

Australians at War Film Archive

Arthur Garland (Gough) - Transcript of interview

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Tape 1

00:30 **Tell us a little bit about your early life, starting with where you were born?**

I was born on the 25th February 1920, my mother and father came by ship from England and they arrived on the 24th February and I was born a day later. They took up house in Leslie Street Richmond.

01:00 We remained there for sometime and eventually we moved to East Coburg and when it was time to go to school, I started school at the Moreland State School. Then the East Coburg

01:30 State School in Nicholson Street was opened and I was transferred to East Coburg. I remember that school particularly because it had a very fine teacher there and his name was Beckett, and he eventually he played for Richmond in the league. I think that

02:00 started me off playing football when I was at East Coburg because I had many happy years playing football.

Who did you play for?

I played for Park Dale amateurs from 1935 to 1939 and then I was captain after the war in 1946, I then retired from football

02:30 and took up golf. Going back to the days of East Coburg my brother and I were a bit of devils and we use to go at lunchtime or after school we'd go wondering up the drains, and there were some big drains that use to go to Merry Creek and we got caught there

03:00 right on darkness one night. My mother had become very worried because we hadn't come home from school and she got the police and the police located us fortunately, so I am still here today.

Thank goodness for that.

Yes.

From Primary School where did you go to High School?

I didn't, I went from East Coburg State School

03:30 to the Mordialloc State School and my days were finished at the Mordialloc State School.

What level was that?

That was the merit.

What let you move over to this side of town?

The reason was that that my father worked during the war with Panes Bond Marsh a large

04:00 clothing retailer in Burke Street and they caught on fire, and my father was put out of work for six weeks. In those days they had to earn money to keep paying the house, they had a state house through the State Bank and unfortunately he couldn't keep up with the repayments

04:30 and they were very ruthless and they ordered us out of the house and he had to look for a rental home and he picked up a house in Mordialloc Governor Road, Mordialloc, so that's why we left East Coburg.

When you finished at fourteen would that be?

That's correct.

05:00 **What did you do then?**

During the war my father had met a man by the name of Jack Walkerson and he started up a

manufacturer's agents business in Flinders Lane in Melbourne and he was looking for a boy, a messenger boy and dad felt it was a good opportunity for me to start there.

05:30 They purchased a suit for me with long pants.

Your first time in long pants?

No. I started work in 1934, gradually I moved up through the company and I then became a commercial traveller out on the road.

Was that post war?

That was post war

06:00 and after the war, that's right.

When did you join the militia?

I joined the militia at Mordialloc in 1936, in those days of course I think it was called Citizens Force or whatever it was, we use to go on parade in Mordialloc in the drill hall there.

06:30 **What battalion or company was that?**

It was the 46th Battalion Rifles and they were in Brighton and that was the head depot and they had this branch that they opened at Mordialloc.

What rank did you obtain in the militia?

I got corporal in the militia.

When

07:00 **did they ask for volunteers for the 39th?**

We were in camp at Tallarook near Seymour and then we moved to Albury and we were in camp at Albury when the notice appeared on the notice board where one officer and sixty other ranks were required

07:30 to join a battalion which would eventually do garrison work in New Guinea. There were three officers that applied and I got the job, so I took sixty other ranks and myself down to Darley in Victoria on the 6th October 1941.

Were you already a

08:00 **lieutenant in the militia by this stage?**

That's correct, yes, that was 1942, the 25th February 1942 I became lieutenant.

Tell us a little bit about the formation of the 39th?

It was formed either one or two officers and sixty other ranks

08:30 from memory from the militia battalion and they all congregated at Darley and then they became 39th Battalion.

How long were you at Darley?

We were there for three months; I was originally posted to the re-enforcement officer's pool of the 39th Battalion but then a Captain Sam Templeton

09:00 approached me about joining B Company, and I accepted and I was transferred from the officers pool to B Company as 10th Platoon commander.

When did you train and embark?

We left on Boxing Day the 26th December 1941

09:30 trained and arrived to go onboard the Aquitania at Woolloomooloo.

Was it a good trip north?

It was until I got seasick, but it was the largest ship I'd ever seen and we had about six and a half thousand personnel including

10:00 the AGH [Australian General Hospital] nursing staff and so on, it was a large escort which took us through to Port Moresby.

Any scares along the way?

There were a couple; we had to sail at night without lights of course and during the day we did drill and

at night

10:30 I was often on night duty as watch.

What were you expecting to be doing once you reach Moresby?

Well we were told to take our tennis rackets, our cricket bats, I had a steel trunk with a lot of goodies in and we thought we were going to do some garrison work.

11:00 **Did they mention about taking rifles as well, or mainly cricket bats?**

We didn't train with rifles but we did take rifles with us, yes, and Lewis guns the old Lewis gun which to us was a very good weapon but not for jungle training.

They were an antique even then, weren't they?

They were, that's right.

11:30 **When you arrived at Moresby, how was it with your first experience in a tropic country, what were the sights, smells and sounds like?**

Firstly the ship was so large it couldn't pull up at the wharf and we had to scale down ropes ladders and the ladies had to do the same but they did it, and we went into small ships, or small boats and ferried to shore.

12:00 But when we got ashore we thought we'd be camped there, but that wasn't to be. We had to march seven mile to the Seven Mile Drome and sweaty conditions and it was quite a task. The thing that we were all annoyed about was when we got to the Seven Mile Drome

12:30 and we were just dumped on the side of hills, we had no mosquito nets, we had no tents we had no malaria tablets of any description. So consequently the mosquitoes had a feast and a lot of us got malaria and I think in all I was in hospital about ten times with malaria.

13:00 I was bordered B Class at a time which I will tell you about later. They did not prepare for the arrival of our troops at all it was a disgraceful affair.

We will definitely coming back to talk much more about that later on. Your time at Seven Mile Drome what were your duties there?

13:30 Companies were located areas and we were near Mount Tuffty, which is a very very high hill just north of the 'drome towards Bootless Bay. We were all put into tents there and our duties

14:00 were to dig trenches and we also had a very good company commander Sam Templeton. He took us out on patrols to familiarize us with the area in case of any hostilities. We also put up at a later date miles and miles of barbed wire,

14:30 it might stop somebody coming from the ocean. We use to take our Lewis gun up to this hill I was telling you about and when the Zeros came down the valley we were on a level with them,

15:00 and they were flattening out and we would fire the Lewis gun into the planes, but unfortunately when we used tracer which illuminated and ordinary bullets they use to bounce off the Zero and they bounced off because the material of the Zero was so strong but we

15:30 were accredited with a couple of planes which we had shot down. We use to do that on a daily basis.

That must have been very frustrated to know that you were shooting and the bullets were bouncing off?

It was very frustrating.

How long were you at Seven Mile Drome?

We were at Seven Mile Drome actually from the time we landed until early

16:00 July, so six months. The other tasks that we did do that each company were detailed to go to the wharf and unload ships, and there was a depot we use to truck the food and stuff to a depot.

What was the general feeling about

16:30 **what you were being required to do, and how you were being looked after?**

They weren't very happy about it, but it was a necessity because we had to eat and we knew but of course you had to keep your eyes to the front because the boys would open some the contents at the depot and have some apricots or what it might be, which they might get

17:00 once in a blue moon which were for the company lines.

Would you be turning a blind eye to that or would you be onto them?

Well yes to a degree.

When was it first noted that you might be heading north across the Owen Stanleys?

17:30 Brigade issued an order for a company of troops to cross the Owen Stanley Ranges and to see if it could be crossed. The company I was with under Captain Sam Templeton, there were five officers and one hundred and twenty troops, we were given the task of crossing.

18:00 We travelled by trucks to McDonald's Corner or Ower's Corner as some of them name it, and we started off. I have got a photograph of us marching up to that particular point if you would like to see that later. Then we commenced the march I think the second day out.

18:30 I collapsed of stomach pains because of the terrain of marching on slippery track, up steps and down steps. The company commander came along and poured

19:00 water over me and said "You get up lad", he was a Scotsman, "You get up lad and I will see you in camp tonight". I slipped down a bit of ravine there and I hurt my back a bit but I made it to the next native village that night where we all camped.

Which village was that?

That's a good question.

We can come back to that later.

19:30 Then each day we would travel for approximately six hours marching, and of course the worst part about it would be at about three o'clock the rain would come down and it would rain until the next morning. All we had on was a ground sheet, it was steamy

20:00 conditions but never the less you got cold just the same.

How many days marching was that?

Eight days and we reached Kokoda and he was very very pleased with our effort. There were a few that didn't make it because of the terrain, because half way across you were climbing and climbing until you got

20:30 to the top of the gap as you might say, and I think it was Mount Victoria that you could see in the distance with the snow. Then from the top it was a downhill run all the way until we got to Kokoda and that as I say was eight days.

When you arrived at Kokoda the first time were you

21:00 **aware of the Japanese and how many there were?**

No, we didn't there was no existence of any Japanese in our area, no.

Were you aware that they had established beachheads to the north?

We weren't given much information at all, no.

What was your job once you were at Kokoda?

21:30 Patrolling, familiarizing ourselves, the areas the locations the plantations and I know that some of the platoons were in a defensive position around the plateau and others were on the aerodrome.

You been sent there to see if it was possible

22:00 **to go there?**

That's correct.

Did you have radio contact with Port Moresby?

Yes we did.

So you didn't have to send somebody back to say that you got there?

No, we had radio contact.

How long were you there before you made contact with the Japanese?

We were there approximately ten days before the Japanese, we woke up one morning and we heard this thumping we didn't know what it was,

22:30 the company commander rang the brigade and it was confirmed that the Japs had landed or were landing at Buna. We had to take action, so Templeton sent just before

- 23:00 I tell you about that I think it would be better to answer this way. There was a Sergeant Collier in the 39th Battalion who came around by ship with stores from Port Moresby to Buna and he with the captain brought the stores
- 23:30 to Buna and a section had gone down at Buna and brought the stores back to Kokoda then it was two days later after they had vacated that they went back to the ship when the actual bombing had started at Buna. We were very fortunate in getting our food stores and our ammunition.
- Yes, there was no Japanese there**
- 24:00 **at that stage at all?**
- No that's correct.
- Very lucky.**
- Very lucky.
- Did you have any word from brigade, they told you yes the Japanese were landing, did they give you any idea of the strength of their force?**
- No, just to take evasive action.
- Evasive or defensive?**
- Well we had to attack the force that
- 24:30 was landing.
- How strong was your force at that stage?**
- Two platoons of a total of sixty men at that stage, that's all.
- How strong was the Japanese force do you know?**
- I can't actually answer that but it would of be two or three thousand.
- I heard that it was several thousand.**
- That's right.
- 25:00 **When did you first make contact with them?**
- The 11th and 12th Platoon first made contact with them at Awala, and all they could do was to attack and withdraw because of the numbers, and that's what they continued to do.
- 25:30 Sam Templeton wasn't very happy at the information he was getting back so he decided to go down himself to see what the situation was and then we would be able to decide what cause of action. He met up with the two platoons commanders, there was one Harry Mortimore, one Arthur Seekamp both ex AIF [Australian Imperial Force] officers
- 26:00 that had overseas experience in war. They knew what to expect and he met up with them and then he must of heard a sound to the left flank and said "look I'm investigate this", which he did apparently. He
- 26:30 must of seen something and he fired and they must of fired. As far as we can ascertain his body was never found, they went to look for him but they couldn't locate him, so they didn't know whether he was shot or whether he was taken as a prisoner of war. I don't think even today that it was every really
- 27:00 established what happened to Sam, he was a wonderful commanding officer and he fought in the Irish Rebellion. He was a tough man but he was well respected by all his troops and they would go anything to go out and fight with him.
- We might spend a bit of time talking about Sam Templeton later on, a get a good profile of him.**
- Good.
- At this stage the officers**
- 27:30 **must be thinking 'what on earth are we going to do', there are a handful of men here against quite a sizeable force?**
- Yes, there was a 2IC [second in command] Captain Stevenson, he was in control then and he gradually attacked and withdrew and attacked and withdrew. Then
- 28:00 one morning I was in charge of the plateau and the aerodrome and I had barricades on the aerodrome and this plane came over and we found it was one of ours but we couldn't get the barricades off quick enough and it circled around and it eventually had to fly back to Port Moresby. I got ticked off for not letting that plane land and I

28:30 rang brigade and told them that we had no information that they were coming and it was impossible to get the barricades off.

29:00 They said if the conditions were good the next morning they would try again. What I did was ordered the sections to clear as many of the barricades off and just leave a few on there.

What were the barricades made of, sorry for interrupting?

Just wooden material, they were wood and they just slid it across the fairway.

29:30 They landed with Doug McLean, the CO Colonel Owen, he was the CO [Commanding Officer] of the 39th then, he was ex 2/22nd Battalion who had come down from Rabaul and he sent McLean and his platoon off Mortimore and Seekamp and give assistance.

30:00 That was the action and they gradually withdrew back and I think McLean eventually came up to Deniki, and the other two platoons went to Kokoda where I was. It was then that we formed a perimeter

30:30 to try and hold Kokoda.

How long did that last?

That didn't last very long really, because it was during the day that we saw these Japs and I always thought that Japanese people were small people, because in business they were small in height like the Mongolians, they were six footers and some of them were on bicycles,

31:00 because the terrain from Buna to Kokoda was flat so a lot of them rode bicycles. We could see them forming up, but they didn't do anything until later in the evening, but just prior to that Colonel Owen had been walking around

31:30 amongst the troops and I said to him "Sir I think you are taking an unnecessary risk standing out in the open." because I said, "There were some very good Japanese snipers amongst them". He said to me he had to set an example and I said, "Fair enough." Then

32:00 the Japanese attacked around about nine o'clock when it was dark and we threw grenades and fired at them, but it was very difficult to see being night you couldn't see much but you could hear the yelling every time a grenade went amongst them they yelled.

I bet they did.

They set fire

32:30 to the administration building and there was a Major Watson who was from the PIB which is the Papua Infantry Battalion and he had joined us just prior to the action starting, with about thirty other ranks and they assisted us.

33:00 He organised my platoon across the plateau and he felt that the action had been going on long enough and it was around about four in the morning and he didn't want to be surrounded, the most important thing that Captain Templeton said to me was "Whatever you

33:30 do you must defend the track, because the rest of the 39th Battalion is on the way over the ranges, so do not be captured, defend the track". Major Watson felt the same so he ordered a withdrawal and we withdrew peacefully back to Deniki.

And from Deniki?

From Deniki we went back

34:00 to the next stage and then the 1st Company of the 39th Battalion joined us.

Where was that?

That's a good question, I can't answer that.

You hadn't gone back to Isurava yet had you?

Not at this stage, no.

So it would still be around the Deniki area wouldn't it?

It was the next stage after Deniki,

34:30 I have got it here, and would you like me to tell you?

Yes.

When that second company of the 39th arrived there was a Major Cameron, Major Cameron was also

35:00 ex 2/22nd Battalion, and he got down from Rabaul and had escaped and he felt it was time to attack the Japanese rather than withdraw and his opinion of B Company was not very good. I knew this man in

civilian life and I was surprised at his attitude but he was a soldier and he was out to do a job.

- 35:30 He sent three companies forward, two straight down the track and one on another track to recapture Kokoda. Apparently when they got there, there was no Japanese at Kokoda
- 36:00 they had withdrawn. After being there in a defensive position the Japanese then attacked but apparently they were there for two or three days,
- 36:30 and they suffered some casualties and it was decided then to get out which they did, and they withdrew up the track the way they had come. I think it was C Company they had difficulty in getting there and they had a lot of casualties and they withdrew up the track and we became
- 37:00 rather a fighting force of about three or four companies of troops.

At what strength roughly?

There'd be about roughly one hundred and twenty troops in each of those companies.

Around about five hundred?

Yes. B Company was sent back for a bit of a rest to Efogi, but then we came forward again and joined

- 37:30 and then of course it was a rear guard action until Isurava.

What sort of state were you by the time you reached Isurava, you were there for quite a while?

Our food consisted of one tin of bully beef, so you had to have that for breakfast, for lunch and for tea. Our clothing was

- 38:00 pretty ragged and we only had one set of clothing so you could image the state we were in. Our moral after being harassed like that was not the best but you were fighting for preservation and it was you against him, so that was always in the back of your mind.

- 38:30 **At Isurava how long were you there before you had relief, because there were some AIF troops heading your way?**

Just prior to that, platoons would be sent out on patrols and I was sent out for forty eight hours on a standing day and night patrol and I was

- 39:00 in contact with battalion headquarters and it was my job to, well if they attacked to attack them. We did have a skirmish there and one of the soldiers died and

- 39:30 Padre Nobyel came forward and he buried that man in the front line, and the Japs didn't do anything about it. Whether they could see or not I don't know but we didn't see much activity from them really, they didn't come up around us and attack us. After forty eight hours I was relieved by another patrol, but apparently after we got out then

- 40:00 action started. These patrols went on for two or three days until they had to regroup at Isurava.

Tape 2

- 00:30 **Take us through Isurava please Arthur?**

We were in the perimeter east and west of the track, one side was up the hill and the other side was down the valley towards the creek, I call it the creek but I'm not sure of the name of the river,

- 01:00 there wasn't a great deal of water going through it. They kept attacking and when they attacked they yelled and blew their bugles which they usually do and a lot of chatter and they didn't keep quiet. They'd hit you at the front of the perimeter and then they'd come around the sides and that was what they were doing and trying to find

- 01:30 out the extent of your perimeter and then get the weakness. B Company were on the up hill side of the track, battalion headquarters was on the track, anyway the Japs started to attack B Company again, it would be B Company. Not that we could see

- 02:00 them but they were just beyond the kunai grass and naturally we were firing and there was a yell here and there. It got to the stage where they were getting pretty close and we were getting pretty vulnerable because our perimeter, if they got around the back of us then we were in trouble. So I said to French who was our company commander at the time

- 02:30 "We should let battalion know what's going on." he sent me down and I met our new CO Colonel Honner. Colonel Honner said to me, "Garland you go back and tell French that he's got to hold because if he doesn't hold they will be down on headquarters." I did that, and we dug in. About two hours later

03:00 to our surprise we see these fresh troops virtually running up the hill and the first person I met was Lieutenant Ben Hall and I knew him in the 46th Battalion prior to pre war and it was his platoon of the 2/14th Battalion and they were B Company and they came up the hill

03:30 and they wanted to know what the position was and we told them. They immediately rushed down through the kunai grass and they started firing and the Japs started to yell. We stayed there for quite some time but as more troops came up the hill we were relieved and

04:00 the 39th Battalion under Honner gradually withdrew back but when Honner got back he realised that he shouldn't be doing this and he ordered us back again, and we went back again and help form the perimeter again. That was a very fine thing to do, because he felt that the

04:30 2/14th Battalion needed assistance.

How did you and the men in general feel about that, were you backing him?

We did as we were told, we had no option, and we were tired and exhausted you could imagine.

How long were you there again with the 2/14th?

05:00 Our battalion lost a lot of men through malaria, it lost a lot through dysentery, losses generally and wounded. A Captain Merritt took over the battalion and I was appointed liaison officer between

05:30 company headquarters and brigade headquarters. I was instructed to go to brigade headquarters and Colonel Key was the CO of the 2/14th gave instructions to me to get Merritt to withdraw along the track at eight o'clock that night.

06:00 I took that message back, not knowing that later on the Japs attacked brigade headquarters and killed Key and his staff. We moved back that night and there was phosphorus on the ground, so we rubbed the phosphorus on the scabbards,

06:30 the scabbards is where your bayonet fits on the end of your rifle. The men were instructed to hold the scabbard so that they have got some way, because it was pitch black on a signal. I had in my platoon when I was platoon commander a

07:00 Corporal Knights and instead of doing what he was told to come along the track he decided to cross the creek and come up the other side. He felt that it would be too slow coming along the track, because it was a very slow hardest thing to do, to withdraw on a single track at night. When I got to

07:30 Eora Creek I was told the news that Corporal Knight and his section had been ambushed in the village, apparently they got to a village and they were ambushed and they were all killed, he was a wonderful fellow and he was only a small man. I will tell you a very interesting thing about him.

08:00 When we were in camp at Seven Mile Drome the mosquitoes would drive us nuts, we burnt cow manure to get rid of the mosquitoes. We use to sleep in the nude under the mosquito nets. But this night the mosquitoes got Knight and they bit his penis and it was so swollen he was in agony for a week, terrible.

08:30 **Back to the action, you are at Eora now?**

At that particular stage the supply people were brought up and they were cooking rice and in the rice was raisins and I was having a bowl of this

09:00 and all of a sudden bang bang bang, the mountain gun that the Japs got had been fired up the hill and went through the tent and we dived for cover, so we didn't eat any more rice. Gradually the, what the remnants of the 39th at Eora Creek waited for the withdraw,

09:30 the other battalions because there was the 2/14th, there was the 53rd and the 2/16th Battalion all withdrew back through us up the track.

From Eora was that when you then, did you back down to Moresby after that?

10:00 No, I'm sorry yes back towards and we went up to Templeton's Crossing, and that name of Templeton's Crossing was named after Captain Sam Templeton. Then we got back over the pass and we were met by the 3rd Battalion and the 3rd Battalion we handed all our weapons over to the 3rd Battalion.

They were the South Australian Battalion weren't they, is that right?

10:30 I think they were.

Was it around this time I think Ralph Honner had you on parade and made a speech and talking about your magnificent....?

Yes we got to Menari; I have got a photograph of us there on parade. I'm there but I'm not in the photograph but

11:00 he made a magnificent speech and praised us for our efforts.

Were there when not so long after Blamey made his infamous address?

I wasn't there when he made the speech but I heard quite a bit about it, I did hear the other one by General Herring and he was just the reverse he said it was magnificent.

11:30 Blamey called us a lot of rabbits, but the same man never set his foot on the Owen Stanley track and how can a man make those comments when he's never seen the terrain? He was pushed by MacArthur and of course some of the fine brigadiers were

12:00 relieved of their jobs, they were good brigadiers and fought well.

That's right MacArthur wanted everything to happen faster didn't he?

His whole idea was to jump here jump there and left the Australians to do the dirty work, I will tell you about that a bit later.

From

12:30 **Moresby then where did you go from there?**

When we got back to Moresby we went into a training camp after being really two months in action and we had lost a lot of weight and we had to be feed and put a bit of weight on and we were re-enforced with re-enforcements and then in November

13:00 We were flown this time to Popondetta.

From Popondetta you would have moved into the Beach Head campaign?

Yes, we went down to Gona west, Gona and then finally Sanananda.

13:30 **Buna had already been taken by this stage?**

No.

The last one?

It was the last one yes.

What sort of conditions did you encounter around that area?

I think the conditions at Gona was pretty bad.

14:00 B Company were again on the fore front and my back man and myself were ordered by the CO to move up through a clearing hugging the trees and seeing how far we could get up and they back waiting when all of a sudden out in front of us two Japanese personnel and they were two navy people,

14:30 they were two navy officers we had no alternative too, it was either them or us. The CO ticked me off because he said "You made a noise with your guns and alerted the Japs to our positions." I said "What do you expect us to do, be killed?" anyway that's what happened and we got their swords, we got a few maps and a few things which we past back,

15:00 the swords were beautiful swords. I never saw them again but I got a sword but I didn't get that one back.

I bet you didn't?

No. Our noise didn't have any effect on the Japanese at all, the attack was put in by Honner he went around in a circle and we pushed forward.

15:30 The platoon, three platoons of B Company were attacking and we had to go through this cops of trees and there were just dozens and dozens of Japanese dead. They had died I think through starvation, their bodies had swollen right up and the stench was terrible,

16:00 so we had to get through that onto the beach head. The last Japanese we saw, some were running down away from us, and some ran into the sea. They'd pull a grenade out and blow themselves up rather than being captured. It was there that again the 2/14th Battalion came down along the beach under

16:30 a Captain Bill Russell and he again was a ex 46th Battalion Brighton man and I met up with him and I asked him whether Bob Doherty was with him, Bob Doherty played rugby for Powerhouse in Victoria and I knew his brother Harry,

17:00 and I knew Bob. He said unfortunately that Bob had been killed two days before, and he was very upset about that and I was upset about it too. Bill Russell I met again after the war when I joined Legacy and he was in Melbourne Legacy and he wrote a fine book also,

17:30 but I cant remember the name of it but have it at home about his experiences during the war. He was a wonderful man and he has passed on now Bill. Perhaps the reality of the whole thing was creeping into

it a bit more there because

18:00 we were seeing more of the Japanese because the other was a lot more jungle over the Owen Stanleys.

Was the fighting more intense around that area because of that?

It was, yes. More so of course when we got to Gona. Gona was the bitterest fighting that we'd been in action, there were

18:30 many battalions, there was artillery, there was planes bombing even if they were bombing us at times.

Yes I read about that.

They did that when we were on the beachhead.

The Japanese were very well dug in there weren't they?

You know you couldn't see them because they were under logs, they had had just a foot gap and they would be firing

19:00 at your legs. There were machine guns and the only way you could combat that was to sort of have mortars, which we did have to combat that. That bobby hit the top and it wasn't getting in amongst were they were with grenades on close up work threw the hole, if you could get close enough to that.

19:30 That was Gona and a lot of people died on both sides.

What conditions were you camped in around there?

You were in the kunai grass, you were in the cospes of the trees, you were on bare ground,

20:00 we weren't dug in, you were moving or withdrawing back a bit or coming forward a bit.

From there to Sanananda?

Well Sanananda, that was a water hold, the only way you could stay there was to dig a hole

20:30 and get in the hole, but it was half filled with water, the water was up to your waist but you had no alternative. You had to stay in that and fire from that position, not that we did a great deal of firing from that position. I was ordered to put in a attack up the

21:00 side of the track one morning and they said they'd give me mortar fire. We got into position ok, probably about fifty yards up from where we were in a defensive position. The Japs snipers became very active and I had three corporals

21:30 how they know I don't know but they shot three through the forehead, they were dead. Then our mortars came into effect when they heard the firing. They were landing the bombs into the trees and shattering and they were amongst us, so I said to run it back up fifty yards, which they did do,

22:00 we couldn't get any further forward they had us pinned down. I was indicating to the rest of the platoon to try and work their way around, then they must of spotted me and they fired and I dived for a hole, there was a hole there in behind a tree. The tree was about one foot

22:30 in diameter and they machine gunned that tree down and I was just hugging for the ground I couldn't do anything else, I had my helmet on. That was a touchy situation but they didn't get me. We couldn't make any head way and eventually withdrew and I eventually had to go before a brigadier

23:00 and he asked me questions and so on, there was nothing more I could do. There was another platoon that went in but they couldn't get any further forward. It was a very trying time there because of the terrain of the water.

How long did the Sanananda battle last for?

23:30 The Americans were there prior to us, and we relieved the Americans when we went there and they were very good and they gave us cigarettes and they gave us chocolate, we never had chocolate before in action. They were wonderful really, reading about Sanananda and our efforts there it was

24:00 MacArthur, it was all the Americans that won Sanananda the Australians didn't win Sanananda.

I've heard that the American troops there were pretty green really?

Yes trigger happy, a lot of them were trigger happy. Nevertheless like ourselves they had to

24:30 combat the conditions in that area.

From Sanananda where did you go?

Sanananda into a defensive position then the battalion were relieved and they came back to Popondetta and then flown back to Moresby. Just prior to

- 25:00 that I'd gone down with malaria a couple of days before hand and I sat in a RAP [Regimental Aid Post] tent waiting to get transport to be flown back to hospital. Eventually that afternoon I had a very high temperature and I got into the Port Moresby hospital and I was
- 25:30 recuperating and I woke up one morning and along side the bed there was this tall fellow in shorts and shirt and it was my brother. I hadn't seen him for a couple of years. He'd flown up from Milne Bay because he was a fighter pilot and he got somebody to fly him up. He had heard that the 39th were back
- 26:00 and he heard that I was in hospital and he found out and came to see me, it was wonderful to see him.

Brilliant, did you spend much time together?

Not a great deal because he had to get back that day. I was still in hospital and I was bed ridden at the time and I couldn't get out.

Did you just have a couple of hours to have a chat?

That's right.

That would have been wonderful?

It was wonderful.

- 26:30 He was a dashing man and he was telling me one at Aitape and they were in a Beaufort bomber and they overshot and at the airfield up there was fairly small and they overshot and they went straight threw the bellies but no one was in the bellies it at the time, but they all got out and none of them got hurt, it was just a remarkable thing.

- 27:00 He said they spent a week up there before they came picked us up, they lived on the land.

From hospital to?

From hospital back into camp. Then this must have been around about February 1943

- 27:30 and there was talk of the 39th Battalion going into action again, we'd been re-enforced and we were back and going into action again and we weren't very happy about it, we'd had enough. Then the good news came through that we were coming out, we came out late March 1943 after fifteen months up there.

- 28:00 We came back to Australia and the wife and I got married on the 10th April 1943.

So you had leave back to Melbourne?

Leave for seven days. Seven days and in those days accommodation was pretty difficult and we spent our honeymoon at the Nepean Hotel, Portsea. On the seventh day dad came down

- 28:30 he had a baby Austin [car] so he took us back, but on the way back I developed malaria again, I was temperatured so he took me to Royal Park where I had to go and told the doctor there that I wasn't well and they tested me out and I was positive and they shot me straight into Heidelberg. When I got into Heidelberg I reckon half the battalion was in Heidelberg. The

- 29:00 cold weather hits you and anyone whose had malaria.....After that I was given another fortnight's leave which we spent at Lorne and that was great.

A blessing in disguise?

Yes. Then gradually like us all we made our way back north to Atherton that's where the battalion was camped

- 29:30 and we all formed up there and trained. I resumed my football with the 39th Battalion and they had a football team, and I was part of the forward part of the football team.

I was going to ask you what position did you play?

Centre half forward.

You would have been quite a tall man for those days?

Yes, and

- 30:00 it was a game that I loved. Pre war I trained with Collingwood and Melbourne in fact I played in, although I was a Collingwood supporter Bruce Andrew who was a great wing man for Collingwood I use to train with him when I use to play with the Parkdale Amateurs and he got me into

- 30:30 Collingwood because he thought I had it. But I couldn't get time off from my work, it was dark when I got out to Collingwood so it was pointless. The following year he got me into Melbourne and I trained there with the late Louie Truscott the airman, he was a great man.

You would of encountered Ron Barassi Senior too wouldn't you in Melbourne in those days?

31:00 No he was a bit later Ron.

But Ron's dad was there?

His dad was there that correct, that's right. I know one of the head trainers a chap by the name of Bob Wine and he knew my father well so I got some exercise and massage.

We will talk about that later, let's go

31:30 **back to Queensland and the 39th. It wouldn't have been long after that that you would have been disbanded?**

That's correct, yes. Colonel Honner paraded us all and told us the news that the division had made and we were all upset. In fact he cried and we all had a tear too.

32:00 The comradeship was a very important thing like in a section in a platoon in a company and that's how mates got together and stuck together and fought together. That's why we were all so bitterly disappointed and we were sent to different battalions, I eventually ended up with the

32:30 2/8th Battalion. I did training at Trinity Beach training, amphibious training but malaria caught up with me again and I was in and out from down Trinity Beach into the AGH [Australian General Hospital] at Atherton that's because you had to go up by train and bus. I went up there about three times and it just was no good

33:00 and they boarder me B Class for twelve months. Then I was posted to a training battalion in 5 AARD [Australian Advanced Reinforcement Depot] at Selene Queensland and I spent quite a bit of time there. Eventually I

33:30 was posted to Gildora I was the transit officer at Gildora, sending the troops south.

Did you see any more action?

I saw no more action. In the middle

34:00 of 1945 I was reclassified as A1 and then I was given fourteen days leave and the wife and I went south and we got to Taree when all the train whistles blew, peace was being declare and I eventually went back to Camp Cable in Queensland

34:30 and I was posted to Morotai but because of the peace declaration no further troops were to leave Australia. I remained at Camp Cable until 17th November 1945 when I was released on the point system. In those days if you were a

35:00 soldier with a wife and children you got priority, if you were married you got a priority, if you were single you were the last out. Then I was discharged as I say in November 1945.

Did the company you were working pre war had they kept a job for you?

Yes, I went back as a commercial traveller in 1946,

35:30 I'd be living with my wife and the parents in Parkdale. I got the opportunity, my employer had a State Bank house in Moro Street Bentleigh but he said there was one problem you have got to get the people out. So I decided I'd go and see them and

36:00 they were very upset that they had to get out of the house because I had bought the house with my money that I got from the army. I met the men subsequent years and they said it was the best thing they ever did because they went into a new home themselves. We lived in Moro Street for about eighteen or nineteen years and then we decided to go a little

36:30 bit better and we went to a house at Moraby and from Moraby we went to Dingley and from Dingley we went to Eaglevale.

Did you find it at all hard to settle back into civilian life after the war?

It took a while to settle down, the firm that I worked with were a manufacturer's agent and they represented

37:00 Ken Thorn in lighting, Mistral Fans in fans, we had some good agencies Utalux made hose clips turn balls for cars and all that sort of thing, and strap clips for electrical trade, and I was the only traveller. Also pre war he

37:30 imported German, Japanese and English goods he was the agent for a pen and pencil company from Germany and the Japanese, so I had to go flogging Japanese products.

How popular were you?

There was a certain resistance to it, but the quality and price the price was always better than the German or the English and the people and the companies found that they had to trade. I stayed with

that company for thirty seven years that's including the war years which was bared which was thirty seven years, and I ended up

- 38:30 as a director. I resigned over a principle, I was due for long service leave and he wasn't very happy about that and he said I had to take six months, I said, "I can't take six months I wouldn't have any money left." I said "I'd like to take two or three months." and he wouldn't agree to that.
- 39:00 I resigned but in the end when he gave me the cheque the payout check he said, "If you want to come in on Monday tear the cheque up." I discussed it with the wife and the wife said, "It's up to you." so I made the decision to go it alone. I started a manufacturer's agent business in 1970 when I was fifty years of age and my son had
- 39:30 just sold the business, completed the sale of the business and it was finished last week he joined me and he did thirty years but the stress of running a business. We were in communication cables and we had coaxial cables, we had all the cables you needed.
- 40:00 It developed to such an extent that he was in every state, he had agents in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia he imported from Japan but mainly from China in the end.

Tape 3

- 00:30 **A little bit more about childhood if we may just to kick things off. Your father was in WW1 wasn't he?**

Yes he was with the 13th Light Horse, which was formed in Victoria.

Was he like many or nearly all WW1 veterans

- 01:00 **that didn't like to talk about the war?**

No, Dad as we got older he told us where he went. He went to Palestine with the horses, he took them over and he went over on the ship and the horses were there and they had to look after the horses en route. They trained in Egypt and then

- 01:30 he was drafted to Gallipoli and he went to Gallipoli and they left their horses behind. He didn't think much of Gallipoli and neither did any of the Australians.

I think that's putting it very mildly?

That's right. When they were taken by small ships they then had to jump

- 02:00 into the water and get ashore and so on. He spent quite some time there but then he went down with sickness and then he went onboard boat, and I don't think he ever came back into Gallipoli again. Then eventually after the withdrawal of the troops they went back to Palestine in Egypt. After that he went to France

- 02:30 and he saw action in France, and they took their horses this time.

Was he there for the full war?

The full war?

Was he there for Australia's complete involvement?

Yes.

He would have seen all of the terrible parts of the First World War then?

He saw quite a proportion of it, that's right.

- 03:00 Then when they went on leave of course they all went to London for leave.

What did he think of London?

It was where he was born naturally.

Of course.

He loved that, and then he use to go to Ireland and that's where he met my mother. Apparently she use to climb out the window

- 03:30 to meet him after dark so there you are.

Forgive me here, was he a British trooper in the First World War?

No, he came out when he was fourteen years of age on a ship and

04:00 he lived in Australia in Victoria.

Right.

That was his early days and he joined up with the Light Horse here and that was something that I should have mentioned.

As a fourteen year old by himself or was he with his family?

I don't know what happened to his mother and father, but he was living with his stepmother and father. He had a brother

04:30 and I think that was probably why he got restless and why he came to Australia. The remarkable thing was that after the Second World War, after my mother had died he remarried again; in fact he remarried a lass that he was engaged to before he met my mother.

Interesting.

05:00 She was a lovely women I must admit. He went back to London to seek out his brother but his brother was not known as Garland, and according to the registry my fathers name was there and Garland but the brother was under a different name. He met up with his brother and his brother said, "You're not a Garland you are a so and so."

05:30 but he stuck to his guns and that's who he was registered as in the name of Garland, so there you are that's just a side bit.

It's interesting isn't it, that in those days a fourteen year old boy would be allowed on a ship by himself and come to Australia, it's a different world isn't it?

Yes, it's a different world, that's right.

Rolling things forward just a tad, was your father do you think deeply affected

06:00 **by his war service?**

I suppose like my memories his memories were always there, he was a very good father to us children and he could get irritable the same as I could get irritable from time to time, but that's probably the English in me and the Irish blood.

06:30 He worked and he clothed us and we went to school, the mother and father really looked after us. Of course I being the senior my early days of football was a great interest to them. I can remember my mother

07:00 after a game of football she in those days you had a bath and you had to heat the water up, and you had to bucket with the water and I had this hot bath waiting for me. She was very good that way, I will always remember that.

That would have been marvellous on those cold Melbourne winter evenings?

That's right. During the war of course the people in

07:30 those days had to dig air raid shelters even in Victoria, and dad had one in the backyard and he dug it himself, and built it and he was very proud of that.

Can you remember, did you ever see it?

Yes.

Can you describe it for us?

All that I remember is that you walked down steps into it and then he had a roof over the top of it.

Was it walled with lining boards or sandbags?

08:00 Sandbags and lining boards.

Would the floor just have floorboards on the ground?

Yes that's all.

What would you take down there, what would be in there cants of food or a lamp?

Yes cans of food, stuff that you'd want like tins of soup.

On that topic then, as the war in Europe

08:30 **is building and Hitler is moving westward and Mussolini is rising in Italy and moving into Africa, what was the feeling in Australia especially having an English and Irish parents, what were you feeling about Europe at the time and about Britain's status in the 1930s?**

I think we felt that we would get assistance from

09:00 England being our mother nation, but seeing the disasters that they were having it was becoming very worrying, and of course when Pearl Harbor and the Americans weren't in the war at that stage until Pearl Harbor on the 7th December 1941. We didn't know who was going to help us really.

09:30 We were really virtually on our own and we had to defend ourselves, and of course as history has said the Americans came to our aid and I think a lot of people in Australia today forget there has been a lot of what America did in Iraq

10:00 but they forget that if it hadn't of been for America we would have been wiped out. We could not of held the Japanese, they were at Port Moresby and it was only the naval battles, the Coral Sea battle and the aerial dogfights, with out America. We

10:30 contributed but it was weighted numbers again. Australia would of gone, and our women and children would of gone too. That was the thing behind the Australian soldier, air force and navy, they knew they had to stand up and be counted.

In the 1930s then when you joined the militia did you have an inkling that war was on its way?

11:00 No, I did it for fun and enjoyment, in the Mordialloc Drill Hall 1936 was when I joined.

If you joined it for fun and enjoyment did you take it very seriously at the same time?

Yes, we had to when we went to Williamstown rifle range and fired guns, we had to take it seriously because there was the element of risk there,

11:30 you had to be very careful.

Were you firing just at targets?

At targets, that's correct.

Apart from having rifles for rifle range practice, what did you use for drilling because you said that you didn't have rifles?

We had broomsticks, that's right. We use to train quite a bit on the Parkdale football oval and surrounding areas there because the terrain,

12:00 there were not very many houses around Parkdale football ground in those days, and of course we use to do our night exercises there.

What did the night exercises consist of?

One platoon attacking another sort of thing, and hiding and so on, we use to do drill up there.

Do you think you received a fairly good training

12:30 **with the CMF [Citizen Military Forces] - militia as it was in those days?**

We did, yes it was excellent and I got the rank of corporal then in those days. I was king and my brother was with me, and several other friends.

As the 1930s progressed then and let say we are talking now about 1938-1939

13:00 **and war is brewing in Europe did you give any thought to or were you tempted to join the AIF?**

No, I had obtained the rank of corporal and then I went into camp I think at Tallarook which was in 1940 I think and I got to sergeant with the 46th Battalion Brighton Rifles, and then

13:30 I was selected to go for my commission so I did that. Then the thought was in those days that the pay was such for an officer as against the private what was I to do? Was I going to join the AIF and go away? So I decided to stick

14:00 where I was with the 46th Battalion Brighton Rifles in Albury. That's when this notice came out about joining a battalion to go to New Guinea and I jumped at that.

Are you saying if you'd join the AIF they wouldn't have recognized your commission?

No I would have gone in as a private, I could have perhaps worked my way up again but that would have taken quite sometime.

14:30 **Did a lot of men regardless of that did a lot of men defect for the militia to the AIF as war began to loom and broke out?**

I don't know about that, but I know that it was when we were at Owers Corner with B Company the 39th just ready

15:00 to go over the Owen Stanley track that the authorities brought the papers along to join the AIF because the government's intention was that the no CMF forces would go into action against the enemy. Ninety five percent joined and about five percent decided that no they wouldn't join.

15:30 They said that those five percent would go back, but the five percent still stayed with the battalion, they wouldn't go back. I signed and I got my VX number after I came out of action so I did not know although I'd signed to join the AIF I did not know whether I was accepted or not, as far as we were concerned we were still militia, choccos [chocolate soldiers]

16:00 of the 39th Battalion.

But that became a badge of honour in a way, you went from being an insult to you fellows being proud of being in the 39th?

That's right. That was the thing that upset us all. Back in the days of Darley when we were there for three months as militia the

16:30 fights that took place against the AIF who were also in Darley, that's where they should never of had both the militia and AIF and you wouldn't think that two men, one AIF and one militia would fight each other, well they did. They stormed B Company up one night and there was a really brawl but Captain Sam Templeton

17:00 again took a sword in there and he straighten them out, and the fight stopped. That feeling existed even when I don't know what they thought about coming to fight with us in the Owen Stanleys, I don't know what their thoughts were.

Was all the amity all the aggression and all the bad feeling from the AIF side,

17:30 **things like from what I have read they picked on the militia it wasn't like the militia went against the AIF?**

It was the AIF against the militia because they said "They didn't join to fight anywhere in the world." this was what they thought.

How did that make you feel personally at the time?

It didn't worry me, no, it didn't worry me at all. We

18:00 were sent to New Guinea to do a job, we did it but we possibly didn't expect what came after, while we were there.

Who would of expected that, who could of really in retrospect?

We were very very proud to do what we did do.

Tell us about your training at Darley as the 39th,

18:30 **do you think it was a effective training raceme they put you on?**

I was very effective, it created discipline within the troops, it brought all the troops together under the one battalion and friendships and comradeships developed. We did day training and we did night exercises, in other words the

19:00 alerted Berg Gorge was one of the big training by division and they had quite a few exercises there involving all battalions. That was undulating country it was very hilly and exhausting, and it was very good.

19:30 A Lieutenant Don Simonson who I mentioned earlier in the car he was in one of the machine gun companies and he use to cause havoc through B Company lines. He as a platoon commander would yell with his troops and go through out lines and upset us and Captain Sam Templeton wasn't very impressed with Don Simonson, but he got to know him a bit better later on

20:00 in New Guinea.

I just thought of something if we can talk a little bit about your work post war; you said that the company that you worked for imported German and Japanese goods?

Yes.

Did they import those goods pre war?

Pre war that's correct.

Did you have an occasion then to met German people and Japanese before the war?

Yes there was a fellow by the name of

20:30 Frigner, from Germany and he was from Castell Pencil company and he was in Victoria when war was declared, he got out of Australia but they caught up with him and he was interned in South Africa, for

the duration of the war. The Japanese people yes, I met some Japanese

21:00 people because they were also in businesses in Flinders Lane.

What impressions had you formed of the Japanese prior to the war and through these business contacts?

They are very shrewd, very business like, very cunning and it was quite well known that any product that the world made including products from

21:30 England could be copied by the Japanese. I think what we learnt during the war was that the quality of such things as binoculars, and Japanese war equipment and their weapons were first class, they had better equipment than we did.

Was the impression pre war then that their equipment was

22:00 **inferior copies, not their fighting equipment but the things you imported were inferior copies?**

They weren't inferior copies, no. The quality was there and the price was better, like for instance we were importing lighting sets for bicycles, which consisted of a generator a headlight and a tail light we use to import the spick German set but the Japanese

22:30 produced a copy of it, probably not quite as good a quality but the price was there, and that's how my boss did very well thank you very much.

What happened to these Japanese people in Flinders Lane when war broke out?

I don't know, but I do know that Utalux was owned by a German

23:00 and he was interned during the war, and after the war he was released and Utalux continued under him, his name was Jansen and he had a lovely home in New South Wales.

That's interesting isn't it?

We did it several times and he had a charming wife and family. He was a

23:30 very outspoken individual and he was a German, and he didn't like Australians, and I didn't like him anyway.

Ok we will leave him alone then for the moment. I'm just wondering then when you are in training and it's fairly self evident that you'll be going to New Guinea and you are going to be facing the Japanese there and there's nobody else whose

24:00 **coming down that way, was the fact that you had contact with the Japanese people pre war seen as a rare thing, would people ask you what the Japanese were like, what can we expect?**

Yes, the surprise we got was, as I said the Japanese that I met pre war was small people in height, not the Mongolians that

24:30 fought against us, they were six footers, not all of them but a lot of them were big people.

Were you given information during training about the Japanese, because I've heard some wild furrphies [rumours] thrown about that their bullets weren't fast or powerful enough to penetrate you and that they were small fellows with glasses and they couldn't see at night, were you fed any of that stuff?

We didn't get any of that,

25:00 I think the one thing that was outlined to us was their jungle training. How they camouflaged in the jungle, compared with our khaki and our weapons that they had as against our weapons and they were so well trained.

25:30 In other words we were told that they had many battles before and they were experienced troops, we were just beginners.

You would of heard about the fall of Malaya and Singapore and Ambon and so forth?

Rabaul was the main thing that we'd heard about. I think because

26:00 some of the 2/22nd troops had escaped from Rabaul and made their way south and like for instance Major Cameron, Colonel Allen, Colonel Allen was made a Colonel when he was made a CO at the 39th. In civilian life I play golf with a fellow who lived

26:30 close to the Kingswood Golf Club and he was with the 2/22nd and they for weeks and weeks making their way south. Then I knew of a Lieutenant Leveret from Leveret Gardens Moorabbin chasing people, he was with the commandos in Rabaul, he

27:00 eventually was captured and sent to the coal mines in Japan.

From Darley you would have been trained up to Woolloomooloo?

Yes, correct.

Were you given a final leave before that?

No, we were told we had visitors Christmas Day and then we were told that we were leaving the next morning,

27:30 which was Boxing Day the 26th.

So your wife who would have been your girlfriend at this stage?

That's correct, not even my fiancé at that stage.

Just your lady friend?

Yes just my lady friend, my father and mother use to bring her up in a baby Austin and we had a picnic on the riverbank and I can remember this, I'm disgusted. We

28:00 took a blanket from our bed so Mum and Dad and we could sit on it on the grass, and when they went I'd take the blanket back to the hut, and then I spent the next two hours taking out all the barbs from the grass, oh that was disgraceful.

How much time or did you have anytime alone with your intended at that stage to say goodbye or to say what?

28:30 A little bit but not a great deal of time I mean by the time they came up to Bacchus Marsh the visitors had to go, there were hours set for the visitors.

Did you make promises to her or did she make promises to you at that stage?

We corresponded a lot, yes. As a matter of fact she

29:00 was engaged to a chap that went to the Middle East, George I knew him quite well actually, nice bloke and a big man, but he unfortunately was killed at Crete. I had been seeing her off and on like we would be going to the dances

29:30 and take her out and I was there when she got the telegram and of course she was devastated by that, that was the prior to going back into camp.

How did she feel then going out with another soldier who was going to war, it must have been tough for her to say goodbye?

I think that she would

30:00 feel it, but I don't know quite her reaction.

Did she put on a brave face for you?

To an extent yes. I know when I wanted to become engaged, that part was alright but when I suggested that we get married when I come on leave her mother and father, not so much the mother but the father was against it

30:30 because he felt it was too soon after the death of George and I went along with that, but eventually he agreed.

You only had fourteen days leave didn't you?

Seven.

How long did you go along for it then, or did you plan to get married before that leave?

Yes we'd corresponded and we wanted to get married because then the problem came up

31:00 about the priest. The priest Father O'Brien wouldn't marry us because I was a different religion so Dobby Earl our Padre of the 39th Battalion I use to talk to him and he said to tell your wife to contact a younger priest which she did and she got permission,

31:30 and Pats father agreed and said it was ok to go ahead. We got married and we spent the first night at the Hotel Australia in those days in Collins Street, we had breakfast looking down at Collins Street.

That would have been quite lovely?

It was nice, and we moved down to the Nepean Hotel at Portsea.

32:00 **Was it because it was in the middle of the wartime, was it a small wedding?**

We had a lot of friends there, but in those days you could not have drink, alcohol at any receptions.

Why, because of rationing?

Yes, that's right but I had my boss

32:30 and his wife there and he said "where's your whisky Godfrey?", because that was my name Godfrey he didn't know me as Goff. I said "it will come shortly", and around under the table the whisky bottles were put and moved around and poured, and even though the glass was on the table it could be Coca Cola, but the bottles didn't appear.

33:00 **Where did you get the whisky from then?**

I don't know, my parents had a lot to do with that, dad being an ex soldier.

He would have had ways and means?

That's right.

I think any boy who can come on a boat by himself at fourteen to another country half was across the world can find a couple of bottles of whisky if he needs too?

That's right.

Let's talk about the train trip to Sydney, what was that

33:30 **like, was that full of men thinking 'I wonder what we are going to get into', 'I'm already missing my sweetheart, wife, mother, children', or was it a train load of excited blokes going 'here comes the adventure'?**

The adventure yes, we were all excited and very thrilled. I have a photograph in my bag there of us, the officers on the deck of the Aquitania looking

34:00 down onto the troops on the wharf which is quite a good photograph and I will show it to you after, and you can see the excitement there. There was one officer there and he was just made president of the 39th Battalion association this year, as a matter of fact Noel Hall who I think was being interviewed by you people

34:30 he was a OAM [Order of Australia Medal] he was presented with it a couple of years ago. He was our president for forty years with our association and they made him a life member and a governor.

After forty years, it's a long time?

The association is still going, that was the spirit of the 39th Battalion.

35:00 I can remember going back years ago I use to look after, I started a ball a get together with our wives and we use to go to the Parks, they use to call it different names the Dorchester, the Botanic Gardens and I ran the ball there every year for quite a number of years,

35:30 and we were packed.

I bet you were?

Yes.

On to this thrill of adventure this swashbuckling sort of mentality, how did that come up against the 53rd Battalion who I believe were on the same ship as you, because they had a much different view of what was going on?

I didn't come up against them but I did come up against a couple of

36:00 the officers and that from the 49th Battalion and they also were on board. We met them but I don't think I heard any views of what their impressions were.

They were to all intense purposes press ganged into it weren't they?

I understand so, yes they were

36:30 ordered, where as the 39th were volunteers, they volunteered for it.

Which is an important distinction don't you think so?

I think so, they were doing it of their own free will, and they were ordered into it, they were forced into it and there's a different atmosphere about it.

You said there were nurses on the ship as well, were the nurses ever entertained in the officers' mess?

Yes

37:00 we got to know some of the nurses.

I thought that would have been quite a jolly time?

Yes, we had some dances on board.

I'm not suggesting you were involved in this because you already had a lady friend, but were there ship board romances?

That's right and we were all involved, opposite sexes we enjoyed ourselves.

It was a little topical cruise then?

37:30 Yes, that was alright until the boys, I had a meal and I had some gorgonzola cheese and that upset me and that was the first time I ever had it and it upset me, and I had to race to the deck that was the nearest thing and I had to stumble because the troops all slept on decks where as we were all in cabins.

38:00 I couldn't get the port hold opened and there were no lights and there were a lot of squeals I was ill, I was pretty sick for a day, seasick.

You couldn't get the porthole opened, did you rely it on yourself or somebody else?

Somebody else copped it.

Charming?

Yes charming, you can image.

The Aquitania had been a luxury

38:30 **liner hadn't it?**

That's correct.

Had it been remodelled into a troop ship by this stage or was it still quite flash?

I don't think so, no the troops were all on decks with all their equipment just laying their in rows.

On the ship what equipment did you have, did you think you had adequate equipment with you for what

39:00 **you thought you would be doing at Moresby?**

We had our Lewis guns with us and we had our rifles, yes.

Did you have jungle greens?

No, we were all khaki.

Were they light uniform, tropical uniform?

Yes, it was khaki was light tropical uniform but it was khaki

39:30 and we didn't get the greens in the first year at all.

Did you have lectures on board about what people might expect and briefings and so forth?

We did boat training, I was on guard at night in case of a submarine attack, there were guards put on around the ship.

40:00 We were given gas mask drill, but not really that we would be going into action, no we were going out there in defence at Port Moresby so we didn't know what to expect really.

And of course you had gone laden to the gunwales with the tennis rackets, cricket bats and badminton sets?

That's right and we never

40:30 got to use them.

No room on that track to play with them?

Those trunks ended up in a quay store somewhere and I know I had a officers pistol and there was a chap who had an American pistol and he wanted to get it back to Australia, well he couldn't take it because he would be searched but we wouldn't be so it went into my trunk for him,

41:00 yes so there was ways.

Tape 4

00:30 **I would like to know what else was in your trunk if I might?**

Spare clothing, other than that that's all.

I imagine other fellows had taken some things with them, did you see anyone bring anything that was ridiculous like a deck chair or something they thought would be handy but was just silly?

01:00 I didn't but some of them got the office to bring back Rolex from natives, yes that's right.

You said there was a bit of trouble on board in terms of sailing to Port Moresby

01:30 **in that there were a few problems along the way was that Japanese Zeros over head or mines?**

No, submarine. A couple of scares but there were cruisers and battleships. I know the Achilles was one, the Perth and there were quite a few. Although there were those couple of scares

02:00 it never eventuated to anything.

How did those scares present themselves, how did you hear about them onboard?

We were advised by the company commander.

Because the Aquitania itself would have been a long way from that sort of action, the destroyers up ahead would have had to deal with that?

Yes.

I'm just curious if it did filter down to you that they didn't bothered to hide it from you at all?

02:30 No, that made us more alert that there was a dangerous situation.

Were there any drills on board in the eventuation of the ship sinking?

Evacuation, yes we were told where the lifeboats were and how the lifeboats would be released, that you would have to

03:00 stand in position waiting for time to get on the small boats.

What was the order to be, was the nurses first and were the privates after that?

I'm not sure.

When you did roll up at Port Moresby, there is this image that you presented before with the ropes overboard and everybody down the ropes including the women. The nurses hadn't had the kind of

03:30 **physical training that the soldiers had been doing for the last six months to a couple of years. I also image that they were quite hardy individuals the nurses that went overseas but how did they manage that sort of activity, did you get the opportunity to witness that?**

Not really, we were just concerned about climbing down the ropes ourselves, and they had to keep that boat

04:00 because it was a bit choppy, so I didn't see what was going on all, all I saw was people going down.

It seems a bit comical thinking about it in a way because those rope ladders you fall through or slip, did you see anything like people falling into the water?

No, they were pretty start ropes and you could hang on to them and they had the runs just like a ladder.

When they got you ashore, what were the little boats

04:30 **called, were they little barges that would take you from?**

Motor boats.

Did they actually get you to shore or did they just drop you in the water and you had to wade through?

No right to the shore.

Upon arrival did it look like, how did it look, did it like sort of an insane camping trip?

It was a sandy beach.

Were there tents set up?

No,

05:00 we were instructed to form into company, platoon by platoon and we marched.

Your company was still fairly green at this stage in terms of what to expect overseas, you mentioned that the soldiers were so full of excitement on the train up.

05:30 **Was there a point where you noticed that the flush of excitement was worn away by the excruciating march?**

Yes, we were keeping our head down and marching down a road and it was hot, it was humid. We were told it was the Seven Mile Drome and that's a fair march

06:00 with your backpack on and everything.

How heavy is a pack, do you have any idea what the physical weight of it is?

It would be about eighty pound.

Did any of the fellows just not manage it, did they fall by the way side at that point and then the rest?

Two or three but most of them got there.

What sort of discipline are you suppose to issue out when you see a fellow that is just a bit tired basically?

You have got to help them; someone is detailed to be with them

06:30 and then catch up.

Apart from the legendary mateship amongst Australian soldiers?

Yes.

In a situation like before you've seen action, before you know how serious the event or the campaign is, are there fellows that fall back given a hard time are they told to buck up and get it together?

I was when I fell by the way side by the company commander

07:00 and he poured a bottle of water over me, because he could see that I was in a bit of agony through the climbing of steps and down steps yes, but I was told 'you're a soldier and you have to grin and bare it'.

The situation that you were in for example two things spring to mind that you had been through incredible arduous tracking and action, and two what was he doing wasting precious water by throwing it over you?

07:30 There were plenty of troops that had water going up the track, it was a single track.

But earlier on in those six months where you were basically working as pack horses for the army at the point and laying barb wire and digging probably unnecessarily?

Yes, and unloading boats.

Almost like wharf workers for a while?

We got very browned off, very browned off

08:00 through it all because it was going on for six months. There were some good spots for instance when the AGH started to arrive and they had picnics, well we were invited to go and have a picnic with them, so that use to be quite good it was some entertainment. Of course the picture shows

08:30 at night, they were very good entertainment there and the sunsets were just brilliant. All in all you went along with it well, everyday was different but we were getting a bit bored with the inactivity.

That surprises me that everyday was different I get the sense that a lot of it was very tedious?

Yes, the first

09:00 thing in the morning was I had to line my platoon up and they had to drink a little pile of quinine, it use to brown your teeth and it was terrible in the stomach.

I heard it could rip the hair off your back, pretty rough stuff?

It was rough alright. Some of the boys use to vomit before breakfast, so what they did then

09:30 was they issued a small piece of bread so they had the quinine and then the piece of bread and that

seemed to overcome the problem. Until the quinine tablets came into effect although it was a bit bitter but at least it went down, but the quinine liquid was shocking.

How did you feel about having to set an example for the men when you yourself were asked to do unpleasant things?

10:00 Most important was to have the quinine first, some of them flatly refused to have it, one or two of them we held down and forced it down, they had to have it because if they didn't they'd get malaria and that was no good to the platoon or the company.

No, and unfortunately some of you got anyway?

That's right.

Holding another soldier down, was it really

10:30 **quite a sad thing to have to do, or was there an element of a little bit of fun, making somebody take the medicine everyday?**

In the end they came around to it.

They had to do that everyday, did they resist everyday?

No just initially.

These picnics that you mentioned, it sounds all very lovely and salubrious, and it also seems surreal

11:00 **that you were heading off to have picnics in the middle of a potential war zone?**

It was usually on a Sunday, and Sunday is a relaxing day there, there was not much activity went on unless you were being bombed. I don't think it was ever bombed at picnics, and I witnessed many bombings.

It's interesting that the Japanese intelligence hadn't sorted that out for themselves to one day ruin your picnic?

11:30 That's right and particularly Tokyo Rose [Japanese propaganda broadcaster], when she use to broadcast and we use to get that in the platoon.

What was the scuttlebutt [gossip] that was occurring around the tents at the point with this day after day of unloading ships and so on, was there constant rumours that you'd be moving off soon and seeing some action?

No not really,

12:00 we just continued on doing what we were doing. It wasn't until as I say early July that B Company got the task.

Was there any talk of mutiny?

No, but the tin food was getting to a lot of the troops, dysentery was a very bad thing and there was a dysentery ill.

12:30 I know some fellows went blind because severe dysentery can cause blindness.

Was it temporary or permanent?

Permanent and that was a bad thing. The malaria wasn't so bad there in the warmer conditions, it was immediately you got into the colder conditions that it would affect you and that's what had happened to me.

13:00 **When you were able to get up to that point and have a shot at the Zeros, you're your Lewis guns I was wondering if you can give me a little bit more detail about how you managed that and whether you knew there was a weak spot in the Zero that you had to aim for, it seems so puny?**

That's right.

You said you did equip yourself once or twice?

Yes, we use to carry the

13:30 Lewis gun up to Mount Lofty and you could see the bullets, the bullet hitting where the pilot was sitting, and it was just bouncing off, you had to keep firing as he moved along at other parts of the plane but you didn't know what effect it had. The troops

14:00 all told you that they were very very difficult to bring down.

Did they actually manage to do that at any stage, you yourself or anybody else?

Not personally, but the platoon were credited with bring two Zeros down, in other words they crashed later down near Seven Mile Drome.

Did they crash anywhere near were you could go and have a look at the wreckage?

No.

Also I'm wondering

14:30 **each company A through to Don Company have any particular jobs to do within their platoon, was A company always sent on scouting operations and B Company always sent to the front, was that an issue at all?**

There were allotted company areas and that was their areas and they all then did their patrol work from there in different sections of

15:00 surrounding areas of the Seven Mile Drome. For instance there was one company down at Bootless Bay and that was four or five miles from where we were, but we went there scouting one day and talking to the natives and so on. There was one time when we were there and a pilot

15:30 had crashed landed, one of our pilots near one of the major rivers and Captain Templeton said to me "I want you to take a patrol out, but you will have to cross the river."

16:00 now it's a fast flowing river and I said, "How do we do it?", and he said, "Take a little sort of pontoon boat and you will have to get a person to swim that river." which was at least one hundred yards wide to take a rope across and tie it up on a tree and then come back with the

16:30 pontoon and then you all ferry across. We couldn't do that for a while but eventually we got one of the chaps who was a powerful swimmer, he ended up thirty or forty yards down stream and he eventually got the rope across,

17:00 we got across alright and it was dark then. We tried to sleep but we couldn't sleep but the morning we were covered in leeches. With a leech you have to heat a needle, all we had was wax and at best matches, we'd heat the end of the needle and

17:30 we'd get rid of the leech but we all had leeches, and it was shocking wet conditions. We started out and came across several villages and talking to natives was very difficult we sort of had to explain and they'd say 'plane' sort of. We couldn't locate it, we went along way for two days and then came back and then had to come back over that

18:00 river again. That was quite an experience actually, it was tough conditions.

What kind of an orienteerer are you, how good are you at navigating through the jungle?

I think it was just feel your way and the natives would help you, guide you. They would say 'Quarter of a mile.'

18:30 and we'd say "Twenty minutes." they had no sense of distance. They were always way out in their times compared to us as we were concerned.

Did you get there faster?

A lot longer.

Did you work with any of the locals as guides; did you sort of eventually learn a little pidgin?

No.

Did you see men and women

19:00 **on your patrols or just the men?**

Just the men.

It's interesting, the women seemed to have just disappeared into the jungle, they were still there?

You mean the women of the villages?

Yes the locals?

A few, but most of them had been guided deeper into the jungle, yes that's right, because some platoons of other battalions we spoke to later

19:30 said there were women in some villages.

Was there any trouble between the Australian troops and any of the New Guinea women?

Not that I know of.

What about the fellows, not the men from the PIB, but just local fellows who were happy to help out as scouts did you have much interaction with them?

I met some

20:00 ANGAU patrol officers, there was one patrol officer named Champion and he was marvellous, I'd met several others and they were great people, they were people that were plantation owners, or worked for plantation owners and then joined ANGAU [Australian and New Guinea Administrative Unit].

20:30 **Did you ever swap any food or any other customs or share stories?**

What with the natives?

Yes.

We shared and as a matter of fact I can't speak any too highly of them, they were magnificent, courageous I mean the difficulty was that the Japanese

21:00 brought natives from Rabaul into New Guinea and forced them to spy on the other natives, and then they slaughtered them, and their women and children. I think there were a couple of missionary ladies and men who were also killed near Sanananda.

21:30 The different natives, there are natives near the coast and there are natives up the point of the Owen Stanley pass, and there are natives down lower. A fellow by the name of Bert Kindsall, he was the leader, he started the train with the natives from Kokoda

22:00 back to Port Moresby and vice versa. He had three lots of natives, the natives from the ocean to the pass and then there were those at the top, they could stand the cold weather there, the ones down near the coast couldn't and then there was the other side the Port Moresby side the warmer climate. Well Bert Kindsall had this carrier with

22:30 food, ammunition and then of course most of all the carrying of people who couldn't walk. My friend Don Simonson he got a grenade shattered on his hip but fortunately he could walk but he had to walk back with that wound after being treated at the RAP back to Owers Corner.

23:00 In the case of those that couldn't walk they were carried on stretchers by the natives, the fuzzy wuzzy angels because that's what they were.

That's a really bad bit of business this taking natives from Rabaul to spy on the locals in New Guinea, I hadn't heard that before?

It's right.

I don't think you can answer this but I'm curious?

They also brought a lot of the ladies with them.

For the Japanese?

For the Japanese, that's right.

23:30 **That's just war crimes one after the another isn't it?**

That's right.

I'm curious to know how the Japanese managed convinced the natives in Rabaul to spy on them?

They didn't convince them they just took them.

Yes, and I'm just wondering how they managed to put them under that much pressure but obviously if they had their women they had everything, that's a dreadful bit of business? When did the war go from being not abstract because you are in the middle of it at Port Moresby,

24:00 **when did it go from being something that you were there to be apart of to something that was effecting you personally, was it a wounded soldier or an order you had to give that men would die?**

I think the stress you went through and seeing a man get shot and buried in the front line by the padre and that had the effect. The attack I put in at Sanananda

24:30 when I lost three section leaders, and they were all shot through the head. The difficulty was we could take their tickets off them, but we had no one to take those bodies out and bury them, now that was the same with the Japanese, just the same. At Gona there were dozens of their dead and no one buried them,

25:00 not even their own. Our people had to bury the Japanese, and I've got a photo in the bag where there is

about six of us standing around and they are just putting body after body into a hole and burying them, and they were Japanese.

Do you think

25:30 **that the Japanese ever buried Australian troops?**

I think they did, I don't know, I wasn't a witness to it but whether they did it I'm not sure.

I've read also that the whole business of Kokoda was really a section leader's war?

Yes that's right, that's where the comradeship came in.

26:00 **Because it was such a difficult part of the terrain, and an known kind of warfare that the section leaders really equipped themselves brilliantly?**

That's correct.

I guess losing those corporals was?

Devastating.

It's just terrible knowing that you are lying there just being picked off by the Japanese too as opposed to the chaos?

It was shortly after that was when they fired on me and I dived into a hole

26:30 and kept my head down and there was a tree about one foot wide and they just machine gunned it down, and fortunately they couldn't get the gun elevated low enough to get me. When darkness came we were able to get out of there.

I realised I've jumped a little bit off the chronology but that's fine, once they have identified who you are, they obviously know you are the platoon commander at this point, that you are the boss man?

They don't know that.

27:00 **They suspect you are, you seem to suspect they saw you issuing orders?**

That right, that's true.

What do you do in a situation like that then it's a bit dangerous to come out of your rabbit hole at that point?

I couldn't get out of it and I sang out to some of the troops to get around and try and identify where they were but they couldn't move either, they couldn't advance otherwise they would have been in the firing line.

27:30 **How long were you pinned down like that?**

I was pinned down for about three hours.

Oh.

That's right.

Did that feel like three years?

More than that. I didn't think I'd get out of it frankly.

So in three hours, which is a long time in anybody's terms, every minute is probably excruciatingly long, what promises do you make with the man upstairs or what thoughts did you have?

You say your prayers,

28:00 and dig deep and scratch down.

Is there time to be overwhelmed by your life story, or the people who you have known?

It all comes back.

So your parents, and your girlfriend and your brother and everybody else?

You think about it all, definitely.

Can you see any of your fellow soldiers while you were dug down like that during those three hours?

I could yes, to the side I could.

Are you sending each

28:30 **other messages or signals with your eyes?**

No, I was singing out to them.

You can actually call out to them?

Yes I can call out to them, and of course the Japs could hear that too, there was no other way. The three section leaders had gone so they had to get directions from somebody.

So you are the last one there to do that?

That's right.

29:00 It was only about I suppose thirty or forty yards across that we were sort of in line.

Is it personal at that point, are you personally angry at the Japanese or is all that out of the picture?

We were trying to find out, we could see where the guns were coming from, I presumed it was under a log with a slot but

29:30 the other boys could only see part but they couldn't get up to it, because they kept firing.

How many are there in this?

There were thirty in the attack.

You had lost three corporals?

We had lost three corporals, that's right.

Any of the others?

No, all others got out, we were relieved then.

How did you get out?

We walked out at night.

You just waited until nightfall?

Yes, the other

30:00 section came up and got into position quietly.

After you got out and you'd spent your three hours with God, and the memories of your life and I don't mean to sound too dramatic but let's be honest it was dramatic, does it rush through your body, are you overwhelmingly exhausted and do you realise you have to do the things that you promised God that you

30:30 **were going to do and all that sort of Hollywood palaver.**

I think you were just lucky to get out, and lucky to get out and get into a hole full of water. I can remember it was Christmas Day the next day and we were sitting in the holes and we fortunately could see towards the sea and you could see the Lockheed Lightning

31:00 the American Lockheed Lightning fighting the Zeros and that battle went on all day, Christmas Day.

While you were sitting in a pit full of water. It doesn't get more surreal more than that I don't think?

No, in writing letters, trying to write a letter we use to write letters and we would write on the back of the letters that we had received and send them off,

31:30 whether they got there or not we don't know, but they did.

Given that we are in this spot I need to ask another question about those poor corporals that you lost is it your job to write to their parents?

No that's up to the battalion they do that, they came from all parts of Victoria. I think in some cases they did but in my case I didn't.

32:00 **Under the conditions you were in when they were shot were you able to take any of their personnel possession?**

We took their weapons and we took their name tags. There was no chance of getting their bodies out otherwise other people would have been shot getting their bodies out, unless you dragged them out at night and then they had to be buried.

32:30 There was not the facilities to do it, and not the personnel to do it.

If you are older than these boys but you are probably weren't much older, did you have a sense about them given that they were your subordinates, did you feel responsible for them like a father might?

I did and I'd known them for a long while, and they were a great loss and the same with Corporal Knight who I lost

33:00 attacked by the Japanese, he didn't obey orders and he paid the supreme sacrifice for it, and it's tragic.

It is and it's shocking.

Yes.

It's also interesting that I hear stories that when men do disobey orders for good or bad or whatever reason they'd often end up in strife?

That's right.

Even in the chaos of those circumstances those orders are made with

33:30 **a reasonable amount of precision?**

That's right. You are in the army and that's why there is a platoon commander and that's why there is a section commander. Even those troops in the section know that if their section commanders lost there is somebody else, the 2IC in the section would take over.

I'm going to

34:00 **take us back again if I maybe so rude to the Seven Mile Drome, it's an aerodrome and is it and I think the Australians had built it, or who built the Seven Mile Drome there and who reinforced it?**

I'm not sure.

Did you have occasion to bump into American troops down there?

No, I didn't our own troops were surrounding

34:30 the drome and some of them got bombed. There was one tragedy and I think we were at Kokoda at the time and the word came through and I don't know how it got through that the Japanese had bombed and there were thirty or forty killed in the bombing raid.

When was the first bombing raid that you

35:00 **witnessed or were apart of?**

I can't remember the first, but there were many. I don't remember this but I was asleep and it was at night and they bombed and we all had fox holes to get in. I woke up after it somehow and I went out

35:30 and they said "We didn't want to wake you, if the bomb was going to hit you it was going to hit you whether you were awake or not."

Well that pre-empts my next question, which is do you get to a point of being quite casual about the fact that there are bombs dropping around?

They say the one that you don't hear is the one that gets you. Getting back to bombing in

36:00 the unloading and loading of stores there were I think two officers and about eight men of the 39th who were killed by a bomb on the Macduhui, that's the vessel that's still laying in the harbour at Port Moresby. The ship actually left the wharf with the troops onboard it couldn't do anything else,

36:30 it didn't have time it had to get out it zig zagged, but after the second day they got them. A matter of fact my friend this Don Simonson that I was telling you about who was the MC [Military Cross] winner he was engaged to a Lieutenant Ted Money and he was on board and I think there was another officer by the name of McCloud, a captain, and he was onboard.

37:00 So that was our first casualties actually in the 39th Battalion and it was very devastating really.

How did you maintain morale after that, was it your responsibility?

No, it didn't come under my jurisdiction, they were in different companies they weren't B Company. We felt really effected by it but there was nothing that we could do,

37:30 it was war and you had to just accept it.

You mentioned also that you bumped into a number of men that you knew from the Brighton Battalion while you were in New Guinea?

Yes.

You bumped into lots of soldiers during you time that you knew from pre war, is that an odd sensation when you see a chap that you knew from civilian times?

It's a wonderful sensation really, particularly when B Company

38:00 the 2/14th Battalion came up to support us in action and the first person I met was a Lieutenant Ben Hall from Brighton who I knew in peace time, and then of course there was this Major Cameron who I detested but I knew pre war and then he just called us rabbits.

He called you rabbits too?

He said

38:30 "You should have stood and fight!" I said, "But the troops we had against us the odds were against us." I never forgot him for his words to B Company.

It's interesting that the fellow you don't have much time for before the war ends up a major?

That's right and he escaped out of Rabaul, when he escaped out of Rabaul he left his troops behind,

39:00 or he took some with him I don't know what happened, but of course the same thing could be said against Colonel Owen, he was a major and he was made a colonel for the 39th. Then what did he say about Major General Bennett who left Singapore.

Well that's the subject of many many books.

I think they can get their troops out,

39:30 and they can get out to fight again and I think that's very important.

Tape 5

00:30 **The trip back in 1967 you would have all been in your late forties?**

In 1967 I was 47, we took our wives and there were about eighty of us and we had a reception at the Port Moresby RSL [returned and Services League]

01:00 and we stayed there the night. Within the next two or three days we flew into Kokoda and the men stopped at Bert Kindsall's home and that was magnificent. The ladies flew back to Port

01:30 Moresby they were lucky to get out because the cloud was coming in.

You said that maybe was because of accommodation but it sounds to me like the men just needed to be by themselves there?

No I think it was accommodation. There were a few people who were seasick because they were using the DC-3s, and you sat opposite each other strapped in and I know my wife was saying

02:00 that her friend May Simonson was ill going over and she was ill going back. That was a wonderful return and there was a monument there and it brought back a lot of memories and we had a meal at the administrative headquarters with Peter Brewer who was the district magistrate of Kokoda and I'd met him

02:30 pre war and he was still there, but he died in later years. Back to Port Moresby, we had this trip to the Bomana War Cemetery and I think that was something that I will never ever forget. Our wives were up at the top of the sort of plateau with the

03:00 New Guinea Girls' Choir and we were at the bottom end. We marched up with our battalion flag and we marched up through the cemetery, this was you might say about six o'clock in the morning and they were just white ghosts.

03:30 We moved right up to the top of the cemetery and the girls' choir was singing and it was just beautiful.

Did you say they were just white ghosts?

The head stones of the burials of where a lot of the 39th were buried and a lot of

04:00 the other members were buried.

Was it at all cosmic in the sense that you could sense those men there or you felt their presence?

We could feel they were there, we turned about and we looked down to where we had come from and

they were still just white ghosts. it was a very eerie feeling, very touching.

04:30 It was at that time when my wife was talking to some of the sisters that were there she found out that one of the sisters taught our children at St Paul's, Bentleigh, Jasper Road she originally came from there, so it was very moving.

How as it been, and how has it been for your friends

05:00 **if you've spoken about this in learning what you can and cant tell your spouses about your experience, and I ask that quite specifically because I know quite a lot of men haven't told their wives exactly what went on, how as it been for you did you feel that you could talk to your wife about the terrors?**

Yes, my wife has been perhaps involved with the association when I was president and I think I was president about

05:30 1950-1952 somewhere around about then of the association, so she knows what I've done and the Anzac Day marches and then the correspondence of the years she's been involved. Taking her back in 1967 was just magnificent really, for us men to take our wives back to what we had been through,

06:00 yes she has been very understanding.

Was she shocked by the physical terrain and the impossibility?

Yes.

Were you shocked when you had a look at it again and thought how did?

Yes I see it now. I saw a film Basic, I don't know if you have seen it?

No I haven't.

Don't see it, there are some very good actors in it, it's an American war film.

They obviously won

06:30 **then?**

Yes but the terrain, it rained and it rained through the whole of the film believe it or not.

Have you seen any films that you thought came close to the depicting what you went through?

Can't put my finger on it no.

The steps of the Kokoda Track, I've never asked anybody this but before the war was

07:00 **the Kokoda Track just a path that the natives used to get about?**

Correct.

Once the Australians got there was it a little more than say a foot wide, was it just worn?

I'd say it was about four foot wide, but you can imagine with troops going over it and it becomes slippery, and when the rain was on it so you would slide so that's why you'd slip and you had to sort of guide yourself.

07:30 **These steps that were built in, they were also built by the natives?**

They built in pieces of wood up the steps but you'd never think that in some cases that you'd get to the top of it, it would whined around and the physical on your legs and your stomach was quite severe because you'd come down, and you were just as scared to come down. You had to be careful crossing creeks,

08:00 slippery, there were logs that you had to criss-cross across.

What about crocs [crocodiles]?

Didn't see any, no. The only thing we came across was the squawking bird, they gave you away.

Did men ever shoot or dispatch birds for that reason?

Not to my knowledge no I don't think they could ever see them, it was thick jungle on either side,

08:30 it's just remarkable. I know when we take up a defensive patrol position and you had to move your troops to either side of the path it's thick and you cant see far ahead of you.

I've heard some men say they'd preferred fighting in the desert because they could at least see the enemy?

Well I think so, definitely.

If you had to choose

09:00 **you'd prefer that?**

Definitely.

I've heard other's say that they preferred the jungle because they could at least hide?

The unseen, the strain on you trying to pick the enemy.

The physiological impact of jungle fighting must be far greater?

I think so and I think the same would apply as far as they were concerned; they were trained in it we weren't.

You weren't trained for the jungle were you, others that came later were?

No, we didn't have any jungle training.

09:30 The terrain of the surrounding areas of Port Moresby were undulating but they weren't jungle, once you starting crossing the mountains that's when you come up against the jungle areas.

What about unfortunate incidences that happened as a result of being there, being a part of the war did you see incidences like that men tripping over and going straight down over the ravines

10:00 **or blowing themselves up accidentally?**

No, but I know of one particular officer around the Seven Mile Drome they had a fire going and he threw some turps or something in a tin into the fire not knowing there was flammable material in it and it blew it up

10:30 and several soldiers got severely wounded.

I bet they were a bit peeved?

His name was Peter Connelly, and he was a fireman soldier and very brave but he died later of cancer.

The bully beef that you were carting around I was interested before when you said that you had to drop your pack from sixty down to forty pounds after

11:00 **a day or two of tracking, one of the other observations about carrying bully beef was that it was in tins and it must of weighed a ton carrying it around?**

Yes but you didn't have too many tins with you, it was brought up to you the supply of tins was brought to you and one tin did you one day, so I think we had it for about three days.

Ok so you would take about three with you?

11:30 Then we had an emergency pack which was a pack with just different things in it, if you ran out of bully beef you could still eat the emergency pack.

What was in the emergency pack?

I cant remember what was in it, dried apricots and things of that nature, because it didn't happen with the 39th Battalion but it did happened with the 2/14th, 2/16th,

12:00 and the 2/27th when the order was withdrawn from Isurava began they scattered in all directions some of them and some of them were lost for a fortnight. They lost their way and couldn't get back onto the track, they didn't know where they were but they were guided back eventually. They didn't participate in any part of the war in the Owen Stanley. In other words when that

12:30 withdrawal came it's a single track to get there, there'd be over a thousand of our troops back through staging, they all decided they'd go different directions, like this Corporal Knight that got killed. The others got higher up in the hills but they were getting away from the track.

Were there occasions where men

13:00 **were genuinely lost but were treated as if they'd gone AWOL [absent without leave] or vice versa?**

Do you mean deserters?

I don't like to actually use that word in that context because I am wondering you can easily get lost there, we have certainly spoken to someone who was lost in New Guinea and wasn't found for weeks?

They'd get lost alright, and they'd die of starvation I would think.

If they surfaced again would it be considered that they'd had done it deliberately to avoid?

I don't think so,

13:30 but what did occur there were as a matter of fact there was a sergeant of mine he left and he said he was going back and I had no control over him.

He just said 'That's it I'm out of here'?

Yes and he went back but he was picked up by an officer and brought back again, he admitted he had deserted but he ended up a good troop.

14:00 **What was your responsibility or your orders under those circumstances?**

I had to report them to the CO, I don't know what happened, I don't think anything happened to him, he came back but there were one or two others that disappeared. Apparently I don't know I haven't spoken to anyone about it but

14:30 it all came back that with the 53rd Battalion it was the officers that led the revolt not the men, that's what I understood. There were men that did get back, deserted in the face of the enemy but I understand it was one or two officers that led and once that happens the men will scatter.

15:00 That's all I can say about it because I had no connection with it other than hear say.

I'm also trying to get a good visual understanding, you say hundreds of troops going back down the track, ordered to go back to Isurava and it's a rear guard action, I'm trying to imagine is every body running back?

What's occurred was they were all given a certain time, now when I was

15:30 liaison officer between the 39th and Brigade we were given a time of 22:00 hours to move back. Somebody would be given 22:30, 23:00 throughout the night, so there'd be an orderly procession of withdrawal, there would be no panic, there was no panic because nobody could

16:00 fight in the night unless you had something to see and you wouldn't see much.

I heard the 39th did do night patrols?

Night patrols, I can't remember doing a night patrol I was out on a night patrol but it was a forty eight hour patrol which was day and night. I think that when they say a night patrol it would be a stationary

16:30 one in other words they'd be positioned there to prevent any break through, that's what I think that's what they mean by night patrol.

Who was it? I think Templeton and then later confirmed by Watson said 'You must defend the track and you are not to be captured'?

17:00 Yes that's correct.

Does that basically mean that you just keep firing until there is nobody left?

No, what it meant was if we came in contact with the enemy we were to fire and try and stem their attack and withdraw, now we moved back into a defensive position on either side of the track, we do the same thing, when they come up within a reasonable range we give them all can,

17:30 then we moved back into another and that was the order of withdraw. But Sam Templeton said to me "You must defend the track at all costs, do not get captured." in other words he was saying don't get close enough to the enemy to get caught, because the rest of the battalion was coming up and they wanted your information.

Ok,

18:00 **that makes more sense. Can... we might talk about Templeton for a moment.**

Sam.

An illustrious figure?

A Scotsman and an Irishmen, and he fought in the Irish Rebellion.

I wonder if he must have fought amongst himself I think if he took part in those things?

He was one of the oldest members. When we moved to Darley we had officers that were three times our age training us,

18:30 but they were good soldiers and Sam was one of those. Some of them were relieved when they got to New Guinea because the heat got to them, but Sam didn't he was out everyday. Sometimes he'd go out walking on his own and he wouldn't come back until night because he was looking for places where the enemy would attack and where he could defend.

19:00 I had a wonderful company commander in him. Everybody knew about him and what he did and then they named Templeton's Crossing after him and it was well worthwhile.

Was he a paternal figure for you?

Yes, he was a man that gave you an inspiration

19:30 really. Someone you'd never forget, I met his son in peacetime but I don't know where he is now though, he was part I think part of legacy in one of the towns.

Officers weren't supposed to get too close to their subordinates?

20:00 That was one of my faults, I didn't get promotion, I went away as a lieutenant and I came back as a lieutenant. I got to know the men too well, and I put myself as equal to them and they equal to me, and I was told not to fraternize with the troops so much, that came from the adjutant

20:30 and that would go to the CO. When I came out of the Owen Stanley's I said to Colonel Honner, "Have you put in for my promotion?" because no one had spoken to me about it and he said, "Yes I have but the brigade have knocked it back because there are too many AIF officers." That was not the case, I just didn't get

21:00 any recognition at all from Honner, I don't know why to this day, but it didn't occur. Other officers went to other battalions of course and then they got promotions, but they didn't get it, militia officers didn't get promotions from the AIF officers. In other words there were five

21:30 officers in B Company, Sam was militia and I was militia, there were 2IC was AIF and there were two AIF officers. So there were three AIF and two militia officers and I was the only one left out of the militia officers that Sam had past on. I didn't get any recognition not that I wanted any.

It interesting because there is this

22:00 **lovely idea that when the 2/14th turned up and there was this realization that the militia had equipped themselves over and above the call of duty, and yet a little bit further down the track at the sharp end of things it still exists?**

Yes that's right.

Interesting. What about Templeton did he stay a decent distance emotional wise from his troops?

He was a bit aloof,

22:30 he had a 2IC [second in command] Captain Alec Eager, Alec didn't come over the Owen Stanleys with us he was too old, and Sam was too old for it but he was a strong man, he set the example.

Did he allow you to have a quite chat at the end of a difficult day, between the two of you, did he offer words of advice when necessary?

He'd tell us

23:00 what he wanted us to know yes, but no he wasn't a chattable man. If you went out on patrol with him he wouldn't talk much but he'd point out things.

Such as?

He'd point out where the Japs might attack if they attacked, where we will put the defensive barbed wire,

23:30 where we will put the trenches and that sort of thing which was important.

This is on the track are you talking?

No this was before we went over.

There was no trenches or barbed wire up there I'm sure. When he died, that was during?

That was back from Awala.

Yes.

That's right.

I'm trying to remember, was he the fellow

24:00 **who went off to do a bit of business and was never heard of again?**

He heard a noise from what Arthur Seekamp and Harry Mortimore said, he went to investigate it and when he got in there they heard a shot or two and one of them went to investigate and couldn't locate him. They also heard other shots as well as his own, he only had a pistol and they'd have more than a pistol.

24:30 They couldn't locate his body, they couldn't find it at all and they had to withdraw so they don't know what happened to him really.

I understand that he wasn't a personal friend of yours but he was someone for whom you really had a lot of time for, so what was that like for moral for yourself and the others when he?

He picked me out from the re-enforcement pool to join B Company

25:00 and that was an honour in itself. I admired the man for that and I admired his strength against the AIF when they attacked out hut at Bacchus Marsh at Darley and just his leadership, he was a man who was tall and he was about six foot three and he controlled. If he said "Go and eat that apple."

25:30 you'd eat that apple, in other words he was one of those sort of person, he was a born leader, it was very sad when he went, I had a lot of admiration for him.

Were you a born leader?

I don't think so, no. I didn't have the bravery that he had.

26:00 I consider myself reasonably brave but I wouldn't be a brave leader like he was. I was ok with the platoon and I was also 2IC of the company later. That's another thing, when you become 2IC of a company you get promotion to Captain, but I was never promoted. I don't say I was a born leader

26:30 but I learnt a lot from being under his command.

Those chaps from the AIF who you had the brouhaha with back at Darley, were they anywhere around in Port Moresby or New Guinea did you bump into them again?

No, not to my knowledge.

You had a batman I image?

I had a batman, I will show you a photograph of him.

27:00 **Was he the same batman from getting of the Aquitania to returning to Australia?**

Was he?

Did you have the same fellow as a batman the whole time in New Guinea?

Most of the time.

How was your relationship with him, that was a very particular relationship?

Very good. No I had two batman, this one in the photograph and I had another one Arthur Fend,

27:30 I think Arthur's passed on now. I had a good relationship with the batman, I never set hard tasks for them, they knew what they had to do.

What about running messages I heard it was terribly difficult?

You used them to run messages to the section leaders, that was most important.

And very dangerous isn't it doing that sort of work?

Yes. It was Arthur Fend and myself

28:00 who shot the two naval officers they were at Gona.

I'm getting off the track a bit but now that you mentioned it I was going ask about this, was that sort of point scoring system among your sections or your companies for that, for example was shooting or capturing an officer highly regarded as

28:30 **compared to a couple of poor privates?**

Not in B Company or the 39th, and I dint think it never existed in the 39th Battalion.

It was just probably a crude imaging of mine, if you shot an officer does that make it more special than you shooting a private?

No, that never existed.

Ok. Back to the batman, as a commanding officer you're not suppose to have emotional attachments to your men

29:00 **or you're suppose to stay a certain distance emotionally or aloof?**

For instance, if you were in a tent in a camp they wouldn't be in that tent with you.

The batman wouldn't?

No, he'd be in another tent, but if you were in the Owen Stanley Ranges they'd probably sleep along side of you.

They'd have too wouldn't they?

Yes.

How do you manage that sort of a connection, this batman has to basically read your mind they have to think?

Sometimes they did, yes.

29:30 **They would have to sort of think for you and know how you are going to respond because time is of the essence so how do you manage a relation like that when you are suppose to stay aloof and yet not be as close as your best mate?**

We managed it.

How though, did you joke with him, like when friends get close did you have a kind of language between them?

Yes definitely,

30:00 they were very trustworthy and they got to know you and you got to know them very well.

Did they generate a degree of suspicious among the other men because they had this kind of privileged position?

No, they were admired. For instance if one batman went you'd ask for a volunteer, from the platoon 'would anybody like to be a batman' you'd always get somebody to come along and do it for you.

30:30 **Interesting position because they weren't really one of the other soldiers, and they weren't really an officer at all, they were in a strange sort of situation?**

They could fire a rifle and they could defend just as well as any section.

I'm sure they had too?

That's right.

Then you got back to semi civilian life or back to safe camps and they are there

31:00 **pressing your trousers?**

That's right.

It's an interesting role, I haven't met any.

I suppose it's like a driver driving the Queen around and that sort of thing, they get some attachment to that and they admire what they are doing, it's a role. It probably keeps them occupied instead of doing other things.

A very unusual role. In your

31:30 **travels did you bump into the photographer Damien Parer?**

Yes I did. I met him in New Guinea, I cant remember exactly where and I also met the Salvation Army top man that was in the Owen Stanley's but I just cant think of his name, he use to give us cigarettes and that was my defence when I applied for a disability pension from [the Department of] Veterans' Affairs.

32:00 **Because you had respiratory problems?**

No I have a back problem in the spine and one of the things of course if you were a smoker that helped you in your application, and because I was able to say that the Salvation Army issued out cigarettes to me, they couldn't deny that.

No,

32:30 **I think it was Albert Moore from the Salvation Army?**

Albert Moore that's right.

It's an interesting thing that we were talking about cigarettes earlier and how they where offered, or issued everywhere the nurses would give you a cigarette if you turned up wounded?

That's right.

What a funny thing that is later on?

We use to buy them from the Americans in Port Moresby, cartons a time.

33:00 **What did you have to trade with the Yanks to get cigarettes?**

The officers got a bottle of whisky and a bottle of gin per month, so we use to trade that. I can relate to my brother, he came back to Australia to Victoria to Parkdale railway station and left his pack there one night with thirty cartons and in the morning fifty cartons and he could do nothing about it, he couldn't charge anyone, but I got a few

33:30 cartons from him just the same.

Here's a silly question, if your issued with a certain amount of privileges per month and you're away in say the godforsaken Kokoda Track and you are obviously not getting your requisite number of bottles per month, do they stock up for you and when you get back do you get extra?

No.

You have to be there to get them?

That was one of the things we never

34:00 got issued with cigarettes by the Australian army they just forgot you in that regard. The only one we got them from was the Salvation Army, we got no distribution of tobacco unless we brought with something from somewhere.

What about Japanese cigarettes, never tried them?

Never tried them, I never came across any actually.

34:30 **I bet they were around though?**

Yes. I survived on the boong twist [native tobacco].

I'm wondering how you walked out at all?

Until I got back to Port Moresby.

Did you develop a bit of a thing for it?

It wasn't bad but it was shocking.

It must have given you a shocking headache?

It was a vile taste too; it was like black liquorice all sorts, that type of a thing.

Did they have any

35:00 **other vices, the fuzzy wuzzy angels, did they have nut that they chewed or any other?**

Yes, they had betel nuts and it gets on their teeth and that's why their teeth are all black.

I wasn't sure if it was there or further on another island so they did have the betel nut there, did you try that?

No I wouldn't try it, they make a wonderful cocktail.

Kava?

I don't know the name of it but

35:30 it would blow your head off, but it was not bad at times.

When did you get access to that?

Kokoda.

Just on a regular night of one of the patrols trying to take it?

No, they use to be around because there were a lot of natives there, they use to make it up some of it was concluded, and betel nut was included. It was potent

36:00 but we weren't getting much at the time so it wasn't bad.

Did you see anyone go silly on it?

Not really no.

Also nobody that I have spoken to has mentioned any Papua New Guinea children anywhere, I'm wondering where they were the women evidently had gone further into the jungle and taken the kids with them?

That was the case, I didn't come across. We did at Kokoda

36:30 when we first went there because that was normal living, there were no Japanese there when we got there, and the women and children were there living in the various villages. We were awarded huts to live in there but you had to be careful in cleaning them out because of the flees, the flees in native huts for instance that patrol

37:00 we went on and we had to cross the river looking for the airplane, we slept in a village that night and we were all eaten alive by lice and so on that was terrible. How they exist, no wonder they get the diseases they do because they are not fumigated, it was terrible

37:30 the fleas it's terrible.

If it's not one thing it's another?

That's right.

Did you wonder that you stayed alive?

Yes, and that first night with the leeches, if we hadn't had Vesta matches to get the needles because the needles in the safety kit.

I was wondering about that, one leech produce a fair amount of blood?

We had at least a dozen leeches, they crawl up the

38:00 trousers, you had putties on.

They liked to get onto the most intimate places on the human flesh?

That's right, if you looked between your groin and armpits and things.

I was just wondering the chap who got bitten on the penis by the mosquitoes also got leeches too?

That was mosquitoes, the poor bloke didn't survive, Corporal Knights.

That was Corporal Knights?

38:30 Yes, he got killed in the ambush in the village later.

A bit of a rough spot from the beginning.

He was a wonderful fellow, he was only a midget too he was, but the respect of his section and everyone.

Tape 6

00:30 **I'd like to talk a little bit about Colonel Owen, you said that you had words with him about the risks that he was taking standing out amongst his troops, was that uncommon for a fellow like yourself, but that would be stepping out of line wouldn't it?**

No it was a natural thing to do.

It was ok to offer senior officers a little bit of advice here and there?

I think I could point out

01:00 to him because I'd heard about the snipers and how good they were and how they climbed trees and you wouldn't see them up the tree and they'd bead on you, now that was what I thought was going to happen to him, so that's why I brought that up to him. He took in what I said but he said, "I have got to set an example for the troops."

01:30 well he set an example all right. When I saw him in the RAP tent later with a bullet in his forehead and he was dieing there was nothing we could do for him. There a case in point what do you do for a men that is just about to die, I couldn't do anything more for him but there was a Sergeant Wilkinson that was attending him but they had to leave him they couldn't take him out,

02:00 it's a terrible thing in war.

It's quite an understatement?

In some cases you hear about them dragging their mate out, putting them on their back but that's in war films but I don't think it occurred too many times, it might of occurred but I didn't witness it.

So your saying that the famous scenes of the great Hollywood minds

02:30 **where they rush in and drag their mate out under fire, would that be just a ridiculous thing to attempt in a battle?**

No I don't think it was a ridiculous thing, for instance if you were in a position and a man is wounded well then you'd do something about it, you would drag him out, but if a man has been killed or is dieing in that case there is nothing you can do about it.

Did the army have any advice

03:00 **prior to battle for situations like that or did they just leave that out of the instructions?**

They left that out of the instructions, that's to human nature.

Did you encounter any experiences where you were asked or felt the need to commit say mercy killings on either side, did you find soldiers so wounded that they needed to die as opposed to being kept alive any longer?

03:30 You mean the opposition, the enemy?

I mean either actually?

No I couldn't do it, they would have been put on a stretcher and carried back by the natives to New Guinea, no.

I'm sure anybody that had a chance of living would have been looked after I was just wonders whether

04:00 **there were occasions?**

There were no occasions in which anyone of B Company for instance shot a person because they were dieing.

Do you know of any other companies?

No not that I know of.

Let's talk about something a little brighter, your nickname of Gough in the war,

04:30 **they call you anything else as well?**

Judy.

So you were called Judy, who called you Gough then?

My mother called me Gough, short for Godfrey, I'm Arthur Godfrey Garland, and they used the middle name not the first name,

05:00 I'm very seldom called Arthur and my doctor calls me Arthur.

Was should we call you?

Gough.

Gough ok we will do that then. That's not an uncommon thing for men of your age group to have their middle name to be their first name, to be the case?

Right.

When they called you Judy was that for a bit of a rise?

I don't know I think the platoon and the other fellows,

05:30 I got it from a whole lot of fellows in the battalion, 'Here she comes.' but you just let it ride.

Were there any times or opportunities for a bit of a sing song or a bit of a moral raiser concert, I know you are under weird circumstances, but there must have been some nights when you could rest easier a little?

Prior to going over the Owen Stanleys

06:00 we were stationed at Hum Brum Bluff for a while, we were moved from the training area, the re-enforcement area onto Hum Brum Bluff ready for departure. At night we use to play cards, we use to play solo. There was another case there was a particular officer unbeknown to me and he was a pretty good friend of mine,

06:30 he use to borrow money from the troops and not pay them back, we use to play solo, I was told to disengage from playing solo and not associate with this particular officer. I ignored that advice and that sort of thing didn't go well for me, but that didn't worry me and he was a great bloke.

07:00 **It's very poor form for that officer to borrow money?**

Yes, he was getting bigger money than the boys but he must have been losing a lot somewhere along the line.

For an officer to know pay money back sort of suggests that he felt that there was nothing that they could do about it?

I don't know what his thought was.

Did anybody ever punch him in the nose for that?

No, no one did, he was well respected,

07:30 I don't know how much he used to borrow but it was told to me.

I asked that question because I was wondering whether you ever had to or felt the need to get up and give a little song here and there given your nickname?

No I did not.

Did you met anyone talented over there,

08:00 **I have been told of great talent that was discovered amongst the troops on occasion the men were brilliant at getting up and giving a song, a bit of poetry or a bit of Shakespeare or something did you ever experience anything like that?**

I didn't do any of that no.

Did you see much of that?

No.

You had a dry old time then.

08:30 **Tell me some of the other nicknames, you said there was Titch Knight?**

Titchy Knight.

You said there was Titchy Knight?

Titchy Knight that's right, I had a Jimmy Quinn as a matter of fact he use to play football for Williamstown, I think he's past on now yes, I can't think of any....

That's alright. Nicknames seemed to be a particular part of....?

Did you come across

09:00 Snowy Parr, did anyone ever mention Snowy Parr.

No.

Snowy Parr used a Bren gun shot about six Japanese it was mentioned in the [UNCLEAR].

I do want to ask about Nobby Earl though; the padres had a particularly unusual time?

Yes, he use to run a missionary up at

09:30 Rossell Island stationed off New Guinea, and he came by boat to Port Moresby and he came into brigade headquarters to apply for a position and they didn't have a position for him. He said, "Look there's a dozen bottles of whisky I want a position." that was the story that I was given, then they said "Alright you report to the 39th Battalion."

10:00 He was a wonderful man and he use to have mass on Sunday, and of course in the army days they had different Sunday churches all different, Presbyterian, Church of England. Nobby would come up to the front line and he would bury anyone, say the last rights.

10:30 He could tell a great joke, he could tell the strongest of jokes you would wish to get.

Was that a bit shocking because he was a man of the cloth that he could tell a dirty joke?

I don't know, you'd go anywhere with Nobby, we called him Nobby but his name was Norbert Earl and he

11:00 was with the monastery in New South Wales and I flew up with some others for his funeral when he died. It was a church close to Randwick Racecourse and the church was just packed, the sisters, the choir boys, it was

11:30 a wonderful service. Then we went out to where he was buried, they buried him at one of the convents there, we all had lunch there. It's strange how things occur in life, I've got a friend and his name is Jeff Bailey and his brother is a priest

12:00 and he knew Nobby very well, Jeff Bailey's brother went to India and wrote a book, he was in New South Wales and I think he's died now too.

He would be a man of any denomination?

Yes no problem.

He was able to give the last rites regardless?

That's correct.

I imagine

12:30 **that most of the men there were either C of E [Church of England] or Catholic and there might have been a few variations?**

All walks of life dear.

How did the padre fit into the unit, for example they wouldn't be under instruction to do what the rest were asked to do, would they just operate automatism?

He would just do what the battalion commander requested,

13:00 but they duck tailed whatever they wanted to do.

Would men take the opportunity to go and sit with him, speak with him to get things off their chest?

Yes, I did when I wanted to be married.

Could you talk about that, that's not too personal?

No, when I wrote to my wife

13:30 and she wrote back and said that she couldn't get a priest to marry us, at the Catholic church. I went to Nobby and told him. Father O'Brien was an elderly priest here so Nobby said to tell my wife to go to somebody younger, and we did get a younger priest and he was very good.

14:00 The point was we weren't married in front of the altar; we were married in the vestry, which meant that the congregation couldn't see a great deal of what was going on. But prior to the day concerned, the morning concerned I had a groomsman, my ex company commander Bevan French and he came to our house

14:30 in Parkdale and he said "I'm sorry I cant act as groomsman today I've gone down with malaria." he had a high temperature so my father drove him to where he was staying in South Yarra and came back and I was in a jam. I knew this Don Simonson the MC [Military Cross] winner and was drinking at the Hotel Australia with Dough McLean, Gwen and I put a SOS [distress signal] out and they came down

15:00 from the Hotel Australia to the church at Mentone in seventeen minutes flat.

I don't know how they did it?

In those days you didn't have the cars on the road.

Or the traffic lights?

Or the traffic lights.

Or the police?

So I met Don at the door, and I gave him a glove because he didn't have a glove and he was the groomsman and Doug and Gwen attended the wedding, so we had a lovely wedding really.

15:30 **I'm sorry to cut back to the Kokoda Trail?**

That's ok.

After really getting a taste of the wedding. Did you ever talk to the padre say in terms of having a crisis of faith for example to use a term of phrase, what I mean is did it just become overwhelming time to time that you were there mowing down the Japanese or them mowing you down, I mean a priest must have had a pretty interesting time with things trying to console men?

16:00 He was in attendance to the whole battalion whatever had occurred, he didn't only do it for our company he did it for other companies too. A lot of great things were said about Norbert, he was a fine man and well liked, he was a wonderful man. One thing I haven't mentioned was when we went back

16:30 in 1967 and we flew into Popondetta I didn't tell you that my wife and I travelled by truck to Awala to a plantation owner, we stayed there for two nights and his name was Glendon Searl, and his wife was Pat

and they were the local

17:00 Commonwealth Bank agent, he was also a rubber plantation owner and that was the first time we saw all the girls in their bare breasts, it was a shock to everybody. They gave us a walk through the plantation and showed us how they cut the tree and the rubber and it came down and into the tin, and that was wonderful. Those nights

17:30 we slept under a big double bed, with white netting for the mosquitoes and Geoff, there were no windows, just bare, no screens for the mosquitoes to come in, and at night you could hear the animals howling and that's were I become a lover of pawpaw.

18:00 I love pawpaw, they serve pawpaw for breakfast with lemon on and it's beautiful.

It doesn't get much better than that?

That couple were forced by the New Guinea government, were forcing the white settlers out, taking over so they sold up and got out when they got a reasonable price and they then moved to Nambour

18:30 in Queensland. They came down to us at Dingley but we didn't have the accommodation to set them up but they stayed a couple of days and we had a great time with them. They went back to Nambour, we corresponded with them but they have both past on now.

New Guinea grew a lot of indigenous fruit, like pawpaw and bananas and so on?

And pineapples.

Pineapples,

19:00 **did you eat much fresh fruit while you were there?**

We did at Kokoda yes, Kokoda was the rich Yodda Valley.

Was it like manna from heaven when you came across a pineapple bush or?

Yes.

or pawpaw tree?

They were young pineapples were sweet and the pawpaws. I think one of the very interesting experiences we had

19:30 at Kokoda when we first go there the men at well which was good but the officers dined with Peter Brewer the district magistrate. We'd sit down at the table and they had the natives waiting. Peter would say something and they'd have to come around and show you their hands so that their fingernails and hands were clean

20:00 before they served you, that was always very impressive. We use to dine there with Peter, that was lovely. But unfortunately I think he was shot down in a plane later on I think, Peter, I have some recollection of that, but he was killed. I think he joined ANGAU later, I don't know if you have any

20:30 records of that.

I don't know that we have actually discussed that with anybody, but you never know we might.

Those ANGAU men they were marvellous, of course they had the knowledge of New Guinea and in it's terrain and they helped the PIB, the native infantry battalion which were good soldiers.

21:00 **I asked you a little earlier about working with the PIB, they were on the track with you from time to time?**

They were at Kokoda in that first battle of Kokoda that's right.

All the officers they were white men or did they have their own officers?

Major Watson was a white man that's correct.

It would be an unusual position to be in I'm sure. I want to talk about the trip to Popondetta with you.

Yes.

21:30 **Was that your first plane flight that trip, when they flew you to Popondetta, what sort of a craft was that?**

That's a good question, I think it was a DC-3.

Was that the first time that you had been up in the air?

No, I'd been in the air before.

22:00 **Was it strange going up above that incredible terrain that you had just been walking all over?**

It certainly was, you could look down and see it.

I just find that unusual?

All you could see was the trees, nothing else, hills and trees.

There's something about going up in an aircraft that makes a bit of mockery of walking, sort of makes you feel a little bit immortal for a moment, and I'm just wondering whether

22:30 **after that incredible battle you're suddenly up in a plane looking down on where you were?**

That was in 1967 when we went back to Popondetta, in the November.

In the November of 1942?

When we were going down to Gona.

Before that they would throw you back in.

That was wonderful, it was a quick way of doing it and so organised.

23:00 **It seems observing....?**

The Popondetta airfield was a very good airfield.

Who operated it at Popondetta?

I think it was Air New Guinea, but I think in those days it probably the air force, I'm not sure.

The Australian Air Force do you think?

I'm not sure.

Ok.

I didn't take particular notice.

23:30 **I'm sure.**

Then we had to march down to these other places right on the coast, it was thirty kilometres, our feet too us a long way.

Was there a sense after you'd won Kokoda that you all deserved to go home that you didn't have to keep going?

We didn't win Kokoda, I never got back to

24:00 the Kokoda in battle, we fought a Kokoda and moved back and the next time we went to Popondetta then Gona and Buna.

But you had as good as won?

Well a lot of people lost their lives between the time we got out and the time went got forward, yes a lot.

When you get these orders to head up to Gona,

24:30 **having been through Kokoda are you concerned that your men just don't have it in them to keep going?**

No, we had re-enforcements and we had to still eradicate the Japanese and that's what we were out to do, because if they were still there they were still a threat to Australia.

25:00 **What was is like receiving re-enforcements in a group?**

Very good.

It didn't cause tension?

It did on one occasion before we went over to Gona. It was my job to house sufficient food for our platoon and we had it in what looked like a hut

25:30 on the edge of the Logi River. I put this re-enforcement on duty and he broke in and stole some bread during the night because he was hungry. So the cook was in charge of that and he wasn't on duty of course but he reported it to me. This Edwards, Terry Edwards and I accused him of it,

26:00 and put him on another twenty four hours duty, and he got the butt of his rifle and swung it at me and I pushed him away. I said "if you ever do that again there will be trouble" and I said "just for the taking you have another twenty four hours duty". So he said "I will report you to the CO Captain Sam Templeton." and I said "You do that". He did that and we both paraded and Sam Templeton said "If you ever come up

26:30 before me Edwards I will have you shipped back to Australia, now get back on duty and do your job." he turned out to be a wonderful soldier and he still comes to our reunions, he's only a little bloke and he drinks like a fish.

Does he still payout on you for that day?

Still comes up to me, he just forgets what happened.

I know it's an officer's job to

27:00 **give unpleasant orders and I know it their job to discipline their privates?**

You have got to do it.

I imagine some soldiers, some officers took more pleasure in that aspect than others, where did you sit, you were a good mate to the men you were working so how did you feel about having to dish out tough stuff?

There is a little bit of give and take in life, I always say to my wife "You have to give and take."

27:30 It depends on how serious, that stealing bread out of the kitchen which meant he was getting bread in his stomach to the detriment of the other platoon and there was just a certain ration for everybody.

Yes I think that would have been quite a serious thing?

I had to set an example to the platoon in doing what I did to him, but that was about the only occasion that I ever

28:00 had a problem, they all followed me whenever I wanted them.

It's interesting because it's not the first time that I heard a fellow take their senior ranking officer, or go over their head?

Yes.

I'm sure that doesn't rub very well to go over ones head?

No, if the officer' wrong and not giving a little give and take, fair enough. But in this case Terry

28:30 should never of attacked me with the butt of his rifle, and that was the thing that Sam was really down on. If you as a reinforcement attack one of my officers "If you ever do that again I've send you back to Australia".

That is a very serious offence?

Yes.

And another officer might have been even harsher with him?

Yes.

Is there a rule book for officers in terms of how you discipline, is there like a judge might have?

Not to my knowledge.

29:00 There might be in this modern army of today.

If soldier X does this they receive this punishment etc, yes I wonder. You said that B Company was sent to the forefront at Gona as they had been at Kokoda and that was why I asked whether certain companies were given certain tasks, whether D Company was for stores or supplies or something?

29:30 They all came down to those areas but they didn't come into Gona at Haley's village, but they did come into Gona proper but they didn't come to Haley's village at Gona West.

Ok. The terrain I imagine is rather different to what you had experienced in Kokoda, you were on a beachhead, is it beautiful up there,

30:00 **the north of New Guinea?**

Gona is a pretty place yes, it's swampy area, but it's when you get to Sanananda that's the swampy area.

At Gona if there had not been a war on would it had been an ideal place where you could have a lovely holiday?

There's not the facilities there to have a good holiday.

30:30 **So it wasn't a pacific kind of paradise is what I'm asking?**

It was pretty, but the track to Gona even when we went back in 1967, we had to get out of the trucks and walk down the final bit because the track was so uneven and big potholes and nothing done to it, do you know what I mean.

Not quite sure how to ask this because it is probably obvious if you were there,

31:00 **but it's hard to understand if you haven't been there. Sent to a place like Gona when they know that the Japanese are well dug in, in terms of sort of military intelligence if they wanted Gona and wanted to get rid of the Japanese from Gona so they park you a distance away and you have to move in is that how it operates or it just seems that if they know that they are there for example why didn't they just send in the Air Force?**

What occurred was the Japanese,

31:30 our air strength would be some so great and our war ships in the area they could not at night send in ships to take the Japanese off, they did get a certain amount off but there was a lot left and it was those that were left that MacArthur jumped, he jumped from New Guinea and around Rabaul

32:00 to the other islands and he cut off the supply route with his warships and planes so that those particular islands could not get supplies. The troops that were left at Gona, Sanananda and Buna were left to the reminisce of the Americans that were there and they were relieved and we came in.

32:30 They had to be exterminated but MacArthur didn't use many of his troops it was all Australian troops, it was just like what happened at Lae, Finschhafen they had to get rid of the Japs up there but there were no Americans it was all Australians they put plane loads in, so McLean went in with the paratroopers,

33:00 when he joined the paratroopers. That occurred, it cut down the length of the time of the war but after the war he said "America won all this and how America won all this", but Australia didn't do much did they?

Did you know of that at the time, did you know that you were being sent in for mop up exercises?

No,

33:30 we just did our duty and what we were ordered to do and that was it.

There are a couple of newspapers floating around in New Guinea in the 1940s, did you ever get your hands on those?

We did, but that was when we came back, that was in January 1943. We read all sorts of things but

34:00 we did know that we were being sacrificed a bit but we were only one battalion. The Gona battle was the biggest battle that I'd been in and that was huge, because there were tanks, artillery, planes, dive-bombers all on our side getting rid of the remaining Japs. We were would be about one hundred yards

34:30 from the ocean and between that was the Japs and trenches and these fox holes in these trenches and they were encircled by the 2/14th, 2/16th and so on coming down.

Really was it despite being a very ugly battle it was a matter of time?

Yes.

Can you just give me kind of an idea of where you're standing or what your doing

35:00 **whilst the heavy action was going on, did they send in the air force first and the tanks moved in after that and then you fellows in?**

We kept our head down until a certain time and then we are told to move and then we moved forward through the kunai grass and up the track and then we dig in and we wait for the next barge to come over and then we dig in again until the final onslaught.

That kunai grass was busy cutting you to shreds?

Yes and it's very hot in the kunai grass

35:30 and unfortunately it was very tall, and it was taller than a man, you couldn't see beyond it so you had to try and get a clearing.

I think the Japanese burnt a lot of the kunai grass ahead of them?

That's right.

Did you also have the opportunity to do the same?

No we didn't do that, not where we were.

Is it possible in the kunai grass just be standing less than a foot from somebody and not know that they were there?

36:00 Yes.

In terms of receiving messages to move on and so on is that signalled by a batman running backwards and forwards or do you actually have electronic equipment to do that for you if you got the front lines operating?

They've got the signals operating but somebody from company headquarters would come down to our company commander and tell them

36:30 what to do.

If that's the case watches must have been essential for officers?

Coast watch?

No your actual time pieces?

Yes.

You must of have to have had accurate?

Synchronized.

Synchronized?

Absolutely, it's one thing your watch with the section leaders was the same thing, you had to check their times and give them a time and they had to keep to it.

Did the army issue you with those watches or did you have to bring your own?

No

37:00 we had our own watches.

Did the jungle play havoc with the mechanisms?

I don't think so, it used to sweat under the actual watch. I will tell you what we did have and that was leather straps and a leather casing that the watch sat in with a leather top slipped up, not like they are today.

No, I figured you needed something from getting them from damage?

It stopped them from sweating?

Something.

37:30 **Did you have to have whistles, did you have to have whistles blowing and things like that?**

No, no whistles.

It's interesting what you were saying before about the Japanese and their chatter and how they'd bugle call and yell and scream, I've heard that that they were incredibly loud?

Yes they screamed too, if you threw a grenade or anything they'd scream. They weren't quiet, and when they attacked

38:00 they all yelled, so our fellows use to do the same thing in attacking.

Because the Australians had a reputation for being fantastically quite other than in attack, did you yell and scream as well?

I didn't personally no, but some of the sections did yes.

Why didn't you?

I was more concerned on how the attack was going.

38:30 **Is it your job in a fight then to keep one eye on what's going on and one eye on what you have to do next?**

And one eye on watching myself too.

You needed three eyes?

No, watching that the section leaders were carrying out the orders they were given prior to the attack and see if they lived up to that, and then of course it depends on the terrain

39:00 it might be a bit different to what we thought it was, so you had to alter things on the way through, and sing out to them.

Tape 7

00:30 **Just a couple of questions outside of the New Guinea campaign, what do the words Brisbane Line mean?**

They have got a great coach because he coached Collingwood, he got them their premiership in 1970, and

01:00 that was a wonderful occasion because I couldn't go to the match, I had been going to some matches because I had to go to a wedding at Sorrento. During the church service I had a wireless and plugs in my ear and we were playing Essendon, I kept saying "I've got to go, I've got to go",

01:30 and they'd pass it along to everybody concerned. The priest said "what's the score?", and we told him, that was a glorious night.

What about Brisbane during the Second World War, the Brisbane Line they had that supposed line through Brisbane where the north of Australia would be let go if the Japanese invaded, did you

02:00 **hear about that?**

The demarcation line, yes we did hear about that.

What did you hear about that?

Only that the evacuation would take part north of that line and south and then we would have to defend from there on.

How real was the feeling at home in Australia, before you left to go to New Guinea, how real was the feeling that you might well be invaded?

02:30 There wasn't a great deal of talk about us being invaded, because I think we thought after the Japanese came into the war that the UK, the Englishmen they would come to our assistance but when troops went to

03:00 Egypt and the way things turned out there we could see that it was a hopeless situation for any assistance coming from England, and at a particular point America hadn't entered. The way I see it was yes the Australian forces

03:30 under leadership were primed to meet but we sought of felt we had enough but against the forces at the time weren't just nearly enough.

I'd like to talk a little bit about Gona and Sanananda now?

Right.

Japanese

04:00 **snipers, where would they be positioned?**

In the trees.

What sort of trees are we talking about?

Trees that would be twenty or thirty feet above the ground, in amongst a lot of crops with still a clear vision fire path they would clear a certain amount and you could see one or two trees

04:30 cleared and you knew at certain angles there would be snipers, but you couldn't always pick them, because they blended into the tree itself.

Were they palm trees?

No, they were sort of like gum trees, all sorts, then there were palms, there was that

05:00 and in the main, that's were Colonel Honner got caught up in the machine gun fire, it was on a low trajectory for your legs coming out of weapon pits with logs over the top, with just slits so they could see you coming.

Would the Australian forces set up their own snipers as well in trees?

No, not to my knowledge.

05:30 **What equipment did you have at this stage when you were in the north, the northern beachheads, Gona and Sanananda, did you have better equipment than you had at Kokoda?**

We had Owen guns, and we had Tommy guns, and the Tommy gun was the first one that we got, but that was heavy and then we did get the Owen gun, at the Gona show we did have the Owen.

Did you have Brens as well?

We had Brens

06:00 correct that's right, but the Bren was heavy but a fellow could pick it up and fire from the hip, this Snowy Parr did.

If you saw a potential hiding spot for a sniper, would you give it a burst of machine gun to see if there was somebody up there?

Before he fired, no. If you fired before hand thinking they might be there

06:30 then he would come from another direction and you were gone, you don't show your position.

Tell us about Snowy Parr, you mentioned him a couple of times, what did he do?

Snowy, he was a real larrikin in the 39th Battalion, but he was a very brave soldier. He picked up a Bren gun and firing from the hip, and there are photos of him in there of him and he advanced and he killed about six to eight Japs.

07:00 **Was he himself killed or did he survive?**

No, he survived.

Can you recall any other acts of outstanding bravery that you might of witnessed while you were up there?

Not really, just everyone did their bit. We all had weapons and we all

07:30 fired shots and killed where it was necessary.

What about the opposite then, did you ever seen any men who baulked or felt that they couldn't do it, or they froze at the front line or anything like that, I'm not asking you to name names?

We did have a couple, for instance some of them joined the 39th and then they wouldn't fire a weapon, so

08:00 they were discharged.

They wouldn't for what reason?

Their belief of not killing.

That's a bit strange to join an army unit if you are not going kill?

Yes, that's true, that's right and that's a fact and they did when it came to the crunch. We didn't have anything up in the front that I knew of, other than those one or two that did

08:30 leave and walk back.

This next question is quite a tough one and if you don't answer I will understand.

Alright.

Do you remember the first time you killed somebody?

That was at Gona, the two naval officers we both fired, and we both killed one. That was the first time and the last time.

Can you remember what that felt like?

09:00 It was dramatic, but then lets put it this way a surge of blood goes through your system, you freeze a bit because there's two of the enemy right in front of you, they came out of a laneway and they didn't turn towards us they turned towards the sea which was only a hundred yards down and they didn't see us, we were amazed

09:30 and we stood still. We did something that you shouldn't do, or I don't say you shouldn't do their backs were to us but we had to get rid of them, otherwise we were gone.

Absolutely. It must be such a, I don't know I've never experience it but the first time actually do pull the trigger and do shot someone it must be quite a life changing moment

10:00 **or does it just pass like that?**

You're experienced in firing and you were trained to kill or be killed, it was a matter of first in first serve.

At that moment does that training kick in before your mind has a chance to go 'enemy kill them' so it's not a case of deliberately

10:30 **killing?**

No, I think it was our training that you were there to kill the enemy it's as simple as that. You had to survive to see another day.

Absolutely. I think it must be, it's an experience that my generation hasn't had, so for us to try and picture what it must be like

11:00 **to kill someone and to be in a position to have to do that?**

Yes it's something that you don't like having to do, but when your country is threatened by enemy you have got to do that.

Did you come across any men who you thought actually enjoyed it?

That didn't.

Who actually enjoyed killing?

No I didn't come across that,

11:30 I don't think any of them did. I know this Don Simonson that I referred to and he was putting in an attack where he won the Military Cross and a Jap fired a bullet and he had grenades on his hip and the grenades exploded, it's a wonder he didn't lose the whole of his leg,

12:00 it put a hole in there and we put some pad on him and got him to the RAP and then he walked back. Then he ended up in hospital in New South Wales, the military hospital in New South Wales and they patched him up and he did still walk but with a bit of a limp, he was a brave soldier. I think he was braver than I

12:30 was but circumstances force you to do things that you normally wouldn't do. For instance, killing those two I would have never didn't want to do that but we had to do it.

Of course it's war?

That's right.

What is bravery to you, what would you say braver is in war?

I think that the thing is

13:00 looking after your platoon and try and protect them from being killed, but it became an individualist section leaders war in the jungle as it did at Gona when I lost those three section leaders.

13:30 I couldn't do anything about it, it was an act of God they were shot, we just had to baton down, we couldn't attack we couldn't locate the Japanese because they were so well hidden.

That must sit heavily on an officer's heart when his men....?

Your blood is boiling frankly, you really hate

14:00 the bloody enemy, you really do for what they did, stamped three lives out and nearly got me, I was lucky to get out of it.

We will talk about that the opposite to killing and being killed, you were shot and the bullet lodged in?

Yes.

How does one feel when that happens?

I think that was just one of those lucky things, I

14:30 wasn't meant to go and to live another day, you could feel a little thud in the feeling of it.

You know when people are in a car accident and they survive?

Yes.

They are taken by feelings of 'why me' 'why did I survive and he didn't' of feelings of relieving the moment and imagine 'I almost died', and that's how shock develops

15:00 **how did you feel in those days after and hours after that?**

I was with another officer when this occurred, he was the liaison officer of the group and he said "That was a lucky one wasn't it?" then we both put bags around our nose and walked around the path and had to walk through all these Jap bodies, and that was a horribly experience really. Then we had to stand

15:30 in amongst them while their troops, the platoons were killing the rest of the Japs that were there.

Was that the only thought that you gave to being shot, 'gee that was lucky' off your guard?

Yes, and you had to move on.

It didn't hit you that night or a couple of days later?

No.

I suppose when you reach that heightened level when you are living like that all day every day?

That's true,

16:00 that's like a car, sometimes you nearly get caught for doing.

The beach head battles, Gona, Sanananda and Buna they were some of the bitterest fighting in WW2 from what I've read and having spoken to

16:30 **gentlemen being involved in that?**

Yes.

It was a time as you said where the enemy really hated us and we really hated them?

That's right.

I also heard that there were no prisoners taken, you couldn't take prisoners then, what happens if sometime tries to surrender, did anyone try to surrender?

I didn't see any.

17:00 I did see two or three Japanese prisoner of war being taken back to brigade headquarters on the track going back to Popondetta. I don't know whether they were wounded or not, I mean we were marching one way and they were going the other way.

17:30 They were in a situation where they couldn't get out of it, they must of know and they were in a horrible situation, they must of known their end was coming but they fought tenaciously, as you say bitter fighting, very bitter. Some of them were in foxholes and you'd walk

18:00 to the foxhole and they'd come up and shot you in the back, so that was the time that it was vicious.

Did you have it in your heart or in your head, did you think 'I'm not going to take any prisoners', did you have that thought did you think that you hate the Japanese so much?

I didn't, no. There was one occasion when we were on the track, and I'm here and there was a Corporal Sam's there

18:30 and French the company commander was there, and this Jap shot a bullet and killed this Corporal Sam's and he was a great mate of this fellow because they were both ex mortar platoon in the mortars, this Corporal Sam was part aboriginal blood and he was a wonderful bloke but he died unfortunately.

How do you deal with it, because that kind of

19:00 **bitterness and that kind of hatred it's not good for you?**

It's not.

How do you deal with it, how do you get it out of your system and get rid of it?

I don't think you ever do.

How do you cope with the rest of your life, it eats you up that kind of bitterness?

Yes it does but I think that once I got out of the army, after what I'd been through and I'd settled down, I had to earn a living

19:30 and I had a wife and I had children coming. I had to maintain a level of encouragement to get though all that without worrying about the past. The things bring the past back is at the 39th Battalion association reunions. Our the Kokoda day

20:00 that we have which is the nearest to the 10th August each year and we form up at a tree and then a shrine. We have planted a tree near the shrine a 39th Battalion tree and now we march up to the shrine and we met there because now we are getting old. The numbers are down dramatically

20:30 of course as time goes on. The other thing that keeps us together and reminds us a lot is this good guts, to fix the shrine and our battalion flag is the Reverend Holloway is our editor believe it or not and he does this on the internet. I don't know if you have ever read one but it gives the story of Queensland,

21:00 New South Wales and here but mainly Queensland in the end and the lives of those that are alive and those that are sick and those that have died, and gives the office bearers and all that, and it's a great

good guts.

I did have a glance at one or two issues there in your folder and I was wondering if you can tell us on camera what the motto of the

21:30 **39th Battalion is?**

It's free to call.

There's another, deeds not words?

Deeds not words, correct.

And what is the Latin translation of that?

Deeds not words.

It's in there but I can't remember?

In other words.

Victus non verbus I think.

That's right, Victus non verbus, it's got me for the moment.

That's alright.

22:00 I should know that.

We won't tell anybody.

No, right.

Are there any men in the 39th that you think hasn't managed let go of that bitterness and still carry it with them?

Particularly on reunion days, more so in the pass when it was men only on reunion days, and you'd talk about the past and they'd talk about the incidences and what you did

22:30 and where were you on such and such, there was a lot of that that went on. A few years ago I think about four or five the committee decided that it would be a good idea to have the wives or friends for the luncheon, and we met at the Victoria bowling club in Carlton, that's defunct now that's gone. We had to get another venue

23:00 so each year the day before Anzac we have a lunch with our wives and that's great and there's less army talk and it's just an enjoyable day and we have the ceremony, the ode and we usually have a guest speaker from all walks of life there.

23:30 Then the following day is Anzac Day and you either march or you walk or go by truck and then afterwards our families come in and we all go to lunch, we all go our separate ways. We pick a venue, we went down to Albert Park down there one of

24:00 the venues down there, it was a lovely restaurant there, it was a coldish day and they had a heater there and it was great we had a lovely time.

When you returned from the war, just to continue with this theme and you were talking about settling down and letting go of bitterness and hatred. Was it a case of sitting yourself down and in your head saying 'Now look Gough, the wars over and it's time to move on.' did you have

24:30 **that thought in your mind?**

No, not really I just let things come as they did.

Did you see other men who had trouble?

Yes there was one particular man in the battalion and he was vice president of the association and he went down with an illness,

25:00 it was a mental illness and he was in a bad way and we thought that he'd died. He came out of that by spiritual means of people he been to see and he came out a much better man for it. Then he produced leaflets which he pass though to all the wives and men of the 39th Battalion association

25:30 sort of try and induce them to join, but not many did to my knowledge. I don't know what it is but he's gone down hill badly, and it was in the last good guts that he's not well again. He was a nice fellow, unfortunately he was vice president for many years and was president for many years.

26:00 When I was president we went in for a year and we brought in another person. I think a round about is a good idea because you can change your ideas, but this particularly person Noel Hall was in for forty years. Don't get me wrong he was a very gifted man and he was a health officer at Hawthorn, and he's a

very pleasant person

26:30 with a lovely wife, but I still think the system should be to bring somebody else in for a change but anyway he's retired after forty years.

That's a long time?

And he's brought in Allan Moore from Mt Eliza.

Let's talk about returning from the war and letting go, or dealing with your war experience so it doesn't dominate your civilian life. Is forgiveness something that you have to thing

27:00 **about, do you have to forgive, or have you forgiven or have you not forgiven, how does forgiveness fit in to it all?**

Although I wasn't there I don't forgive the Japanese for the atrocities on the prisoners of war that had lost their lives and those that came out. I have one at Kingswood Golf Club and I knew two actually,

27:30 one from the 2/22nd Battalion and he was a prisoner of war and another one prisoner of war, they lived a pretty miserable life. Then the women, the nurses that they slaughtered I don't forgive the Japanese for what they did, but it's not the children of Japan it's those in the past.

28:00 I'm hopeful that we don't see another repetition of that. I'm concerned with Korea and we've all seen a build up there of that, and America hasn't had a good existence in those countries when they've gone in their against jungle fighting and I sincerely hope that

28:30 nothing comes of that, it's brewing but on top of that China is there. The Koreans, Mongolians and Chinese and what have you I don't know I'm a bit fearful, I'm more fearful of that than I am of this Iraq business, I think that's all I can say there.

29:00 **I wanted to ask you about another thing that must have been hard to see or to hear about, the Japanese soldiers you said who preferred to march into the sea and blow themselves up with grenades. I've seen some shots that Damien Parer took of a soldier on a beach with his gun trained on a Japanese soldier who wouldn't put the grenade down and eventually blew himself up. Was that something that you heard about or**

29:30 **witnessed?**

I actually saw that happen at Gona West, not Gona but Gona West. He walked in about fifty yards out and put the grenade up like that and pulled the pin and away it went. He was going to be captured and shot and I witnessed that, and that's the only one I witnessed doing it.

I think one is enough really.

That's right. The others

30:00 ran down towards the river and they were picked up by the other platoons, so they didn't get away.

What was morale like during that time at Gona and Sanananda, because it was a dogged hard relentless thing and you'd already been through Kokoda so you knew how nasty things could get, how were you able to keep your spirits up or what sort of state were your spirits in?

30:30 I think they were a bit below par because we were getting tired from our earlier campaigns we'd been in over a two-month period and the anxiety and everything. I think we were getting a bit touchy when we got to Haley's village at Gona west, we thought we'd

31:00 probably get out of there but then we were sent onto Sanananda after that a bit more.

Was the resentment building them, were people thinking 'look we've done our bit'?

Yes the resentment was 'why are the Australians doing all this fighting and the Americans are not', they weren't in that at Gona, the Buna show the last, there were at Sanananda

31:30 that was the tail end of them.

Was there any talk between the Australians and Americans when you met up there about that?

No I don't think they would, I know on principal I don't think they would. All I can say is they fed us well with chocolate and cigarettes when we got there, and too us that meant a lot, a hell of a lot.

I'm sure it did. You were very poorly

32:00 **rationed at Gona?**

They had everything ration wise, but our rations were shocking.

Even later at the beachhead were the rations still quite poor there?

Yes that's right.

Did that cause much resentment amongst the men?

I think they lost weight, and you lose strength

32:30 through losing weight, yes it did, bully beef after bully beef.

What does an officer do in that instance to, you have to find an outlet or curve that resentment otherwise you build and you may have mutiny?

I think they know that you're eating the same as they are. When we were in the field we took our officers

33:00 down with us, they would pick you as an officers you were an OR [Other Rank] really, but you ate the same as the men in the field, and you survived the same as they did. There was a photo in one of those booklets there, burying the Japanese where we are all standing around, it was in Pix [magazine] or something. They were smiling the boys,

33:30 that it wasn't them.

Did you feel ok about burying the Japanese or did you think 'why are we burying them for'?

I think we were fortunate that we did a bit there, but we couldn't do that at Gona west there were too many of them there, there was no hope in the world, and I wouldn't of touched them anyway.

Why weren't the Japanese burying their own?

Why don't they?

Why weren't they at that stage?

34:00 This was the finish of Gona, the last Japanese had been killed so we were all our troops that were there able to mop up and any fragments of bodies were just put into a hole, visible.

What about souvenir taking, I've heard that some?

That went on.

Cut ears off as a souvenir?

I

34:30 didn't see any evidence of that.

Did you see any evidence in both places of cannibalism, or was that only up at Kokoda?

I didn't see any evidence of that, but I got word back that some of the Australian soldiers had their buttocks taken off and the Japanese were cooking them and eating them, because they had nothing else.

35:00 They came across apparently; our troops came across them hanging in trees and that sort of thing, that way.

It almost sounds like the Gona, Sanananda was much worse than Kokoda?

It was, yes that was the bitterest fighting that I'd ever seen, it was more bitter than Sanananda

35:30 and yet I lost more troops at Sanananda than I did at Gona, but both were pretty awful. Victory was there and that was the important thing, they got rid of the Japanese at Gona and of course they still had to get rid of those that were left at Sanananda and Buna.

Was it after the Sanananda battle that you were down with malaria?

Yes that's right. We came out of Sanananda to a resting area and this morning you all got to stand to at dawn so that you don't get any frontal attack and where we were which was a defensive position but you still have got to stand to a dawn, I stood too and I feel down

36:30 and I had a high temperature. I was sent back to a RAP and I stayed there all day and during the afternoon they came and got me and put me on the bus and took me up to Popondetta and then back to the hospital in New Guinea.

Was that your first malaria bout?

No, it was the second in New Guinea but then I had eight more back in Australia,

37:00 the colder weather and then I was boarded B Class.

From that hospital in Port Moresby when you were there with malaria was that when you were sent back to Australia on leave?

No, I wasn't sent back to Australia on leave, I came back with the battalion when the battalion came back at the end of March.

37:30 **That's right.**

After coming out of hospital with malaria I went back to the battalion but then we were in a training area and then there was talk that they might send us in further action up the coast. They must of felt and that's from Honner's point of view he must of said that he felt that

38:00 the battalion had been through enough and further re-enforcements stood with the moral perhaps of the troops wasn't up to it and at the moment they needed a long rest so that's why we were sent back to Australia. Perhaps that may have been one of the reasons why they had disbanded us.

How did you personally feel after the disbandment?

When Colonel Honner paraded us he was crying

38:30 when he told us the news and we all begged him to and the voice raised out 'go back' brigade and division and tell them that we wont accept this", he did do that and he went back. But he came back and told us that to no avail we would be disbanded and sent to different battalions. I think I was sent to the 2/6th Battalion

39:00 and then I was sent to the 2/8th Battalion which was where I did amphibious training.

How did you fit in, did you find it hard to make new friends again to build up mateship?

There were two or three other officers that went to the 2/8th Battalion and the CO was a Colonel Howden [Lt Col W S Howden] and he was a fine officer and I did amphibious training and I got down there and I got malaria again so they shot me up to Atherton

39:30 again. I must say that after my stay in hospital I had a beautiful holiday at a place called "Lake Perrine" I don't know if you have ever been there. There are two lakes in Queensland up in the Tablelands, Lake Perrine and Lake Marine, and there's a dividing wall between the two and the theory is that a man drowned in the front one and they picked him up in the second one. Surrounding these lakes are huge

40:00 jungle trees with pythons, snakes so you have got to have guides to walk around it, it's a rest house for re-cooperation of officers. I've been back there a few years ago when I we went up to Atherton Tablelands and I've been back to Lake Perrine and took the wife there and it's a beautiful spot. If you ever get the change

40:30 to have a look at Lake Perrine have a look at it, that's where the mighty big trees up there the big fig tree.

Tape 8

00:30 **You said you were boarded in Queensland, you got malaria in Queensland?**

Yes.

In hospital for twelve months?

Yes, it was actually about twelve months, that's right.

Was your wife able to come up and see you during that time?

Yes she was, we stopped and I was in camp Cable and it's not far from

01:00 the jungle training camp Canungra, it's not far from Bing Lee, where she stopped was at a home on the top of a hill the people were Yore and her son had the contract with the camp for garbage which he fed his pigs.

You weren't allowed to live off

01:30 **camp with her?**

I had a company motorbike because I was company commander there and I use to use the motorbike and go out through the back and come in and see my wife and then I'd drive back the next morning.

Was that a strictly legal?

No,

02:00 I was not entitled to use army vehicles for pleasure, and I didn't have leave to do it. We also got quite a thunderstorm and the rivers in the area over flowed. This night it was raining when I rode the motorbike out and when I got to the bridge there was three foot of water and I couldn't go over that on

a motor bike.

02:30 Just across the road was a house with a man that had horse and I asked him to loan me the horse to go to see my wife and he said "How are you going to do it?" and I said, "Ride the horse." because I could ride horses. I did that, the next morning I took the horse back and got on the motor bike and got back to camp. Then I had a visit from the adjutant and he said "Where have you been?" and I said, "What do you mean where have I been?"

03:00 and he said "The motor bike is warm you have been out on it, and I believe you have been visiting your wife." and I said "Yes." and he said, "I'm parading you to the CO." and I said "Ok." I was paraded to the CO and I was confined to barracks and he let me out one night a week. I couldn't do much about that, but time went on and he had a

03:30 night for officers and their wives and girlfriends at the mess. He met the wife and he then increased it to three nights a week, so he was a pretty good bloke really.

Good on him, it was your first year or second year of marriage and hadn't been together very often?

That's correct.

You need to see each other don't you?

It's important

04:00 but it was the time of real restrictions and we were lucky, she was lucky to get up there.

How did you organise that because train travel wasn't easy for civilians?

She knew somebody that saw somebody in at the railways to do it. She had to wait a while to get permission to do it, she come all that way up with troops on the train and when she got there she was scared stiff, she was only young. Then I took

04:30 her out, she's coming out to this place up on the high hill but this Mrs Yore was a little women with a lovely kind heart and she took her as a daughter. Kevin, he was a bonzer [good] chap and he was the fellow I told you about the fish, catching the fish without a hook, line or sinker.

How old was your wife at that stage?

05:00 Pat would have been about twenty two I think.

How old were you?

Twenty two, we were both the same age.

How was it when you saw her again for the first time, after coming back?

That was wonderful, it was wonderful. We had some great nights together. We went on leave from up there and we came back and then

05:30 the sign of peace being declared was coming up. This particular night I thought I'd take and bottle so I took a bottle of gin because in those days gin was a pretty good drink particularly, for the ladies. But I didn't take anything to drink but the gin and unfortunately the daughter Nola who did come and

06:00 stay with us in Victoria may years later, her Pat and I decided we were going to have a drink of gin. Well we finished the bottle of gin, we were all pretty pickled by this. It was such good news to hear that peace was immanent. We then later on a few months later I went on leave again to Melbourne

06:30 at home, when we got to Taree when peace was declared and all the trains were blowing their whistles and everything. We went back to Melbourne then I had to return after the fourteen days leave, and I was reclassified A1 again to be sent to Morotai, because peace had been declared no further troops left Australia, so I didn't see any further action.

07:00 I wasn't sad about that I can tell you.

I'm sure you weren't. What would you have been doing in Morotai seeing that peace had been declared?

There were still troops on Morotai and Balikpapan. For instance this Don Simonson he was up there and they were just sending out patrols keeping the Japs at bay they weren't attacking them. I think when the troops

07:30 had been cleared from the New Guinea area some of those islands I think the warning must of gone out "do not sacrifice your troops, hold them at bay", starve them because something is in the wind, and of course the bomb was dropped after all there were a lot of islands with a lot of Japs on that couldn't get out because no one was

08:00 there the navy was gone. It was just a matter of just holding them.

Did you hear about the bomb, did you hear much about that did you know what it meant?

No I didn't at the time, all we knew was that it was dropped and caused devastation, a tragic thing really.

Yes definitely.

08:30 It's a tragic thing but if you look at the way the Japs attacked Pearl Harbor that was a tragic thing, I've been to Pearl Harbor. I've been on the decks of the warships, I've seen the bodies down below, they never took them out they are just frozen down there. When you see that and you realize

09:00 what they did to America, well then you can understand what the Americans did with the bomb on Hiroshima.

When you heard that peace had been declared, was it an amazing moment for you or a bit of an anti-climax?

Yes, wonderful.

Was it continuous sadness?

No I don't think so,

09:30 I think it was just happiness all the way through from then on. I think everybody celebrated and celebrated, and then of course when I went back to camp, you came out on the point system. A man who was married with children say three children would get out first, then two children then one. A husband and wife next

10:00 then the single bloke, the poor single bloke we use to tease him, 'You'll get out'.

Was your wife pregnant by that stage?

No she wasn't, I was careful.

I'm surprised after two twenty two year olds all that time away from each other, those night-time visits on the motorbike I'm sure Queensland was rocking.

10:30 **I've just lost myself there talking about silly things like that.**

That's alright.

Celebration, how long did you celebrate for was it weeks, days when did you sort of come back to earth?

When I went back to camp of course and there were celebrations there. We kept training of course there and we use to play Solo in the mess at night. It quieted down a lot and then

11:00 just hopefully waiting for the time when you got out, when your time comes. I was rather sad really when the time did come, you were going south to be discharged.

I'm sure there would have been a tinge of sadness in it?

Yes, because we'd been with men for so many years, been through such a lot together

11:30 it was a sad time, it was a good time to get out but then we had to face up to. I think I got out on the 17th November and I started work in the January the following year in 1946.

Did it give you any pause for consideration in your job, you had to go straight into a job where you were selling

12:00 **to the Japanese items, or did it take a while for them to come back?**

Not straight away, I think it was a couple of years later when I sold Japanese stuff, by then it settled down a bit. Things were coming on the market, which hadn't been on the market before because there was such urgent supply of everything. The country was being flooded with goods.

Were you a changed

12:30 **man after the war do you think, had it taken something from you or had given you something?**

I was more hardened to conditions and I think that's why for thirty seven years I worked with this company and when it came, after what I'd been through with the war and he was an ex-soldier my boss he was with

13:00 the Australian forces with my father. When it came to applying for six months leave I wanted my leave that I was entitled to, after twenty five years. He said I had to take six months at a time, I said "I can't take six months I'd run out of money." he said, "That's it." and I said, "Oh well, that's no good." so I wrote a letter of resignation. My friend who

13:30 was an associate director with me he tried to talk the boss around, but he wouldn't move so I thought 'I'm going to be my own master for a change.' and I think it had hardened me to that extent, and I decided that was what I wanted. He decided I could have it the day before I left and I said "Well you're too late." and what I did do was I had taken two of the agencies from him.

14:00 **Good on you.**

Now, he had a visit from one of the agencies and the agency told him that Gough was going to me our agent on two products and that gave me a start. The firm folded last week, my son got out after all these years and has done very well.

Good.

In communication cables. It was called Garland

14:30 Cables from every type of cable you wanted. You know a ball of string he got one of the Chinese manufacturers to make a box to pull the cable out of the box like a ball of string and he did that on all his cables. An electrician going into a factory pulling that out of a box,

15:00 instead of out of a coil, so it was a real success.

Tell me when the war was over as you settled back into civilian life how had Australia changed during the war do you think as a country?

I think they were frightened

15:30 of what had occurred. I think they were more aware that we were vulnerable but I think that people like myself and all soldiers and ladies of our age must of realised and be so thankful

16:00 of the American support because they were supreme lets face it. If they hadn't of come to our aid we were gone, there's no two ways about it. People today are resentful for the Americans doing for what they have done in Iraq they're trying to get

16:30 rid of despots like Saddam Hussein and the other fellow the tall fellow that rides a horse. I think that it was a rebuilding that had to go on, but I don't know whether we were any better equipped with the modern weapons we have got.

17:00 That we are any better equipped and I still think that we'd very vulnerable, we are too big a country, we haven't got the population we have twenty million people. Whilst we have got America, ok but if America went down I don't think there is anyone else who can come to our aid. Although Britain wants to,

17:30 and would dearly love to they are not in the position in the world to be able to do it because they have got too much at stake in Europe.

Did you think when the Korean War broke out in 1950 did you think 'Oh here we go again I thought we fought the last war.' how did you feel about that?

18:00 Actually that was at a time when I think my son, some of them were getting called up on the marble system, I think that was the time.

Was that Korea or Vietnam?

It was one of them wasn't it?

Vietnam.

Vietnam was it? Fortunately he wasn't called up. I

18:30 didn't have much thoughts about it really, troops went over there to assist America and that. It wasn't here and we weren't been vulnerable here and it was over there. I didn't have much to think about it.

We will just roll

19:00 **back a little bit.**

That's fine.

When you are doing amphibious training in Queensland?

Yes.

Was your heart still in it or did you think 'I've done my bit'?

Yes it was, I was looking forward to it because it was a new challenge and there were some nice blokes in the 2/8th Battalion.

What was involved in amphibious training?

19:30 You were getting into the amphibious boats and going out a certain distance, and then you were coming back to shore again there was not a great deal in it but there was a lot to learn. I didn't get a great deal of it, with the colder conditions I went down with malaria again.

How did you feel when you kept coming down

20:00 **with malaria, would that sap your moral?**

It did, I got very despondent. With malaria you get a very high temperature for three or four days irrespective of the medicines they give you they have got to get your temperature down. I've seen fellows with malaria and I've seen fellows with Black Water Fever. We had an officer in the 39th Battalion that nearly died

20:30 from this Black Water Fever.

What's the difference between Black Water Fever and malaria?

It's something they didn't know much about, it's from the Sanananda area in the waters there. Because of the ticks and all that sort of thing, the conditions that fellows lived under and how they came out of it still live it makes you wonder.

21:00 **Apart from disease and so forth, you would sometimes be shelled by your own men or come under mortar fire?**

That was at Sanananda, yes. The regimental sergeant major was there whilst the mortar platoon, there was a mortar platoon were firing these mortars. They fired them forward of

21:30 you to drop them down on the enemy but the problem was they were hitting the trees and breaking and then dropping down, so they were losing a bit of the impact. But they were dropping on us, but our regimental sergeant major, one of the bombs was in dud and it fused back and killed him. That was at Sanananda.

Correct me if I'm wrong but I think I have read that

22:00 **Ralph Honner or somebody came up with the idea of delayed explosion shells, rather than explode on top of their dugouts, would penetrate and then explode?**

Yes, I've read about that somewhere but I don't know much about it. I don't think that existed when we were down there, this must of come up, a theory of his may have come up and he's past it on,

22:30 but I saw no military evidence of that. Let's put it this way, no military evidence of that was passed onto us.

Right.

But I did hear about it.

Sam Templeton, we have talked a little bit about him why that particular place was called Templeton

23:00 **Crossing what was the?**

Significance of it?

Yes.

It's on the creek that runs down, it was a staging area. There was no native village there it was just a crossing of the river and I think they felt his bravery and what he'd done in taking us

23:30 across the Owen Stanley and reaching Kokoda and then going into action against a huge force of Japanese was very worthy, naming that place Templeton's Crossing after him.

Do you think he was in anyway reckless in his behaviour that led him to getting shot?

Sam often said,

24:00 now this is strange, he often said "I'm going to kill the enemy I won't come out alive." now he has said that to me and said that to one or two of our B Company officers, but he hadn't said that to any of his troops, but he did say it to me on several occasions. I said, "Sam, we need you through this." he said "You'll battle on son."

24:30 he had a great habit of calling people laddie, "Come on laddie get with it." and you were an officer under his command "Come on laddie."

How old was he compared to you?

I reckon he was twenty three or twenty four years older.

He fought in the Irish Rebellion?

He did.

1916 we are talking about?

That's right.

What an Irishman doing fighting in the British Commonwealth Forces?

Bugged if I know,

25:00 that's a good question.

That's very funny.

Irish Rebellion, half Scotsman too.

Sounds like a man who just loved to fight?

Well, he loved to fight as he did at Darley, he put the wind up those blokes that were attacking us. I wasn't in the hut at the time but I heard about it the next morning.

What did he look like Sam Templeton?

He was about six foot three

25:30 a set man and as fit as a fiddle, and he'd walk for miles, he'd out walk anyone. He gave me the impression that he was a lonely man, he didn't talk about family life much, he kept his thoughts to himself, you couldn't get past his thoughts. His 2IC would feed us,

26:00 "Don't worry Sam today come back tomorrow." he had problems but he was a very brave soldier just the same. But that wording that he said, he said "I'm going to kill the Japs and I will be killed in the action".

Was he do you think the best leader you personally

26:30 **had during the war?**

Yes. Honner was a very fine man but Honner was another one he was a deep thinker, I suppose these top men are, it's like your boss sometimes he won't tell you what he is thinking. Honner was a brave brave soldier yes, and he had a good reputation and came with a fine record from the 39th. Then of course he

27:00 went on to lead the 2/14th Battalion, the battalion that assisted us. I think he came from there before he came to the 39th, I think that was the story but then he was wounded, badly wounded and in those photos I can show you with a stick he used to walk. He was one of the finest arthritises. We had a dinner

27:30 at the Hawthorne Drill Hall and he came and spoke, he went on and went on and went on and we all said "for God sakes shut up Sam". He went on far too long actually, far too long indeed.

I think you would have been too polite to tell him to shut up?

No we were at the table you know.

28:00 He was well respected let's put it that way, I don't think he was my man but as far as the soldiers were concerned he was a good man.

Obviously the 39th would have had very little love for General Blamey?

None whatsoever.

None what so ever, I think you can't put it any plainer than that. Was he regarded as like one of those shiny bottom officers who spent all their time polishing their bum on a chair and

28:30 **don't get into the action?**

I don't think that anyone thought much of him. After his comments and particularly against his own AIF troops, when he came out and said that, he should have been the one who should have been arseholed out of the army, for speaking that way he should of apologized.

29:00 **Did you come across any other so call leaders who you thought 'that man does not deserve or hasn't earned that'?**

No one sticks out in my mind but I think the one that we all admired most was General Herring, he was a fine leader and he was a quite man and he got things done.

He made a speech didn't he when you came back from Kokoda, after Ralph Honner did, what did he say?

I can't remember now,

29:30 I'm afraid I can't.

What was his role, was he up there at all on the track?

Herring, I don't think so, but he had an infinite knowledge from his brigadiers and he didn't sack brigadiers.

Was it important for the men to see their commanding officers doing the same thing that they were doing?

I think so, it's most important.

30:00 Let's put it this way when Major Cameron, Owen was there and he set an example and then he died and then Major Cameron came up and sent three companies forward. He set an example he was back from the action there but then when Honner came up Honner was right in the middle of it, like we

30:30 were up the hill, down the track but on the track was battalion headquarters and Honner was with the adjutant and the eye man.

Having said you are show your men you are willing to go with them, do you also have to make the decision, 'look I'm the one with the map, I'm the one who knows what we are doing, I have to look after myself a little bit', like I have to send you to do that and you to do that rather than you yourself doing it all,

31:00 **did you have to do this job as well?**

Yes you have got to delegate that's right, you do what you've got to do but you have got section leaders, you have got a platoon sergeant and you have to see that they are involved in whatever you are doing, and as I said before it was an individual and a section leaders war, because of the terrain of the country.

With that in mind,

31:30 **you got to delegate and you have got to trust the men you are delegating to, could you see the signs if you thought 'Charlie over there I think he's starting to loose his nerve a little bit' could you see that sort of thing coming and would you give him a different job or have him sent to a different area, was that something that you had to manage as well?**

Sergeant Quinn, that's the fellow who was in that photograph he went back, he told me he was going back,

32:00 he said "I cant stand it any longer", I said "You know what you're doing because you could be a deserter?" he said "I cant help that, I cant face it." He was brought back and he knuckled down and he became quite good from then on, but nothing was done. I never put in a bad report against him.

Did you see some fellows and you thought 'I think that guy has had enough and needs a rest'

32:30 **would you move fellows back?**

No I couldn't do that, I can't send any man back unless he was wounded.

Would you mention to your CO then 'look I think this fellow over here needs to be looked after'?

I would, but I didn't have anyone in that category. The only thing at Kokoda was that when we had to withdraw Major Watson lined

33:00 my platoon up across the plateau so that the 11th and 12th Platoons of PIB come through us and we had our Lewis guns fired in the direction. I had a section down a cliff, you image the plateau and that over the side and they were stretched along there of that section. There were many times

33:30 when you gave orders and the Japanese might hear and he'd repeat that order. Corporal Markham's section of mine was down there in that section and knew they were there and I knew they were throwing grenades because I could hear the squealing further down. When we got the order to withdraw, other platoons came through and Watson said "It's time to go." so went down myself personally and called

34:00 Corporal Markham "Rex are you there?" and there was no sign, no one answered. I said "Rex are you there?" I came back and I sent a runner down and said "Go down and get them and tell them to come back to withdraw". What we didn't know was they had already withdrawn, and they'd gone back a track and went up to Deniki and when we went back

34:30 up the track to Deniki there they were. I said "Why didn't you tell us you were going?" he said "We tried to but with all the noise going on we couldn't get you to hear." but nobody from the section came to me and told me that they were going, I was a bit annoyed about that.

I bet you were?

Yes.

Was that an instance of him just saying 'We're getting out of here, I've had enough'?

Yes. He sent me a long history years later when they were

35:00 writing the history of the 39th and I sent it on to the powers at be. He lives in Sydney and I think he's still alive, I never have had anything to do with him since. He was a good soldier but he broke orders, he didn't advise me what he was doing but that was all.

To sum up, looking back

35:30 **on the war and I always ask this question and I always phrase it wrongly so forgive me. Are you pleased that you took part in the war, I don't mean pleased as in happy about it, but does it sit well with you did a job that had to be done, is that how you feel?**

Yes I feel very proud that I was a member of the 39th Battalion in action against the Japanese

36:00 and that overall we won the war and we saved our loved ones and we are here today with them still and that's all I've got to say.

Thank you.