certainly would've been quite strong in their response, I would've thought.

**Were sailors worried or concerned about having all these vaccinations or…?**

In retrospect, probably, yes, but then I don't think anyone then, I don't think anyone really thought about it, because it happened so quickly. And you were having, you know, you were having a vaccination

15:00 on vaccination and then you were also taking tablets called NAPS [Nerve Agent Pretreatment Set] tablets, which were supposed to assist the anti-nerve agent injection, if you had to take one, if you thought you were exposed to nerve agent, and that. So you were taking those, plus you also had your gasmask, you had your anti-flash and all that. And the Americans all looked at me quite strange when I rolled up with all

15:30 this, because they really made no change to what they were doing at all, they were in their normal clothing and all that. So on the first night when we, when the attack happened and that, and Desert Storm started, I remember thinking, 'Right, well, I gotta get in my anti-flash,' and I got in my non-nylon clothing, all cotton clothing, and all that, as you're taught, the anti-flash that I had and

16:00 all that, I had my gasmask and all that. And I, it was like I was someone from Mars when I walked into the operations room, they all looked at me and said, 'Holy Powers, what's going on? The mad Australian's here.' And so after a while I thought, 'Oh gee,' you know. So yeah, but they really, they looked at me quite strange because, you know, they said, 'Gee,' you know, 'we don't do any of tha-at.' And I said, 'Oh, okay, alright.' Yeah, so…

**Weren't they expecting anything or…?**

Yeah, but the Americans kind of, I think,

16:30 you know, it's kind of the casual-ness of Americans is that, you know, they operate at the big picture but I don't think they, you know, on board the ship they weren't gonna… And I'm not sure whether they do have anti-flash, I know they have anti-flash but I'm not sure whether they change, got all cotton kind of clothing and that. See, we took, we learned a lot from the Falklands, where the British had a lot of problems with

17:00 battle damage and fires, where nylon clothing and that just kind of boiled into the skin and it was terrible, so, for some of the crew. So we changed, the Australian Navy started responding to the lessons learned from the Falklands, introducing better clothing and all that. And you see now on ships they've got these proban overalls and all that, which are one, they're an overall but they're fire retardant, they're cotton and all that, and you have-flash and all that stuff. And that's all to make, you know,

17:30 to make life at sea, in case, you know, there is a fire or something, a lot safer, rather than wearing synthetics and stuff which will 'cause a big problem, so…But the Americans hadn't responded to that then and so, you know, I think, I don't think they knew what to expect, at the same time they just didn't have that requirement. And they were probably expecting they'd get warning if they had to really change, so…

**On that first night of bombardment, were they**

18:00 **expecting a big retaliation or they had no idea or…?**

Oh, they were, yeah. Yeah, no, they were. They kept half their aircraft and firepower back. They were, and they, at that time they didn't know how Iran was going to respond either. I mean, it's predictable the way Iran would respond because it wasn't great friends with Iraq, I don't think. But they had, they

18:30 watched everything, and so in those first couple of hours it was very critical that you didn't commit everything. And so naval-wise the decision had been to keep back half the aircraft on, that were available at sea, or one carrier's aircraft, I think were kept back, purely as a defence, in case it was needed to defend, you know, against whatever came along. And

19:00 also a number of the ships were kept in readiness, yeah, so that they weren't surprised. And they were watching, I mean they've got sensors and that that were watching, you know, responses around the Gulf and that from aircraft and everything, and detecting electronic emissions and that and watching radars

coming up on land bases and all that stuff. So they were watching what was happening, and they could then determine what

19:30 the level of response was going to be while, you know, what activity electronically they were seeing happening. And they targeted a lot of the communications nodes and that in Iraq, to cause confusion into the high command and make sure that they dismembered the communications so that there was no great control or centralised control of the response. So all that was very successful.

20:00 **Did you actually, we've heard of guys who saw Tomahawks being sent off and so on, and it's quite a journey over the sea, did you see them on radar and reports on CNN [Cable Network News] of them impacting or anything like that?**

Oh yeah, I mean, you saw a lot of Tomahawks being fired at and I know Brisbane just about shot some down, because they didn't warn her that one of the waypoints was over the top of Brisbane.

20:30 When they fired these things, they actually went south first and then they had a waypoint where they turned and then went off, and the Tomahawks have to geographically lock too, so they had to find a distinctive part of the coast where it'd lock its systems, so then, and then it was off and it was, then it'd go, so it, you know, all those happened. The Americans were obviously committed some time before the

21:00 drop dead time because of, or the initial start time that was promulgated, 'cause they'd fired the Tomahawks beforehand and that, so they were committed. But we were using CNN very much as another source of intelligence, because CNN was there and so you'd know that the Tomahawks that were, I mean, the intel guys and the battle damage assessment guys were looking

21:30 at CNN and saying, 'Well, there's that one and it's just gone into that building, and that's,' you know, 'so we've got, that one was successful,' 'cause they knew the targets. And so, and CNN was there actually covering it inside Baghdad, etcetera. And so it was a great form of assistance to them until CNN got booted out and then shut down. And, you know, I mean, it was great, because it was live battle damage

22:00 assessment really of your targets. And, you know, the one that flew down the street and all that and I mean, it was very good. And, you know, I mean that's where Australia doesn't have that kind of capability, I mean, to run an operation like that they needed, first of all the intelligence to identify the targets, to make sure they didn't hit the civilian population, and it was great care taken right throughout to make sure they didn't. But they had to identify the targets, next

22:30 they had to not only do that, they had to then prioritise the targets, then they had to feed the targets out to each of the aircraft, the Tomahawks and all that, get it all out. And then the next part of it, which is crucial, was that they then had to work out the success of those attacks and then eliminate the target or re-attack the target or whatever, huge organisation to work out what happened to each of those targets and whether you had to re-attack or whatever and that. So, and then

23:00 you feed that back into your strike plan again and you get your aircraft re-targeted, and they, and that. And only once I think did we get accused of where they came back and said, 'Why were we attacking the last remaining wall of that building, when the rest had been…?' And it had, just hadn't been updated for that one target, and so they were re-attacking that target 'cause they thought it was still a valid target, in fact it'd been destroyed. But that was only once that I saw that

23:30 happen out of all the hundreds of targets, so. And trying to, you know, I mean, even the Saddam palaces they were going after, they were trying to find him, but he was pretty good. He moved around.

**He was in a hole probably again.**

He could've been, yeah.

**Just talking about the impact of CNN as intelligence thing, was that a surprise for the American guys that this happened or did they know, 'Oh, we'll be able to watch it on CNN?' Or did they just go, 'Oh, look!'**

24:00 **What kind of impact did that have?**

I think they realised CNN was going to be there, but they didn't realise how good it was gonna be, and so, but instantly, I mean, we had CNN feed going inside the admiral's operations room, and so you could basically watch what was happening, and that. So it was better than any other intelligence which you could get and, you know, only for that part of where they were but, you know, but generally

24:30 they, CNN had a pretty good network, so, yeah, so.

**How long was it before they got kicked out of Iraq?**

I think, was it Arnett? I think he was there for a couple of weeks and he got closed down, or maybe only been a week, but certainly was, yeah, they were providing a…Steve [Peter] Arnett, wasn't it, I think?

**Yeah.**

But he was certainly providing a very good coverage of what was happening and

25:00 all that stuff.

**With the Americans going in, how confident did they seem to you of success?**

They didn't underestimate the power of the Iraqis. And so, were they confident? I think they were confident and I think they were prepared to take fairly large casualties, especially in the marines,

25:30 in pursuit of what they believed they had to do. I think they were confident, at the same time they didn't underestimate the potential of the Iraqis. And I think even now, if you look back on the force, the strength of the force the Iraqis had at the time, you would say that it was a pretty significant force. They had a large air force there and some pretty good patrol boats and that,

26:00 had a lot of mines and a huge ground force. So you, they really could've, you know, caused it to be quite difficult, but, you know, you probably have to give a compliment I think to the way the Americans planned this. They, yeah, they got maximum intelligence, they planned it to the nth degree and thought about it, and certainly General Schwarzkopf, I think, did a great job. And, you know, he made the top hard

26:30 decisions which proved to be correct and didn't let, he didn't let individual service objectives or, get in the way of, he, a composite strategy. So, you know, I mean the marines would've said, 'We've gotta do that amphibious landing, 'cause we're marines.' He said, 'You don't have to do it, we'll do it this way.' And so his overall

27:00 collective strategy, I think, was very successful, and he pulled in the, you know, he reigned back in the individual service, the objectives that…and there's no rivalry there, but it was the individual service objectives that were there.

**At the beginning and so on, what was the actual mission statement of the war?**

It, what at, for, the initial

27:30 one was to see, you know, to just intercept, in Desert Shield, was to intercept the shipping and all that and see if we could get Iraq out, but in Desert Storm it was very much to secure Kuwait. And I suppose at the end of it a number of us thought, 'Oh well, gee, you know, we stopped too soon.' And, you know, I question it, at my level I question

28:00 whether, why they didn't continue on to Baghdad then, but you know, it was obviously, once again I think it was a presidential decision that they didn't go on. And, you know, President Bush at the time would've said very much that, you know, the objective had been achieved, it was the securing of Kuwait and removing Iraq from Kuwait, and, you know, he really didn't have the mandate to extend that to

28:30 Baghdad. In hindsight you may say, 'Well, gee, you know, it should've gone on,' but at that time, you know, he was, he probably made the right, or the ethically right decision. Whether, unfortunately probably it was a continuing problem there for a while, which had to be sorted out twelve years later, but…

**But going to Baghdad was never part of the actual initial objective, was it?**

No.

**So that would've been something that would've been tacked on at the end if they…?**

Yeah, yeah, it would've been.

29:00 It would've been. But, you know, when you had the Revolutionary [actually Republican] Guards and all that on the run like they did and they were, you know, they were in complete disarray, well then, do you go on and just continue the thing, rather than leaving a power there that potentially could cause problems in the future. Now that's really for the diplomats and politicians to sort out, not me, but

29:30 if we're fighting them, which we were in Kuwait, and so we were at war in Kuwait and that, then you wonder whether maybe, you don't leave the nucleus there that can resurrect itself, cause future problems. Now, you know, I don't know, and really that's politicians' thing but that's, you know, something a lot of people questioning at the time.

**But as an armed forces guy yourself,**

30:00 **do you think the Iraqis probably would've tried to defend their homeland more than they would've tried to defend Kuwait, do you think?**

Yeah, I, no, I think at that stage they were on the run. They'd lost most of their aircraft, you know, their land forces were withdrawing, and that. I, you know, I mean, I'm not a military strategist so I may

30:30 be wrong, but the initial impression to me was that they were in complete disarray. And so they were, they could not probably mount too much of a defence anyway, but I don't know, I could be wrong. And I'm not sure how many forces they had in reserve, if they kept many back in reserve, but certainly their communications and all that, their nodes of communication had all been disrupted and that, so…yeah, I don't know, but certainly

31:00 the initial, the objective of the coalition was Kuwait, and they did that very successfully.

**And after the first strike, and there wasn't really any retaliation on the ships, how hard is it to keep up morale and keep things going while the war's still continuing on the ground?**

Oh, it was just continually busy. And, continually busy, and you also still, although you may not have had any aggression

31:30 against you, you still prepare and react and make sure that you, you're absolutely ready for any offensive action that may come against you, so it wasn't, it was just very busy. And there was a couple of missiles fired to sea at one stage, Silkworm from memory, and a couple of other things. Now those were fired out there and,

32:00 and they, you know, I mean, so there was potential that could happen, it never did happen. But people were very busy in the operations and what they were doing, certainly on the, flags you. And, you know, you're probably at your weakest point after a couple of days where there's been nothing against you, because you may let your guard down then or you may say, 'Well, it's not gonna happen,' and it's weird. So the trick is

32:30 not to allow yourself to be, you know, deceived in to a false sense of security. And certainly I don't believe any of the ships were relaxed until it was absolutely certain that there wasn't gonna be an attack against her. You know, it could've been from anywhere, you know, from terrorists, from anything, you know, aircraft flying out over the Gulf. It could've been anything, it just didn't eventuate for one reason or another but, you know, the potential

33:00 was there.

**Speaking of the potential, were they looking out for suicide boats similar to what happened to the USS Cole and things like that, were they looking for that back then?**

Yeah, they were, they were looking for those small boats. They were, mines were a big threat that, and the, remember a couple of ships did get hit by mines up there, the Tripoli was one I, from memory, which, two mines I think, and there was, I think, another one. So the

33:30 mines were a huge threat and you didn't know where they were, they were obviously being released up in the Gulf and then, you know, the potential small boats coming out, etcetera, were real threats. And in fact one of the battleships reported that he had, he was chasing, with his escorts, he was chasing some small Iraqi boats down the coast and they disappeared into the coastline.

34:00 And they subsequently, I think, bombarded that part where they disappeared into. You know, so that threat was there, yeah, until they got a foothold, you know, the coalition got a foothold on it, on the islands and all that, that threat was certainly there.

**What was the protocol to deal with a boat coming at a ship and…?**

Oh well, I mean, it was, generally you try and

34:30 identify it and if you can't and, you know, if it's identified as an enemy, well then, you'll use whatever weapons are appropriate to stop it. Or you can use a helicopter, and British helicopters are pretty good because they had a very effective surface missile called Sea Skua, which they used very effectively against a couple of Iraqi boats, which I think the Minelow [?] was one of them. So they, you know, you can use that

35:00 or generally, you know, your guns on board and most of 'em have five inch or some calibre similar, which will, you can use. Or now, these days, they use a, the smaller gatling gun called Phalanx, which is very effective against these small craft, yeah.

**Do you know…?**

We had fifty cals which were, you know, the Australian Navy has fifty calibre machine guns, which are very effective

35:30 too, to put out. I mean, an old gun but very effective one and a very reliable one, yeah.

**Do you know if there were citizens of other countries that were fighting for Iraq at that time, or was it just Iraqis?**

I don't know. No, I don't know. I, no, no idea. I remember some peace activists who went in, I think, similar to what they did this war, but I think they all left beforehand. But

36:00 no, I'm not sure of, yeah.

**And for yourself, being part of such a large operation and so many ships in the Gulf at that time, can you describe that scene of all those ships and the power of, that was in that Gulf?**

Yeah, it was just, it was an amazing collection of, you know, of firepower, really. You had at least two

36:30 battleships there, they brought out all the battleship ammunition 'cause they were going to use it there,

and they were going to retire them when they went back. You had a lot of Aegis cruisers there which, well, not a lot they, they still needed the, our ships for air defence so, but there was, it's good air defence in the naval group. And then you had three carriers inside the

37:00 Gulf too which, with all their aircraft and then all the support ships, so. And the minesweepers and the amphibious task force and everything, so it was just huge, yeah, huge, an amazing collection of ships and firepower. And, you know, that, with that, I mean while it's impressive to look at, it is amazingly complex to co-ordinate,

37:30 and the fact that the Americans were able to do it without any friendly on friendly incidents was, I think, a great tribute to their professionalism at that level of operations. That you could co-ordinate all that and get it all done and do it very effectively without endangering, you know, your own friendly ships, is, I think, a great testimony

38:00 to their professionalism.

**Would it have been easy to run into another ship or accidentally shoot a missile into another ship, was it that dangerous, or how would you…?**

No, it's not that dangerous for the ships but, 'cause your ships, there wasn't any other warships out there, which were non-friendly, unless if, you know, the Iranians never came out and that, so there was nothing out there. And we knew Iraq had nothing of

38:30 that sophistication operating on that side, out of Kuwait or that, so there was nothing there that they could do. But it, very, very easily, easy to do for aircraft, because in the confusion of the moment and so many aircraft in the air and that, to put one, you know, one Iraqi to get below or in that kind of merged picture of all those aircraft is very easy. So

39:00 you know, that was really the great success story, I think, of deconfliction of all those air tracks and everyone was friendly and making sure they were. And any they couldn't visually, any they couldn't identify by electronic means, or that, they sent, they had aircraft there, I think eight aircraft in the air at all times, which'd go and visually ID [identify] the aircraft to make sure it was friendly. So, you know, they had layer upon layer of checks and balances and it turned

39:30 out to be extremely successful. If the Iraqis had've flown more, well then, would it have been as successful? I think yeah, I think they built the regime which would've made its success, yeah, irrespective of what the Iraqis did, so…

**And how different, or how would you compare training and the big training exercise that you did to the real thing?**

Well, it, the training should always prepare you for the real thing, but it

40:00 can never prepare you for the actual sense of, 'this is for real.' And, you know, leading up to that there was huge standing force against us and all that so, you know, you always go through the motions of, you know, 'How do I minimise the risk to myself?' and, you know, I mean to the ship and all that, but also, you know, 'What is the worst case?' And so the

40:30 exercises, you know, prepare you to, up to the level they can, and then you have to go into a professional level and you have to really, you know, make sure you've counted every threat and every possibility and every risk that is there. But you always go through the, your, mentally you go through, you know. What is the worst outcome? The worst outcome is something bad does happen. And so I think, certainly I wasn't, I was one of many, I think, that wrote

41:00 kind of, letters and that if there was a thing, and I, those letters were written to each of my children and my wife. And then you think about, you know, I mean you put them somewhere safe, so I had them back with a fellow called Boyd Robertson back in Muscat and he held them for me and that. And I'm sure most people would've done that.

**Were they hard to write?**

Oh yeah, pretty hard, yeah. But not,

41:30 for the risk to yourself, you know, the risk to yourself is something you can actually deal with, well, I think you can deal with pretty easily, but it's for the, kind of the not wanting to cause pain to people you love.

**Okay, that's just the end of the tape right there.**

# Tape 7

00:32 **At a, on a personal level, dealing with the Americans yourself so closely, how did that end up, did you end up becoming good friends with some or most, or how did they react to you personally?**

Yeah, I found it very easy to make good friendships with the Americans and so I've retained some of those friends right throughout.

01:00 Yeah, and I mean, very common, I think, you know, very common kind of cultures really and that, and Australia militarily deals quite closely with US and has done for a long time, so. It, yeah, they're friendships I cherish, I've made, you know, from the mate who came out here on the Australian College of Defence and Strategic Studies and

01:30 was the captain of Louisville and we've retained contact right through, Frank Stewart and his family and a number of others. So yeah I, you know, they're, yeah, they're lasting friendships which you look back on with a certain amount of joy and, you know, satisfaction I think, yeah.

**Did you find that other Australians who had been before you and working with Americans and so on**

02:00 **had left a good impression in the jobs they had done?**

Well, I was the first one in the Gulf War, so there wasn't one before me, it was the job established for the immediate situation. But I was relieved by Les Pataki, who currently is in Washington but, and Les would've done a very good job. And sure, with the other job in 3rd Fleet, yeah, I

02:30 find the Americans are quite pragmatic, in that they don't really have any expectation before you arrive and they really, my feeling is, they really sum you up and that. And if they're prepared to accept whatever level of engagement and what level, whatever level of participation you wanna have, so. And, I mean, if you

03:00 are really keen and enthusiastic they'll keep on giving you responsibility, and that. If, as I've heard about some jobs, where people have treated more or less their overseas posting and, you know, they're there to enjoy the country and all that, well, Americans will lay off and treat them, you know, respect that too, I suppose. So to a large extent it's really up to you what you make of the job and how they, how they treat you.

03:30 They will treat you and give you the responsibility you want, according to how you conduct yourself, I suppose, yeah, so…

**And your time in the Gulf, how did that end up?**

I was, after the start of Desert Storm and that, we were doing that, and then the Australians decided that I was going to be rotated after six months so, and I

04:00 said I was more than happy to stay on. But I think my successor, Les, was more than happy and quite keen to relieve me anyway, and he was putting some pressure on the other side, so…And so Les flew up, and at that time it was a bit difficult to get into the Gulf so he took a while getting into Bahrain. But eventually we met up or communicated, and Les then flew out to Blue Ridge and we got him

04:30 established, and then I left. And I left through Bahrain, went down to Muscat and did my, you know, Oman, and did my out-chop with the Australian, where they'd set up the Australian office and support office from. And then left through there and went, flew out, commercially I think, through Singapore and then home, stopped overnight in Singapore for a couple of chilli crabs and a beer and then I was home, yeah.

05:00 Yeah.

**And what was the reception like when you got home?**

Oh, great, you know, I mean it was good. I think, you know, family always probably fear that there's danger, and there was danger. And at that time it was a bit nasty because, I think, a bit stupid, but some of the families who purported to represent all the families, claimed, and I was only aware of this later on,

05:30 but they claimed that the servicemen, and the families in particular, weren't being treated well. Now my wife and family weren't part of that, but it was a vocal few who were making…I, unfortunately they were getting a lot of publicity for, which was anti-government and anti-navy, and they were getting a lot of publicity,

06:00 undeservedly I think. And so that, my wife and family just stayed completely separate from that, but unfortunately that, there was stupid publicity of, which really didn't, I think was stupid in that it really detracted from what was going on. And there was better ways, if support was really needed in some area, there was better ways of achieving that support than

06:30 by going to the press and just embarrassing everyone, and detracting from the main effort of the good work that people were doing overseas, yeah. So anyway, that was going on, but you know, I mean, when I got back I was really glad to be back with the family and that. The kids were, yeah, they were still fairly young then so, you know, so it was a great time to be back with the family and that, and I went back to the Jindalee project and, for a while, and

07:00 yeah, that was still flowing along well. And Captain Shackleton and I, yeah, worked pretty successfully together at that time, and then I left the Jindalee project on, to go in command of HMAS Brisbane, which was a great honour and surprise, I suppose. I, Shackleton had left the

07:30 Jindalee project to go on and command Brisbane, so I actually relieved him in command of Brisbane at the end of '92. And I'd always loved Brisbane because I'd been a warfare officer on it and, you know, the guided missile destroyers are fantastic ships. So I did my commanding officer designate course, which took about six months and then from there I, from there I proceeded on board, and relieved him

08:00 in December of '92 from memory. And it was just a great honour because, you know, the ship, three hundred and thirty men, they were fast, they were the last of the high-powered, high-steam, you know, or high pressured steam turbines and superheated steam, you know, a thousand degrees and twelve hundred psi steam. So they were very, they were dangerous ships if you didn't maintain them properly, but

08:30 at the same time they were just tremendous ships, very responsive, very tough, very fast. Two five-inch guns, guided missile on board with the SM-1, and a good ASW capability too, so. And Brisbane was the one that really had, really been, served with distinction in Vietnam, and also in the Gulf War. So she had a great

09:00 history behind her and so yeah, it was tremendous, and I really enjoyed Brisbane and my three years there.

**Just to go back slightly, when you got back from Iraq and the welcome and so on, what was the level of protesters and all the outside things in the community in general? Was that happening, or what was your take on what was going on?**

I didn't

09:30 see any, I wasn't aware, that I can remember, I wasn't aware of any great protest movement against the Gulf War. I think it was a response to blatant aggression into Kuwait, and I don't think many people could construe that to be anything other than what it was. You know, the Kuwaitis had suffered a fair bit, and I think it was, you know, the world was right to, or the nations

10:00 that did respond were right to do it. And so, you know, sure, people can argue that it was oil and everything behind it and that, irrespective, a lot of people were killed and the Kuwaitis deserved to get their freedom back, which is what they were given back. So I wasn't aware of any great resistance when I came back, there may have been but I wasn't aware of it. From my perspective I think the country was, the country had learned from

10:30 Vietnam and it, I think we felt embarrassed at the way we treated our troops coming out of Vietnam. So I think people were, I think the politicians in particular and the papers and the press and that were not going to allow that mistake to happen again, and to confuse the politics with the people, which'd happened in Vietnam. The people loyally served but, you know, people

11:00 blamed the, well, you know, there was a number in Australia who were prepared to blame the troops for what they believe was the wrong national policy, and that's just wrong. You know, troops will loyally serve the government of the day, that's democracy. So when we came back, I think people were quite prepared for that, and so there was a great movement to recognise the service. And also, I think also the Vietnam

11:30 veterans were there too, and I was aware of their presence in that they were in the RSLs [Returned Services Leagues] and that, making sure that the reception was different. So I think all those things mounted up to, you know, kind of a national reception, which was, I think, you know, made you feel welcome. You were back, there was a march back through Sydney where all the ships got back and, you know, it was a long march

12:00 down through Sydney, which was great. And then we, yeah, and so there was that, and then also, I think, I can't remember when, but after I got back I was recognised in the Queen's Birthday honours, I think, with the Conspicuous Service Cross for the Gulf War time. So that was also a great honour and, you know, they had the Governor General,

12:30 who was Bill Hayden at the time, present that to me with…it was a great honour.

**How important do you think that warm return was, that warm welcome back?**

I think, yeah, I think it's very important. Yeah, I think it's very important because, you know, the servicemen don't, as, don't really expect much but they've got to believe that the country is

13:00 behind them. And they've got to believe that they have the support of the country and the people, and the people believe they're doing the right thing. So, you know, the welcome march, per se, was probably not required, except it was a very obvious indication of the support of the nation, and I think that meant a lot. So, you know, and the politicians and the, you know,

13:30 military leaders and all that made, they went out of their way to make sure that people were aware of their thanks, you know. So, and I think the press was good too, so for all those reasons I think, you

know, the actual ceremony wasn't that important, except it signified something that was very important.

**And then you moved on to take command of Brisbane and…?**

Yeah Brisbane, yeah, which was…

**What was it**

14:00 **like to get your first command?**

Oh, it's very, it's overwhelming to a certain extent, because you realise for the first time, I think, in your life that you've got, you're fully responsible and you have no-one really checking you. So that you are aware of the ultimate responsibility of all those people who

14:30 were living on board, who are working on board, who had this, to a certain extent, blind faith, initially anyway, that you were competent. And I think that's, you know, that's, if you really think about it, that's quite overwhelming because, you know, you really have to come up to their expectations, or their lives and that may be in danger. So it is a tremendous

15:00 honour but also a huge responsibility, and you have to make sure that not only are you a good leader but, you know, you really know everything that you possibly can, or you know how to prevent and reduce the risk at all times. And I suppose that's what it's about, because otherwise people will get killed. And I used to always say that everyone on board from the people, officer under training, which I used to be, to the most junior, the junior sailors, everyone can make a mistake.

15:30 The only one who can't, and the time it becomes really dangerous, is when the captain does. And I mean, so therefore, you know, I was very aware of that. So, you know, and I think, I wasn't very forgiving of people who made the same mistake twice, but the first time I always, I mean it was never an issue, but my real concern was having, that I was good enough to

16:00 make sure that I didn't make the same mistake they were. And I, you know, and luckily I didn't, I never had anyone…oh, there was one maintenance accident on board where a fellow badly injured himself, but that was really screwing in a TV, you know, and anchoring it for sea and that, and the screwdriver slipped and that badly injured him. But generally, otherwise I don't think, in either of my commands,

16:30 there was any, ever a, no, there was never any bad or dangerous injuries or deaths or suicides. So, you know, I put a lot of work into that, and I think leadership's also vitally important, you know. People, your people have to have a, you know, have to want you to lead them, I think, especially in wartime where you need to have that, the trust of people that you can actually lead them in

17:00 to do what military career requires and then have the best risk of survive, you know, the best chance of survival, so…

**When you take command of a ship and become captain and so on, do you sort of have to put on a, not put on, but become a persona that enables you to lead all the sailors and so on, or…? Do you have to sort of take on a role?**

No, I don't, no,

17:30 I never really aspired, I never really thought you had to change yourself. The navy obviously thought you were good enough, and you know, some people can role play for a long time, but in the end they come undone. You know, the navy's got to select you for what it thinks are the right qualities to command, and I think if you do take

18:00 on a persona then you're not being sincere with the crew. And I think the main thing is to be yourself, but also make sure you're competent, and you never stop driving yourself to achieve the best possible outcome that you can, because otherwise, once again, you may involve more risks than what you want. So, you know, I mean, I generally, I'm pretty

18:30 tough, I will demand high standards of people, and I did. And I drove the ships, I drove both ships to the standard that I wanted, because I used to always argue, not argue, but I used to tell the crew that ultimately we're practising for war, and so we better be the best we are or else we mightn't have the outcome that we want. And you know, that's a function of

19:00 warship, we weren't driving a commercial ship or a tanker or something, we were in a warship, so I used to demand very high standards. At the same time I really enjoyed getting around and meeting the crew and knowing the crew, and also understanding what was, what were their issues, and making sure you could remove them and really feeling for the crew. Irrespective of,

19:30 you know, what the issue was, you know, making sure you're there to help them. And, you know, I used to say to all of 'em, 'If one of us hurts, well then, we all hurt, and so, because if one, someone's got a problem, well then, they're not as effective as they would be, and so therefore they then, someone has to cover for them and you find that the whole performance of the whole crew goes down.' So you've really got to make sure that everyone, you know everyone, you know the issues, you make sure

20:00 you're helping them if they need help. And there are a lot of personal issues, especially when these kids

are young, you know, the average age of Brisbane was about twenty, twenty-one. And, you know, you're going through a lot of personal relationships at that time, you know, and, you know, sorting out, and it's difficult to leave your girlfriends and all that ashore, and all that. So you gotta realise, you know, and there's some family pressures and obviously parents who are sick and all that, all those things we used to, had to be in

20:30 tune with. And I used to make sure the divisional officers and chiefs and all that, I went around and knew their people, because you've got to be there in the system, provide the assistance, you know, or else it's a very lonely life for these kids at sea, yeah, very lonely life.

**Did you have women on board Brisbane?**

No, not on Brisbane . No, Brisbane was all male, it was very, would've been extremely hard to modify the accommodation

21:00 to provide the segregation or, you know, the separate accommodation that is required. So the decision was taken that guided missile destroyers wouldn't be changed, and so Perth, Hobart and Brisbane weren't modified, so had three hundred and thirty men on board, you know, differing ages and ranks and personal circumstances and all that.

**And when, as captain, you go into port and, do you worry about what the guys get up to on R&R [Rest and Recreation]**

21:30 **and so on, or what role do you take in that?**

Oh, you do worry. I mean, I, once again I used to say to the crew that, 'Three hundred and twenty, three hundred and thirty of us can work to build the reputation of what the ship stood for and what we stood for, it only takes one person to bring that whole reputation down.' And so I used to always, monotonously used to say that every time we came in to port, that it was important that we

22:00 all had a good time and, you know, and they work so hard at sea that generally people are tired, they will go into port and they will probably drink too much. And there's, you know, while you prefer they didn't drink too much, there's nothing wrong with that, the only problem is when they actually start intruding on other people's lives and causing a nuisance or something like that. And you know, I was never let down by

22:30 the crew. I think the crew were extremely responsible and, you know, as long as you reason with them and said, you know, 'This is what we wanna do and this is why,' and, you know, 'go and have a good time,' you know, 'enjoy the place, see the place.' You know, 'If you're going to have a couple of beers, go and have it,' and that, 'just don't bring dishonour to yourself or the ship or the crew.' And I used to treat it that way, if there was dishonour to ship, crew or that, anyway, we all

23:00 shared some of that dishonour. But I would very much look on that, you know, when it came back on board, and if I had to deal with it I'd deal with it. But everyone knew my rules were, you know, have a great time, enjoy yourself, let your hair down, whatever, but don't do anything to dishonour the crew or yourself, you know, or the ship, good name of Brisbane. I mean, Brisbane had had a huge name back from the '60s when it first started operating in

23:30 Vietnam, so it was a very proud ship, you know.

**Do you think sometimes the general public don't fully understand what it's like for sailors to be on a ship for months at a time, twenty-four hours a day, and then getting in to port, do you think they fully understand?**

Yeah, they don't understand, it's hard to understand, you know. I mean, you see these ships that go away and people have this kind of idyllic kind of notion that, you know, you go away and I don't know what they think we

24:00 do when, but you go away and you sail to all these exotic ports and all that. So at first glance it would appear as though you're being paid for something that's quite pleasurable, and in that extent they don't. But, you know, I mean those who come on board and we used to, certainly in my command I used to, or both commands, I used to make a real effort of getting the parents and the

24:30 wives, not the, well, no, you couldn't do the wives, you could only do the wives for day trips was the navy's rule, and that. But you could have father and son overnight cruises or, you know, you could bring, take them from Mackay down to Sydney or something and so, you know, they were kind of spouse trips where you could identify. And they were, or you'd have daytrips

25:00 where you went out and took the families out, and they really did then appreciate how hard you worked and that, in, but it was a rare opportunity for people to appreciate that. I mean, the living conditions on board Brisbane for the junior sailors was, it was about eighty to a hundred in a mess deck, which wasn't much bigger than this room, you know, so yeah. And they used to, you know, they, three high,

25:30 they were just stacked in bunks and little kind of passageway in between and that, you know, and very much the showers and that, you know, were all there in one space, so showers and toilets and that. So it was very cramped conditions, you know, there was nothing luxurious about it. The officers were in two

four-berth cabins and that, so there was no great luxury

26:00 about it, but I mean, those ships were, you know, great ships. But no, the public doesn't appreciate that side of naval life. I mean, the other thing is the long periods you spend at sea, I mean, even though you may be going to Honolulu or something, you'll only be there for four or five days and, you know, maybe three days. And generally the first day is cleaning the ship and sorting out the defects, the engineers in particular were particularly hard, trying to fuel the ship, fix the defects and that before

26:30 you go to sea again. The crew are all around fixing the defects, you know, cleaning the ship and re-storing the ship and all that, so the first day's generally gone. And then for the officers they'll normally have to have a reception that night in port, and they, you know, it's not something they actually volunteer for but it's a national task of representation, because there would be a lot of Australians and dignitaries ashore who like to come down

27:00 to the ship. And so there'll be what they call a cocktail party, which is really a reception where, you know, you meet all those people who are either supporting or friends of Australia or, you know, the local diplomats and that, so they'll all come down. So the officers' first day is generally tied up with all the other stuff and then, and that. And then second day you'll have one in, the crew will be in, one in four probably, so the next day a full quarter of the crew'll be on

27:30 board, and so, in the duty watch in case there's an emergency or continuing the maintenance or that. And then, so the others will work probably a half a day or something, depending on the requirements, so they don't get that much time off. And even when you're in port and, you know, may get one or two days off, but knowing that they're going to stand at a full day of duty anyway, in port and that. So it's, you know, but that's something not

28:00 too many people appreciate, that. Not only the long periods at sea in pretty cramped conditions, but also in port you're still working pretty hard, it's not like a cruise liner where you get off and go and see the sights and do a bit of shopping, yeah.

**And eighty guys, this is a fairly good size room, but still, eighty guys in here. Is there much friction that develops between them, or how do they get on?**

No, I don't think they can allow the friction to develop because then they'd, it'd be unpleasant for

28:30 everyone. They sort themselves out, and not sort themselves out physically or anything like that, I mean, I don't mean fights, but I, there's nothing like that, but they just generally know they've got to get on, and they do. And they all, you know, the ones who don't really care about the others and make life un, difficult, whether it's, you know, how they're living or you know, just their

29:00 tidiness or that, generally the, you know, the group will say, you know, 'You've gotta clean up your act.' Because everyone has to have their, doesn't need to have the inconvenience of someone else who's just messing it up for everyone else, so generally I found the mess decks all run pretty well. Each of the mess decks had a leading hand in charge, for the able seamen anyway and that, you'd always have someone in charge, and that person had the responsibility of that mess deck. And, you know, they would use their rank

29:30 and their position to ensure that it, it was, you know, ran, and it was inspected every night to make sure it was all squared away, tidy and cleaned and that. And the XO does the rounds through the whole ship to make sure the ship is in proper condition as a naval warship, so you know, all the bathrooms and toilets and all that've been cleaned right through, passageways cleaned, everything, mess decks are all clean and that. So, you know, it's run at a military fashion, much the same

30:00 as we did at the college, we used to be inspected in our cabins at the naval college, you know, and made sure our bed was neat and tidy, everything was stowed. I remember the socks all had to be folded a certain way with what they call the smiley face rather than the sour face, and they all had to be in a row and had the smiley faces going down and that. And, you know, that was preparing you for what was essential at sea, if you didn't live that way, well then, you really would be mucking it up for everyone else.

30:30 **And after Brisbane, how did you become involved in Bougainville?**

Well, I, it was, I, from Brisbane after, and Brisbane really, you know, was a great command, I was there for three years and then I left to, I was selected to go to the Australian College of Defence and Strategic Studies for the first year. And they set up a senior college there for senior

31:00 captains and one-stars [an Americanism – Australian rank insignia do not include stars], you know, commodores and brigadiers and air commodores, so I was selected to go to the very first year, except the navy fudged it a bit. And it was treated by the other services, and I suppose by navy too, as the senior staff course at that time. So un…my problem was I was still a commander, and

31:30 I'd been selected for captain, but they, you know, said, 'Well, you're going to the college.' And I said, 'Well, that's great, I'm not even a captain yet.' 'Don't worry about that, we'll fix it.' So I, they gave me acting rank to go to the college, and then I was in amongst very senior guys from other services, and that, and from the navy, and the commandant was

32:00 a retired Chief of Air Force who, Ray Finnell. And Ray, in his very first premier year of this college starting off, wanted everything to go right, except he only found out after I joined that I was, I wasn't even a substantive captain, I was an acting captain, and so he was a bit annoyed with me and the navy for quite a while.

32:30 But for one reason or another we then got on, and Ray and Susan, his wife, are good friends of ours, and that. And, but I enjoyed that year immensely, and especially with the quality of people who were there. I suppose that's the thing about all the naval postings, whether you're in command or you're not, you remember the people, the people are high-quality people and you make good friends, and you're impressed by the people. And

33:00 it was no different on that course where, which went for a year and had the best lecturers from all around the world, and it really did challenge you intellectually, I think, and you needed that at that level, you know, it was just a great year to be able to enjoy and think about, you know, the international relations and, you know, how other countries interact with each other, and the economics of the region and a number of other things. And you had some great

33:30 visits and that too, to China was one, which was extremely interesting. And it was a high powered course, so we were received wherever we went, you know, it was a lot of organisation went into it. So we did that year, and then at the end of that year I wasn't sure what the navy was going to do with me, and I received the letter in green ink, 'cause only the Chief of Navy who can write in green ink in the

34:00 navy, so, and it said I've been selected for commander of Success. So, and Success is the twenty-thousand ton tanker and supply and logistics ship and that had a mixed crew, different to Brisbane, and it had two hundred and thirty crew on board. But I was posted in command of Success, which was a great honour once again, totally different, it was, I was

34:30 captain then so it was also a different level of responsibility, I suppose, and that and a very interesting ship to command. And I suppose, I think in comparison Success was a more normal working environment, I suppose. I was used to an all male environment, but very much a mixed crew, I think, was a more normal working environment. And let's face it, in office blocks and

35:00 all other universities and all around Australia, it's, we don't segregate, it, we are used to a mixed environment, excuse me, so very much on Success, I think, it was a very normal working environment. And probably a, I think, the crew were different in that they probably didn't

35:30 really go ashore, they went ashore but it was as kind of a crew, so it was kind of like they were just going to a restaurant or something, which was more normal. Whereas on Brisbane, I think, we probably all used to hit the pubs and have a couple of beers, as guys do. Whereas on Success, it was, you know, it was probably more normal that way. I found it

36:00 was a, it's a very normal working environment and that, and the crew were great. And so that was a different ship, different operations and all that, and as part of that I was on board and we, once again, there seems to be a tendency of mine to get short noticings, where Bougainville sprung up. And we'd done a number of other things, we'd just got back from RIMPAC

36:30 and it was a very busy year and I got a ring from the admiral saying, 'Bougainville, we need to provide support to Bougainville, can you get the ship ready?' And I said, 'Yeah, I mean we're in pretty good shape,' Success was running well and that, but I was worried about the crew, and it was in December and we'd been given less than a week to go. And we knew we were going probably over Christmas, for a couple of months, so it was a hard thing to sell the crew, and it was a real disappointment

37:00 to the families, so I felt that very bad. But at the same time it was a pretty important job we were going to do and it was to support the operations up there and people up there already. So we did, we went and I had to convince the crew that it was a good thing, and the crew was excellent. And you know, I had a very good crew, and crew, my executive officer, Andy Birch, was probably the

37:30 best XO I've seen, and he really was in tune with the crew and ran that ship, you know, as an XO very well. So we all worked together to make sure the crew understood and families understood, and we supported the families back home over Christmas and all that. And we sailed and went up to Bougainville.

**And what was the situation in Bougainville that required your service?**

We were really

38:00 providing an escape for the troops. The New Zealanders and Australians were ashore, and they'd been flown in, generally. And, but no-one knew how it was gonna turn out and, you know, it was the early days of the peace group and the New Zealanders, from memory, had command of the group ashore. And so they were controlling

38:30 the group ashore and the Australians were in support, and then later on it rotated and Australians took command of it and New Zealanders were in support. And so we embarked, Success normally carried one helicopter, which was a seeking, we embarked a second helicopter, which is not normal for Success, and so we always had two helicopters on board, but had to keep one on the flight deck at all times and one in the hangar, and, but we had

39:00 capability of launching two. And we were the escape route, if things got really bad then people could be taken off very quickly, and we had the medical facilities and all that, we had a very competent Dr Aileen on board and a dentist on board, and that, and so we were there and we were responding. But generally we were over the horizon 'cause there was a, you know, a certain limitation on the number of

39:30 people who were allowed to be ashore and on Bougainville. So the navy didn't want to infringe that, so we didn't go ashore, we remained at sea, we had plenty of fuel and that, that was never a problem, we remained at sea for a couple of months, for the two months, over the horizon. So the XO and I made a pact that, you know, we had to enjoy it too and we were going to make sure the crew enjoyed it. So we did everything from

40:00 having, you know, boat competitions to swimming competitions to fishing competitions to a number of things. And also we rigged up a, so we could get satellite TV and get the, you know, the different feeds in and that. But still, you know, and Christmas Day was fantastic and all that, as much as it could be, but you know I'd, I was very aware that the crew were giving up a lot and that. But, you know, we did,

40:30 we made of the most of it and that's what we always said, as a crew we made the best of the situation that was presented to us. So I remember, you know, the, certainly we had carols by candlelight and a million other things, and it all, I think the crew had the best time they possibly could while at sea and doing what was a very important role. 'Cause Bougainville, let's face it, it's turned out as a real success story, just as much as Timor. Yeah.

41:00 **Okay, we'll just stop there.**

# Tape 8

00:32 **Alright, so basically your presence in Bougainville was that of a contingency. What sort of, you know, hazards were potential, sort of, hazards expected?**

I suppose the most obvious and prominent hazard was that the process that

01:00 the Australians, New Zealanders and that were trying to put in place to get the peace process going was rejected by the population, and in particular it was a number of factions, and factions rejected that. And there was hostilities, then you could have a lot of bloodshed, very quickly, because the rules were for the, for those land,

01:30 for those, the people on the land, was that they would not be armed, as a demonstration of their faith and the process and what they were trying to achieve. But there was still a lot of arms on Bougainville, and the arms went right back to the Second World War, I mean, that was a island of intense fighting during the Second World War. And, you know, the Japanese had a major base there and that, and so it was a lot of fighting and a lot of weapons

02:00 left in the jungle, which had been at some time, a lot of them had been resurrected, found, and all that. So the, you know, the, we knew those weapons were there, and I suppose that's no different to the Solomons, you know, which subsequently has become problematic and that, to a certain extent. And so, you know, that was the main threat, how did, to respond quickly, to get people off, get them to safety,

02:30 if that was the case, or in fact to provide assistance if you could. But I, generally it was to provide an escape route for people, and support in a limited fashion, I mean, logistically and that, if required.

**What was the size of the force of, you know, of Australian, New Zealand troops entering Bougainville?**

Oh, look,

03:00 I think there was, from memory, I think there was a couple of hundred. There wasn't too many, I think it was two or three hundred there. And, but we, you know, we were there to support them and generally, you know, so they didn't feel that they were completely isolated and, you know, they did a very good job, obviously, because it never came unstuck in, they achieved what they went there to do. There was a New Zealand ship there for a while

03:30 too, which was Endeavour, it was driven by a, interestingly a year mate of mine from the Naval Academy, from New Zealand, so he was the captain of that. And he, his rules were a bit different, he was actually tied up most of the time in Loloho I think it was, which was the port for the big mine before that was blown up and really, you know, destroyed a fair bit, as

04:00 was the mine. So the, he was alongside there a lot, whereas we continued steaming just off the horizon there, up and down, yeah.

**Was that the only, I mean, sorry, you would've actually had some times when you'd have gone ashore as well?**

Only went ashore initially for, we went ashore for the, you only went ashore for

04:30 first couple of times, which was to really get the lay of the ground and what was the thing. The helicopter went in ashore more to establish landing points, if it had to go in, in emergency, and especially landing points at night, if it was an emergency. So we, 'cause Endeavour didn't carry a helicopter, so we had the helicopters, and I had two Sea Kings, which is unusual for Success. So I only went there, and then the maritime

05:00 commander decided that no one should go ashore there because of the number of people on Bougainville and what the government expectation was in the number of Australians ashore. So we generally didn't go ashore after that, and remained at sea, except for the missions that the helicopter had to fly. And it would go in and get mail or provide some logistic support or whatever, and that was basically it.

05:30 We used to, you know, we used to do a lot of things to occupy ourselves, because we said that we were going to have the best time we possibly can out of this, especially over Christmas, New Year, and we did, we did everything. There's a number of activities that you can do which really distract, I suppose, your thoughts from your family and that, especially over Christmas and, you know, so we wanted to

06:00 enjoy it. And, you know, there was model boat, everyone had to make model boats and that and see how, which was the winner of those, and there's some fantastic designs that came out with little sails and that. There was certainly a swimming competition and that and, you know, there was a number of other fishing competitions and all that which happened on board. Games nights which happened on board and all that so, you know, we generally,

06:30 we still enjoyed ourselves to the maximum while always being prepared for the worst possible situation, which would require our assistance, yeah. Yeah, you know, that worked very well, I think. I mean, certainly the Australians ashore did a tremendous job, because they achieved everything, Australians and New Zealanders and that, achieved everything that was required, and set the process in motion to a point where

07:00 it's been very successful, I believe.

**So what sort of lessons do you think the navy learned from the Bougainville experience?**

Oh, I don't think there was any great lessons for the navy. I think it worked well, we were relieved by Tobruk after a couple of months and Tobruk came up and, you know, she took over and did the role, I, realistically, I don't think there's any great lessons

07:30 out of it. It worked well, logistically and every other way, and we carried the right amount of logistics, the fuel that we required and we supported the LCMs [Landing Craft, Mechanised] that were up there that the army were using and a number of other things that were required. And we got, you know, we provided medical treatment when it was required and all that stuff, so no, it all worked very well. Yeah.

08:00 **Yeah, actually it must've been a good sort of experience before the East Timor operation as well?**

Yeah. I think so, although Timor was different in that, you know, that was probably, you could do the Bougainville thing unarmed, you couldn't do the Timor thing unarmed, I don't think. So, and it was a bit more complex, Timor and that. Bougainville had had some, obviously gone through some bad times and the factions were, you know,

08:30 fighting against each other and also against the New Guinea, you know, Papua New Guinea government and troops. But it all calmed down and it all went pretty well. And I would hope one day they, I mean, there's huge natural resources on Bougainville, and the copper mine and that, and I hope that one day they can start restoring that wealth and, you know, that, what was,

09:00 you know, just to go there, just to appreciate the size of the operation that must've been there. It must've been unbelievable, the Bougainville mine, the Bougainville copper and the size of the port and the, how important the infrastructure they had there, it was unbelievable. And most of it was all trashed, unfortunately, damaged, blown up, you know, trucks and everything driven off the end of the wharf into the water and tractors and all that. And I never went up to the mine, but I understand

09:30 the mine was in a pretty bad state too. So I hope one day they can get that going again for the good of the people, you know, the, it's always the innocent people in these conflicts that suffer. A lot of people with different agendas who run around, they try and achieve their agenda but unfortunately they injure, hurt and forget the rights and, you know, the right to live a peaceful life of a lot of the innocent people who are below them. So

10:00 from that perspective I hope Bougainville does get back and get on track because I think it'd be, you know, the natural resources would really improve the life of the people on board.

**Did you, on your shore leave, by any chance come across or interact with BRA [Bougainville Revolutionary Army] people, the local...?**

No, I didn't. No, because we remained off the coast and so that was really the

10:30 job of the contingent who was ashore, yeah. But an amazing island, and especially seeing all the cane toads too, I mean, just thousands of 'em, and…

**Cane toads?**

Mmm.

**They also have cane toads?**

Oh yeah, there's thousands of 'em. I think, I don't know whether, but they're obviously a very close relation to the one we've got in Australia. They may've come from there, I'm not sure where they were brought from but they, gee, there's a lot of 'em,

11:00 you know, really in plague proportions.

**Huge lot, are there?**

Yeah, plague proportions, on the roads and especially in the evening. So, but you know, very dense vegetation and everything, and you can see why it was probably quite a prize possession in the Second World War. I think, you know, obviously the Japanese probably had big intentions for Bougainville and that, so it was, yeah, and the infrastructure. But a friend of mine who I went to school with

11:30 right back at the start, he actually worked for Bougainville Copper there and had a contract. And he told me, you know, we used to discuss what I saw and what he saw and he said it was just a phenomenal island where the company had built up all the infrastructure. And they'd built up, you know, I mean, all the people who were working there had a community which was lively and life was fairly enjoyable there and a very successful mine and that.

12:00 But when I went there all these houses that they'd lived in and the mine and the infrastructure was all destroyed and, you know, they were just burned to the ground. Generally, even the church where I went for, to the Catholic church on the Sunday, it'd been, obviously been a big fire in the corner and someone had tried to set fire, and I think the local population must've really fought hard to save the church. So, you know, you get an indication of what it was in a past

12:30 life, and then what had happened to it. Excuse me.

**What happened to you after Bougainville?**

Oh, Bougainville, I came back on Success and, you know, I mean, Success had a pretty busy program for the, you know, years I was in command. And then we completed and we did a RIMPAC and that, in that time,

13:00 and a very full year that next year. And at the end of that year I was relieved in command and selected for command of HMAS Watson at Watson's Bay which is on, entering Sydney, and once again a different posting, a challenging posting in its own right. I was the, not only the commanding officer of Watson but also the Lead Authority

13:30 Maritime Warfare, which is responsible for all warfare training and operational training across Australia. So responsibilities from, everything from fire fighting training at three different fire fighting units across Australia to clearance diving, to hydrography training to principal warfare officer training and that, so, and all the sailor training too for the operation

14:00 specialisation. So it was a big job and a very interesting job and one where you can apply a lot of what you've gained over the previous years to put back in to try and improve the process. Also enjoyable, cause we lived, the married quarter was on board Watson and there was a captain's house there which was very enjoyable and my family moved

14:30 up. And my daughter, Amanda, went to Rose Bay-Kincoppal which, for her last, you know, it was a bit dangerous moving the family because my daughter was in one school system down here and then to take her into year eleven and twelve up in Sydney, into an HSC [Higher Schools Certificate] system, but the school was a great school and that. And my son went, Andrew went to the Christian Brothers

15:00 at Waverley and he did years eight and nine there. So it worked out very well and it was a great place to live, just an unbelievable place to live in there in the Watson's Bay community and, you know, and it's a very lovely part of Sydney too. So, and the base is steeped in history, you know, it can trace its history right back to in the very first days of

15:30 settlement. Because, you know, once the First Fleet moved from Botany Bay up to Sydney they established, just about right throughout it, established a military presence on South Head, for one reason or another. And the fortifications were quite huge and the old gun emplacements and the sandstone emplacements and the cannons and the tunnels and all that. And way before electricity, so all built in the cliff side and all that, so it

16:00 was quite a historical base as well as a very, well it's probably most important base for the navy because of the training it undertakes. Yeah.

**Is it one of the largest bases as well?**

Yeah, it's got a lot of personnel. I don't think, I think Cerberus is the largest base but, down in Victoria, but certainly it is one of the largest and the, you know, the amount of people under training there

16:30 and that are quite substantial. And it's great, once again, you know, to get back to kind of the, you know, the initial stages of training and that, and be connected with those various levels of training from navigation training right through to warfare training and all that stuff, and so it was a very interesting time, yeah. But I was supposed to be in

17:00 command there and there for two years but the, after about twelve months I was then selected for promotion to commodore. And so the navy asked me if I would take the promotion and go to, return to Canberra to be the Director General of Maritime Development, which was responsible for all the operational requirements of the future capabilities,

17:30 so the new ships and all that. It was defining what you wanted from those ships and getting government to accept that and getting those projects to a point of approval with government, so that you can actually, and the funding in place, so that you could establish those new projects. So the ships that are coming now were all projects I was working on when I was Director General of Maritime Development. So in about January or February of,

18:00 I think, 2000, I left and came up to, came back to Canberra and left my family in Sydney to complete, especially for my daughter to complete year twelve, or else it would've been disastrous for her to have come back to Canberra schooling at that stage. So, and we did that and then the family joined me at the end of that year after

18:30 completing that and we moved back down to Canberra, so, you know, Watson was a great time, and career-wise I thoroughly enjoyed it, once again great people. And that's, you know, I mean that's the common thread of navy life, I think, no matter what your posting is, you get to work with great people and, you know, people you highly respect and are very professional. Really don't ask much from Australia or, you know,

19:00 the Australian people, they just ask, you know, to be able to do their career and that and, you know, get on with life, which they do. So the people I think have, you know, right through, have underpinned every career I've had, so…in maritime development, different, I mean, I had a lot of officers working for me there and generally all officers, but they all working in their different specialisations to deliver those projects which were vital for Australia, whether it be

19:30 mine warfare or submarine capabilities or destroyers or amphibious ships and all that. And you had to deal with the committee processes in that job which, and the politics of the job too so, and the government had certain agendas and requirements and you had to deal with all that, so it was a very interesting posting there, and especially as a flag officer it was a challenging posting and I think one that we all made a significant

20:00 contribution to. And we certainly look forward to those capabilities being delivered to the Australian Navy in the future.

**Now at one stage you were the leading authority on, basically, maritime warfare. How did…in this capacity, you visit a lot of specialist schools around the country in naval warfare. In what capacity were you liaising with these institutions?**

Oh, I wasn't, I was in charge of 'em.

20:30 So I was responsible for their product, therefore what they did, so generally OICs [Officers in Charge] of those different facilities were responsible to me and worked for me, whether it be the fire fighting training ground down in Jervis Bay or the one over in Perth, I was ultimately responsible. And some of those schools were established on other people's bases, so you

21:00 may have, you know, a commanding officer of HMAS Penguin, for example. Well, in Penguin I had three different schools that I was running there, one was clearance diving, one was hydrography and the third one was naval police and coxswains, so all, oh, and mine warfare. So I had, yeah, I had clearance diving, mine warfare, naval police and coxswains and hydrography, so I had four, basically

21:30 established there which we were, I was responsible for, but they were on someone else's base so, you know, they were the landlord but these schools had to produce the required product, yeah.

**Now at that time, which is about 2000 was it, roughly year 2000?**

Mmm.

**What was considered to be the main threat to Australian maritime security?**

At that time

22:00 I don't think there was any real threat that, you know, there was no real threat per se. I mean, there was things like Timor and that that were happening, but they were generally training people for, you know, the contingencies that may arise. There was no real identified threat as there, you know, I mean Iraq and that, in fact Afghanistan and that have changed things

22:30 to a certain extent, but we generally were training for the range of contingencies the government believed were plausible so, you know, the mine threat. And everyone was specialising in their particular areas so that you could counter those threats as they came along, whether it be mines, submarines or, you know, aircraft.

**I mean, at the time was there any, was it seen at the time that Indonesia was potentially a maritime threat to Australia?**

23:00 No, and I don't think at any time, really. I mean, there was once during the Confrontation and that, but generally during my career Indonesia hasn't been. We've had a certain degree of good relations, you know, militarily and that we've always worked with Indonesia and naval-wise we've had limited exercises and that. But I've always found the reception by Indonesia to be

23:30 very friendly actually, yeah.

**They participate in RIMPAC as well, don't they?**

No.

**They don't.**

No, they don't, no they don't participate in RIMPAC.

**Which are the countries that do?**

Well, it's grown since I was there. I mean, when I was there it was Canada and United Kingdom, the US, Australia. New Zealand dropped out of it when they took a stance against the US, so they didn't participate anymore. And we also, Japan was a big contributor

24:00 and continue to increase their forces every exercise. And then there was, Korea was invited to observe when I was there, so I understand they've now extended that and, you know, you've got some of the South American countries who are now participating as well as Korea and Japan and all those. So it has expanded quite a lot since when I organised it

24:30 in 3rd Fleet. It shows the success of it, I think, you know, where navies, when you can get eight to ten navies, you know, doing fairly complex operations over language barriers and different methods of training and all that, and you can operate successfully and safely together, exercises like RIMPAC are worth their weight in gold, really, because they allow you to develop those procedures. So if you ever need to do anything for real then

25:00 you are used to working with each other and it won't be completely new. So it's a very big exercise, RIMPAC, and one that I think is very, very valuable.

**Is there any such equivalent for the Indian Ocean?**

No. No, there's not for the Indian Ocean. There's more bilateral

25:30 exercises with the individual navies rather than a combined exercise like that.

**In even the latter stages of your career in the navy, how important was the Indian Ocean to Australia's strategic security?**

Oh, very important, I mean, we did a number of deployments into the Indian Ocean so I, it was very important to maintain those relations and that. I suppose it's a little bit, it's

26:00 always been a little bit more difficult to establish those national, international relationships but, and Australia found it more difficult.

**Which deployments do you refer to?**

Well I, on Melbourne we did a couple of deployments to the Indian Ocean and that. But I suppose it's always, Australia, for one reason or another, found it a little bit more difficult to establish closer ties with India and,

26:30 you know, Pakistan and that. And so that probably has driven the rate of deployments and all that, whereas there's certainly, Australia's been engaged more to the north, you know, in Asia and all that, rather than to the west. So, you know, but that can only develop, I mean, India and Pakistan and all that are developing very quickly I think, they

27:00 will become very important to Australia. But generally we didn't do too many exercises together, it was more port calls and a little bit of operating together. Whereas in Asia we have exercises like Starfish, which is Malaysian, Singaporeans, etcetera, and we all operate together and once again with a common set of procedures, communications and all that. And they're very important exercises as we, you know, we mature

27:30 as countries in the region and take more responsibility for the region too, yeah.

**So the two appointments you had as Director General, Maritime Development and Defence, sorry, Defence Material organisation was separate? Was that Director...?**

No, yeah, it was separate . I went from Maritime Development, then across to the Defence Material Organisation, where I became the Director General of Industry Capability. And

28:00 that was really looking at the infrastructure and the industry requirements to support the defence force. You know, the defence force, and certainly the navy over the last twenty or thirty years has got rid of a lot of the infrastructure that it used to have. We used to have naval dockyards and all that, we'd have naval dockyards that were responsible for the modification and work on our ships, whereas the, that has been commercialised to a certain extent, ADI [Australian Defence Industries] bought Garden Island, for example and all that.

28:30 So we then became quite, you know, reliant on the infrastructure or the companies and growing the industry capability to support our defence force, so we did that, and that. My job was very much to look at that industry capability required for the defence force and also to write the government policy with respect to defence industry. And in that, I

29:00 was responsible for the development of a number of sector plans which the Defence Department was developing for government, as government policy. And the primary one at that time was the naval shipbuilding repairs sector plan which was delivered to government before I retired. And, you know, government considered that and it was, changed it somewhat in developing that policy, but very much I worked with industry to develop an agreed

29:30 document of the way defence industry should proceed for the future.

**That's absolutely fascinating. So you actually, the defence material organisation is a public service organisation?**

Oh, the Defence Material Organisation is part of the Department of Defence but it is run by a Dr Steven Gumley now, who's now the CEO [Chief Executive Officer] of it. And it, basically it has a lot of civilians in it who provide all the acquisition

30:00 and support of the defence force for it and the maintenance and all that. And also, once it's been agreed that you're going to acquire a certain type of ship, they are then charged with delivering it and managing that project through to fruition, and beyond actually, and also the after-life support of those ships too. So, you know, for example, the amphibious ships now, the, they're developing their requirements, once the government approves the designer and the particular ship that they want, well then, the

30:30 Defence Material Organisation will deliver those ships, they'll contract, they'll manage the contract throughout the acquisition and that to do it.

**With the, it's very interesting stuff always, industrial policy and defence policy and so forth. How would you describe the main players in Australia's military industrial complex? You know, ADI is a government-owned one?**

No, ADI is

31:00 a commercial company which bought Garden Island, the naval base or the naval facility there, and you still have a fleet base there which is owned by the navy. But they bought the maintenance side of it, and that is fifty per cent owned by an international company called Taylors, and the other fifty per cent is by Transfield, and so between them they own that company

31:30 which, you know, supports the navy out of Sydney. And it, basically provides the major focus of maintenance and repair for the navy in Sydney so, you know, that's one of the major players. Then you have a number of other players, over in the west coast it's different, the navy's got Garden Island which is, you know, two ocean basing, so you've got half the navy and all the submarines over in the west and they're supported by a different lot of Australian industry including Tennex and Raytheon, the company that I left

32:00 the navy and joined. Raytheon is present right around Australia and very much supports the Collins over in WA too, and so it's a logical extension from my job in the DMO [Defense Material Organisation]. Having delivered, you know, the policy and that, I, it was then agreed by the Defence Department that I proved that I, when I retired I could seek a job with Australian industry, which I did. And

32:30 now I find it highly interesting that I'm working in a related job which is, you know, but as a civilian. And the major focus of that is to structure Raytheon and with respect to the amphibious ships which the government is about to go ahead with, and they'll be two of the largest ships constructed in Australia. You know, they're gonna be twenty-seven thousand tonne ships, we've never built that big a military ship in Australia,

33:00 and they'll be very complex ships with six helicopter spots and a number of helicopters and tanks and all that on board, so amphibious-wise they're gonna be a great capability for the navy, and there'll be two of them, and that. And so I find it very challenging, you know, working for Raytheon and really assisting the defence department who acquired this capability.

**Now your position is... can you describe the actual title?**

Yeah, I'm defence, I'm director of advance programs for Raytheon Australia, and

33:30 realistically that was looking at all the future programs for Raytheon. But now we've had to, as these bigger projects have now started to materialise, the air warfare destroyer and the amphibious ships, we've now had to focus more closely, so I'm now closely related to the amphibious ships and someone else is running the air warfare destroyer project. And we, there's a lot of overlap and, you know, the operational experience I have that the navy gave me I can now

34:00 really use to assist, you know, the development of the ships that the navy's trying to acquire, so it's a great perspective, you know. And, you know, Australia can't turn back now, it's now relying, it has made the decision that it would downsize and get rid of naval dockyards and all that, so it is reliant on Australian industry and Australian industry remain current in giving it, you know, a very efficient outcome for the limited dollars it has. And Australian industry has to be

34:30 quite smart to do that, and so there's a lot of us who've left the services and are working in industry. But you never really leave the navy, you still want to do the best thing for the navy and the defence force, and you scratch the surface and we're all very proud of our naval service, you know, wherever we are and what we're doing.

**With Raytheon's, what's it called, business in Australia, its operation, how long has that actually**

35:00 **been dealing with the Australian defence organisations here?**

The, well, Raytheon is, you know, a founded company in Australia of Raytheon US which is a large, I think the fourth largest defence company in the US. And, but the decision was taken by Raytheon to establish an Australian presence and a company in Australia for

35:30 Australia, rather than trying to run the business from the US. So we're very proud that we're seven hundred and fifty Australians here and there's no US with us and we've got some major projects that we're doing. You know, the Collins combat support system and the support of the F18s and the F111s, they're running, the Deep Space Tracking Station at Tidbinbilla is run by Raytheon, and a number of other things. And so, you know,

36:00 we, Raytheon I think was, put a lot of trust and faith in investing in Australia and I think it's a great sign of the way they rate Australia and the importance they place on Australia, so…but for the defence force it's critical, because unless you have those, unless you have the intellectual capacity and you have the capabilities, the industry capabilities in Australia, well then, you can't support your, it's gonna cost you a fortune to support your capabilities from companies overseas.

36:30 You need to have your own industry at a technological level which is equal to the rest of the world. The beauty of Raytheon is we can, where necessary, for new technologies, because of the R&D [Research and Development] of the company back in the US, we can reach back into that company and bring those technologies to Australia, and also get the assistance and experience for new technologies so that, not only for Raytheon but also for the rest of the industry base. So you have that

37:00 technology transfer into Australia and then the aim is, I think the government's aim is that very much you can start exporting and competing out of Australia on the global marketplace, you know, especially in the military, hardware and all that. And there's a lot of big projects where Australian companies and the small, SMEs, the small to medium enterprises, which are really operating at a level which is, you know, they're probably kicking more than their weight right now and they're punching more than

37:30 their weight. But they need a gateway to get into these big programs, you know, companies like Raytheon can do that, so.

**So the Collins class submarine, it was a, that's been somewhat controversial in a sense, in the past that is…**

Yeah, it has.

**…regarding its blow out, budget blow out and certain technical problems.**

Yeah.

**Is that likely to see the end of the sort of**

38:00 **production line, is it gonna come into some sort of service eventually?**

Yeah, oh look, I think it's the most capable conventional submarine in the world now. And, you know, I mean, sure, any of the big projects have problems, especially when you're trying to do it on your own. You know, a small nation, we're trying to build the most sophisticated conventional submarine in the world, I think the government of the day had to be congratulated for taking that step and moving ahead and doing that. So having

38:30 done that, sure we had some problems, you know, I mean the country had some problems, but what has happened, the combat system was pretty ambitious. What has happened now is Raytheon has taken over the combat system and has been awarded the contract for that, and I don't think you've seen it in

the front page since Raytheon has taken it over, it's a real success story, it's moving ahead. So successful now that, you know, where I was talking about technology transferring smart Australian things

39:00 that we do that we can export out of Australia, well, we are. I mean we, some of the things we've done for Collins, the US Navy's now picked up on for their submarines, which is, I think, a great tribute to the capabilities of Australians, yeah, a great tribute, so it's, I think, very successful. And, you know, these bigger projects like the amphibious ship and the Werewolf destroyer will be critical. We're relying on Australian capabilities and Australian people to be able to support them,

39:30 or else you won't be able to keep them state of the art throughout their life.

**So Australia's, in a, military industrial complex has expanded fairly extensively, it seems, since, well, maybe you could go up to Vietnam or maybe before that period, but it seems…?**

Yeah, oh, it has. I mean, years, most of these things used to be run by government, didn't they, you know, the dockyards and the DSDOs [Data Systems Design Officers] and ADI. And, you know, look at, the ADI's business was basically a government business,

40:00 including manufacturing ammunition and armaments and all that. And now you've got the commercial side running them, the trick is to make sure that you continue to grow that, those companies and you provide sufficient demands so that they can invest for the future. If they don't have certainty of investment for the future, well then, they won't invest in the R&D [Research and Development] that's required, and then you'll have an industry that dies, and then you won't be able to support your,

40:30 your ships.

**Unfortunately we've run out of time so, the day's gone really fast, but if there's anything you'd like to say, we've got about a minute left, if you'd like to say for the historical record or you haven't told us, anything about your career or experiences, here's your chance.**

No, I think basically I've said it all. You know, I mean, it's been a great career and that and, you know, the things, you know, your career takes different turns, but generally I've always found that those turns have been for the

41:00 best, and happy family and everything, you know, right through it. So, but I suppose your career is, you know, your career's only as good as the support that your family give you, so as long as your family back your career, well then, you'll always have a successful one. So I think that's the main thing.

**Okay, well good, thank you very much.**

Thanks mate, yeah, thank you very much.

**INTERVIEW ENDS**