Australians at War Film Archive

Donald Ball (Don) - Transcript of interview

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Tape 1

00:31 **We might get you to just talk about your early life, growing up, where you were born?**

Well I was born at a suburb of Brisbane, Taringa, 17th of October 1926. in fact we just drove past where the hospital used to be near the, well the Taringa school's gone now too.

01:00 Yeah I was born there, I'm the eldest of four, my brother and my two sisters, they are all still living incidentally. And we went to school there, Taringa School, which has now been demolished, I think there is units there now I think. And the Baptist church that we went to, attended to because I was born into a Christian family.

01:30 We all went to Sunday school there and later on to church and that's only about, oh wouldn't be a hundred yards from that hospital. I can remember my mother saying that when I was born, it was her first-born and it was the church anniversary. She can remember lying there in the bed and listening to the singing that was up at the church up the road. I wasn't a

02:00 very good scholar when I started school there. I was very attached to my mother and she used to take me to school in the early beginnings and she would be going to walk to home and I'd be following behind just around the corner somewhere. So we all went to the school and I left there at age fifteen, I wasn't a very good scholar, and took my first job in Brisbane as a message boy. I worked for

02:30 Charters Limited at that time, they were a typewriter firm. And from Charters, just can't think how long I was there with them, and I went around to Martin Wilson Brothers on Adelaide Street, and was apprenticed then to a fitter and turner. But I wasn't real happy with that, I transferred the apprenticeship to aircraft engineer and went out to Qantas [Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Service] at Archerfield.

03:00 And at those times I was riding a bike from Taringa right out to Archerfield, quite a long way. And it was from Archerfield that I joined the army in 1944. Joined up the army in '44, and went through Redbank, transferred down to Cowra, the training battalion. At

03:30 Cowra, as you will remember, that was where they had the breakout of Japanese in 1944, well that was in August and I was there in November. And the powers that be suspected they would break out again. So some of us who had shot with a .303 before were put together and marched up and down where the Japanese could see us because the Japanese prisoner of war camp was up

04:00 on a hill, and the army camp was sort of directly opposite across the valley. The idea was to put on a show of force, of course they never ever broke out again. I was interested in air shooting because my father was chairman of the Queensland Rifle Association and captain of Brisbane club. So I had had training already with a .303. Still interested in rifle shooting although since we've moved up here I haven't done much,

04:30 used to shoot with the Erindale Rifle Club. Yeah well, so after training then at Cowra we went to Bathurst and then to Singleton, and I was at Singleton then when the war finished. So they broke the unit up and sent us all back to our own states, and I was camped at Logan Village, Camp Cable originally.

05:00 And one day I was called up to the head office for an interview. I had been working in the small light armament workshop on the outskirts of the camp. I was trying to get into transferring to the army mechanical, but they were disbanding as well, that was the end of '45. I think the interview would have been somewhere around October,

05:30 I think late in October. And another guy was there with me, and they interviewed us, a major from Victoria Barracks, so we were told to sit out on the veranda for a few minutes, and then they told us, "Well you guys have been selected as military police. Have you got any objections?" They said we'd probably go to Japan. And I already had one stripe, and they said, "Well you'll get two stripes."

06:00 So we accepted and the other guy was Doug Wallace. And we went straight to New Guinea Force Provo [Provosts – Military Police] Company at Kelvin Grove where we had some training and we did foot patrols in Queen Street and vehicle patrols night time. And we were there until the beginning of 1946, and the both of us went straight to 11th Div Military Police in Rabaul.

06:30 And we stayed there for nearly two years. The time I was there, the two of us were picked out in early 1946 because we were non-smokers. We went on a Fijian Ship, Salamoa Suva, and we went all around the islands. And it was our job to stop guys from smoking while they were loading drums of fuel. So we saw

07:00 quite a bit of the islands, we went up to Madang spent time there, then to Wewak, Aitope, back to Finschhafen and Lae. Then to Jacquinot Bay which is back on New Britain, and then back home. And when we got back to Rabaul, 11th Division had folded up, and there were already two other military police companies in Rabaul because there was a third

07:30 of the Japanese army in Rabaul. Was really a jump-off place to invade New Zealand and Australia. There was one place where we did traffic control there, the bottom of Tunnel Hill , there was that much traffic. 8 MD Military Police was there, so we joined up with them. And already when we were at 11 Div the war trials had

08:00 began and everyone had a turn on the trial as a court orderly or escorting Japanese for execution. I might say here Japanese looked on execution by hanging as a dishonourable death and shooting by firing squad as an honourable death. And the court ordered whatever they felt respected the background of what atrocities the Japanese had

08:30 been convicted of I think. And other factors as well, such as being ordered to carry out executions. So we were on the Rabaul side of the island then. Rabaul proper that is, and then I think it might have been late 1946 we might have been transferred over to the other side of the island, to a place called Nonga.

09:00 So most of the war trials that I was involved in were carried out at Nonga. The trial of some pretty high-ranking Japanese were carried out there. Some of them were executed by hanging, some of them were executed by firing squad. The, just think about what else I can tell you there about the war trials. Because that was over

09:30 the whole period that I was there, that was the main course of military police towards 1947 because a lot of troops had returned to Australia by then. The trial of Adachi was one high ranking Japanese general, General Adachi. General Imamura who was the Japanese general in charge of the Japanese in Rabaul.

10:00 And quite a few others, I didn't want to remember all of this so I put it out of my mind because the fact that I was brought up in a Christian family, having to be involved in the execution of Japanese I knew was part of my job, but it wasn't a very pleasant thing. I think in the period of time that we were there, there would have been somewhere in the number of sixty all together.

10:30 Most of them were executed by hanging and the others were executed by firing squad. And of course the one that was most significant for me was the last execution that was carried out in 1947. in fact I had both my 20th and 21st birthday in Rabaul. And

11:00 at that time the person who was in charge of the military police was a warrant office first class who transferred from the military police across to the war criminals' compound. Now that significantly put me in charge of the last military police detachment. I think we had ten or twelve corporals then and I was given the rank of

11:30 acting sergeant. So at the time of the war trial, the particular Japanese Hirio Katiama came up. Now Katiama, I was introduced to Katiama probably early or mid-1946 I think. Part of our tour of duty at Rabaul was to call in every now and again at the war criminals' compound. And Reverend Gordon Young was our chaplain in the

12:00 army at that time. He had permission to go into the compound and take a Christian gospel to Japanese. And Katiama because he was a cipher officer, was a sub-lieutenant in the navy. He would often be found in the major Upton office because of his grasp of English. And Gordon introduced me to him because Gordon knew that I had a Christian background and,

12:30 which was very unusual, Katiama was a Christian in the Japanese Army. Now we better talk a little bit about him because I think it was in 1944 also, he was working as a cipher officer with the Japanese Navy at Ambon and he had been ordered to carry out the execution

13:00 of Katiama. Now because of his Christian background he had great consternation with that and actually, I'm not quite sure how it come about, it was a padre by the name of Horichikaido attached to the Japanese Army at that time and Katiama had gone to him for counselling of what he had to do. I actually met Horichikaido,

13:30 who is dead now of course, but there was some things I've just got to have a little bit of a think about now, so it might be a good idea to stop that film if you can. Katiama was ordered to carry out the

execution of an Australian airman. I think he was flight lieutenant by the name of Scott, can't think what his Christian name was at the moment.

14:00 And what happened was Scott was in charge of a lobbied Hudson aircraft that was on a reconnaissance flight from somewhere in the Northern Territory and they were flying over the Banda Sea and they were shot down. Now he landed, crash landed the aircraft, and I'm not sure now, I should have had a look at these to find out if someone was killed in the crash.

14:30 I think there was five in the crew, I'm not quite sure now, I just wonder if we should have a look at that before…

Well maybe if we just keep going and when we have a break and if there is anything we need to look up we can come back to.

Oh okay. So what happened was they survived the crash with very minor injuries, when I say they, there were about four or five of them I think. And the Indonesians, where they crashed, they

15:00 looked after them for a time and fed them food and so forth but eventually gave them up to the Japanese. I know what I was going to tell you. So they were taken prisoner and put in Tantoi POW [Prisoner of War] camp, now also at Tantoi were quite a few other Australians. And I corresponded with a high ranking officer and I think he…

15:30 I just wonder whether I should look at these notes to make sure I've got these names correct, is that okay?

We can stop if you want to stop.

Yeah well I think we better stop that because I think it's important. See if we can talk a bit of sense. Where'd we finish up there Peter [interviewer]?

Oh about where the Indonesians had looked after them.

16:00 I said they were in the prisoner of war camp at Tantoi was the name, T A N T O Y or T A N T O I? That it? When you're ready.

Well after Tantoi where did you then go?

Well also in the Japanese prisoner of war camp there were remnants of an organization

16:30 which was the battalion in defence of Ambon when the Japanese invaded there 1942. They were 2nd 21st Battalion known as Gold Force. And they were also in that camp. And there was, I think there was other prisoners in there as well, like people who were of Dutch descent, Dutch people and quite a few other prisoners in that camp. So

17:00 what happened was that in 1944 there was a war trial supposedly on Japan, a court marshal. Of those that survived the crash, they were incarcerated in the camp there, and if I remember correctly one of the members of that Hudson that crashed there was caught signalling Allied aircraft there one day and

17:30 was shot. I'm not quite sure, I think his name might have been Beddows, I'd have to go and have a look at my other file to find out if it was. So the ones that were left there were seen one day driven away in a truck by someone who was a Dutchman. And in the, after the war, when the war finished, the interrogating officer helped

18:00 to produced the film Blood Oath, it was his son, Brian Williams, I know this sounds a little bit disjointed now.

That's okay.

John Williams, in his interrogation, this Dutchman happened to come up towards the finish and say that he had seen these airmen driven away and they didn't come back. Now almost, the Japanese almost got away with the execution of the airmen of that aircraft

18:30 but except for that Dutchman having to say this. So in their interrogation they pursued it further with the Japanese and they finally admitted that they had been executed. So then they had to go to the site and exhume the bodies of those that had been executed. Katiama because of his rank, he

19:00 put on, I do remember him and his depositions of the court trial saying he put on his best naval uniform because the Japanese called the execution by beheading with Japanese sword 'bushido' which is to do with part of their culture. It was an honour in their culture to be the helping sword for someone who was going to commit suicide,

19:30 but in the case of the execution of someone it was sort of looked upon as something similar along those lines. So he had to carry out that beheading much to his dismay. Now after the war he was discharged and back in Japan, but except for that Dutchman coming forward in interrogation he would never have been discovered. So what they did then, they sent out a

20:00 search to try and find Katiama in Japan, which they did. And one of the things that some of his friends

tried to encourage him to do was to not front up to it. And I think perhaps I should tell you about this lady, I've got a letter that I'm not quite sure that I want published at the present time because I might want to write a book one day.

20:30 But I'll tell you about this lady, her name was Winifred Yamaguchi. And she was an English lady married to a Japanese. She spent the whole time of the war in Japan, unharmed by the Japanese and in some way she was related to Katiama. So he went to her with this problem because he was being taken to have a trial and she, in her letter she

21:00 says that she couldn't believe her nephew would carry out an execution of anybody, because of his Christian background. But she said in the letter finally that she believed in British justice and if it was found to be true than so be it. That letter is in my files, which I don't particularly want to release at the present time.

21:30 Anyway the trial was held and because the trial was held early in 1946 I'm not sure if it was Morathai or it was at Ambon. And on the tribunal, the war trials court itself, there was an air force officer that was part of that trial. And it was thought by John Williams, who was also

22:00 the prosecutor on Katiama's war trial, it was thought that the reason that Katiama was given the death sentence by firing squad was because of the presence of that air force officer as part of the war trials court and the fact that Katiama had executed a flight sergeant in the air force. Now whether that's true I don't know but that was just his thought at that time.

22:30 All right, better stop that for a minute Peter just to let me have a bit of a think.

Okay.

Now Katiama's execution, although he was transferred from where his trial was held, either Morotai or Ambon, he was transferred to the war prisoners' compound at Rabaul some time in 1946. The reason he was

23:00 still alive at the end of 1947 was because he was required as a witness in another case and he also had an appeal in against his sentence because the court had sentenced him to execution by firing squad. I think I said before, it might have just been in discussion, that Japanese looked upon shooting by firing squad as an honourable death and execution by hanging as a dishonourable death. Well this is a part that I hid within myself for

23:30 forty years because after discharge I didn't want to talk about this and I put it all behind myself because I knew that I had a problem with Katiama's execution. The reason for that, I was wrongly misled to believe that Katiama's trail, he hadn't really carried out the execution. And in fact I

24:00 think in his first ,when he was first put before the court he didn't admit and some of the others with him said they didn't carry out the execution. They changed their story in other words. So there was some confusion in the war trial court. But eventually he was convicted. The trouble was he was ordered to carry out the execution by a higher ranking Japanese whose name I've forgotten, I understood he was a baron,

24:30 a Japanese baron, who had already been tried on a different case, and because he couldn't be found to support Katiama's story. Because most times in a court trial if a person was ordered to carry out an execution what happened was they got off with a gaol term. And I can refer to that again as to another

25:00 person I actually met in Japan. So, but in this particular case the court had decided to give him the death sentence by firing squad. So the last execution was Katiama's execution in 1947, and I had had my twenty-first birthday on the 17th of October 1947 and on the 23rd I had to take Katiama for his execution.

25:30 So on the day of the execution, it was carried out early in the morning, the gallows and the area where executions took place was right away in the jungle in behind the, not far from the airstrip at Rabaul in those times. It's all gone now because of the volcanic eruption, it's all covered over, perhaps that's a good thing.

26:00 But anyway I picked Katiama up this day in my jeep from the death cell at the war criminals' compound. I had another corporal with me and because of my relationship to Katiama, because having met him at the compound we shared our faith, having met him through Gordon Young. Something worthwhile mentioning here, I have got some notes of Gordon Young's who was originally a Rat of Tobruk.

26:30 But later because his training in ministry had been delayed when he joined an armoured division within Tobruk. After on after coming back from Tobruk he had taken on the training in ministry and became a chaplain in the army. So with Gordon's help and with Katiama in the war criminals' compound there were twenty Japanese

27:00 were recognised as having accepting Christianity from Buddhism or Shintoism or whatever. So anyway I picked Katiama up this day and drove him to the site, and as I said I hadn't said anything to him at that time although we knew each other. And it was my job to prepare him for execution by firing squad. So

27:30 I took him to the chair, they were shot sitting down in a directors type chair, and I strapped his legs to the legs of the chair and his arms to the arms of the chair. And the doctor, Captain Alice had already pinned a white disk over the heart area. The firing squad, while that is taking place, are hidden in the bush and the rifles are loaded by an officer.

28:00 And the officer in charge of the firing squad was a lieutenant, Lieutenant Joe Backhouse, who is known to me and still alive here in Brisbane and we have a great relationship with each other. Now there are ten volunteers in a firing squad. The rifles are laid out on two ACF [Australian Comforts Fund] tables joined together

28:30 and they're loaded with nine ball rounds, what we call ball rounds, live rounds. And one rifle had what is known as a balastite cartridge in it, so no one can really say who shot that person who was to be executed because there is only one person knows which rifle that is in. So I had strapped Katiama in that

29:00 position to be executed by firing squad. And then I went to put the blindfold on him and it was the first time he spoke. He called my name and said that he didn't want the blindfold. But because I had seen those chaps before after they had pulled the triggers on the rifle, not all of them, but once or twice I seen them

29:30 react and all across the table realising what had taken place although they were volunteers and properly trained. So I felt greatly for those who would see the face of the person they are about to shoot, because the distance is only twenty-five yards, so I insisted that I put the blindfold on him. The blindfold doesn't just go around the eyes,

30:00 just like a triangular bandage and hangs down over their face as well. When it's put on it goes around the back of the person, where there's a post behind the chair, and the knot is tied around the post, so it is quite tight and it holds their head back in position. So I insisted to him that I should put it on, that it was regulation. And I'm holding the blindfold there and made to put it on him, and he

30:30 recited The Lord's Prayer out loud in English. So I just stopped. I could barely finish the prayer with him myself because I was so overcome. There were a lot of high-ranking officers there, the brigadier in charge, Brigadier Naylor, was there, and other high-ranking officers because Katiama was a special person in the war criminals compound. And even

31:00 General Imamura who was in charge of the compound from the Japanese side had made pleas to Brigadier Naylor to spare him but, and I think an appeal had gone to the Adjutant General in Australia but it was confirmed that he was to be executed. So I waited until he had finished the prayer and then I put the blindfold on him and the firing squad did what

31:30 they had to do. Now because that was the last execution, we came home, the military police unit was disbanded and we came home in November. Now I hid that story within myself for forty years, I didn't want to talk about it or think about it. Just from holding myself as best I can, even at this moment, I used to become a bit overcome emotionally because

32:00 it wasn't an easy thing to do anyway. So I hid that within myself for forty years. And after I came back and got discharged and because at the time I was in Rabaul, I met up with pre-war missionaries, met up with missionaries who were returning and Gordon Young took discharge in Rabaul

32:30 from the army and joined the mission staff. That would be also in 1947 when he did that, so I had a friendliness with them, and Reverend Roger Brown and his wife Cath, they're in their nineties, they live in Adelaide they were pre-war missionaries. Although Gordon Young and his wife Grace have passed on. One of the things that I should talk about

33:00 I think is the fact that the Methodist missionaries wanted me because of my association with them to get discharged in Rabaul and join Gordon Young but because I hadn't seen my family for a couple of years I decided to come home. So after I was discharged, I started to go back to my mechanical trade to begin with and then was corresponding with the Methodist missionaries, and they were wanting me to come and manage a plantation.

33:30 So what I did, I took on rehabilitation training in agriculture and in 1949, 1950 I went back to Rabaul to manage a crop or a cocoa plantation for the Methodist mission. Not only did I manage the plantation, I've got some photos of my house and the plantation here somewhere, you might like to have a look at them, I was also

34:00 running the ex-army work boat from Rabaul right down to the Nakanai Coast. Most of the boys I got on the plantation were from Nakanai further down the coast. Spoke a different language, or dialect to local, ones in Rabaul. So I had to converse in pidgin English most times. So I didn't learn the Toli language like most of the other missionaries had done.

34:30 What happened to me was I got a bad bout of malaria and finished up in the hospital at Rabaul at that time. And I confided in the doctor that I knew I was having a problem with trying to settle down there because of the background of the area where I had been, the army and what had taken place. So he sent me back to Australia and I was in Greenslopes hospital for a time and decided that I wouldn't go back.

35:00 And eventually after working for a while as a mechanic in a garage I became an honorary bearer in the ambulance service, and was eventually, in the early 1950's I took on a position in the ambulance staff in Brisbane and I remained there with them until some time, it'd be 1967.

35:30 At that time I was stationed at the ambulance depot at Mount Gravatt, my wife and I lived at Mount Gravatt and we, I should perhaps mention she's the daughter of a Methodist minister and I met her on a blind date actually. So anyway we were married in 1951 and we lived at Mount Gravatt when I joined the ambulance service.

36:00 And while I was there the superintendent of the Murwillumbah ambulance used to come to Brisbane buying carnival things for the carnivals they had down there. And I became friends with him and was short of someone to come on his staff down there at Murwillumbah so he encouraged me to come down there. So in 1967 we

36:30 shifted down to Murwillumbah. By that time we had two sons, the elder son John was starting high school and the youngest one was starting primary school so it was a good time to move anyway. And I remained on the staff at Murwillumbah until 1980 and then I went over in charge of a small ambulance station at a place called Bonalbo, over in west of Casino. And it was while I was

37:00 there that I saw in the Northern Star newspaper that there was a Catholic priest visiting Australia with a group of Japanese war widows on a journey of reconciliation. And it went through my mind how wonderful it would be if Katiama's widow was one of them because he was married, and his wife was also a Christian. Something I didn't mention before, I was twenty-one at the time of that execution and Katiama was aged twenty-seven.

37:30 So anyway, I didn't do anything about it the first day it was in the papers, but the second day when it was in the papers again I thought, "Well I'll ring up Woodlawn College in Lismore," and I rang up the college only to find out that father Paul Glynn, also from a family that were in Lismore, had gone down to Sydney with this

38:00 retinue of war widows. So the priest I spoke to said he would like to know why I wanted to speak to him. When I told him what it was in relation to he was very excited and he said he would get in touch with Father Paul Glynn. So Paul then rang me from Sydney and then a friendship began. Paul Glynn was a missionary in Japan for twenty-two years.

38:30 He's O'Mara's father and two of his brother also became priests, Father Tony Glynn forty-two years in Japan as a missionary and he actually dedicated his life to them, he died and was buried there. Now those three Glynn brothers, it's worthwhile mentioning that those three became interested in becoming priests all through the

39:00 witness of a Father Lionel Marsden who was taken prisoner of war, a chaplain in the army at Singapore. And was in the Changi prisoner of war camp, and one day Father Marsden was walking along the railway line that they were building there, and this Japanese officer was coming toward him and Father Marsden saluted him like he was supposed to do. And the Japanese hit him

39:30 over the head with his cane and kicked him down the embankment. Lionel Marsden was angry and turned his anger towards the Japanese but instead of attacking him, which if he had have done there would have been, he would have been executed himself, instead he made a commitment to his God and his Heavenly Father that if he came through Changi he would go back to Japan as a missionary.

40:00 And that's exactly what he did. Now I believe that the three Glynn brothers were influenced by him as a teacher at Woodlawn College and they in turn became priests, so it's really a remarkable story. Now another thing that I think …

Sorry we'll just get you to stop there we're just running out of tape here.

Tape 2

00:31 **And had gotten their lead from Father Marsden's example?**

Yeah wait a minute. What we'd say previously, yeah we're talking about yeah okay. Paul being … Okay. You right to go? All right, well Paul Glynn went back to Japan and he and I

01:00 began to correspond and I shared with him that I had a problem with this whole thing, that I had put it all out of my mind, didn't want to talk about it. So I shared with him what my problem was with Katiama. And interestingly enough around this same time, not quite sure how it occurred,

01:30 I think it might have been because of something I had said to him, it might have come in the newspaper or something somewhere. So two people picked up my implication of the war trails. One was Phillip Confauld of The Australian newspaper and the other one was Brian Williams. Brian was the son of John Williams who was the prosecutor on Katiama's war trial.

02:00 So both of them contacted me and Phillip Confauld, I told this story to him more or less but he was already doing research into Katiama and other Japanese who were involved in atrocities. So Brian's idea was that he had discovered in his father's garage the transcripts of

02:30 Katiama's trial as a young lad and always was interested by them. And I think he did drama when he went to school and he was moved to write the book Blood Oath and of course out of the book came the film. Well that was in early 1980s. Now the thing is, a lot of things transpired

03:00 writing to Paul Glynn mostly. What Paul did, he told me when I was talking to him on the telephone that he would go back to Japan and try to find Katiama's widow. Her name was Yuri. Y U R I . And with the help of a person from the Northern Star at Lismore, Jim Brigenshibe, they did just that.

03:30 So because she had remarried there was a problem with the new husband culturally really as to what they should do. But she was overjoyed when I was able to say that I didn't think Katiama was guilty of what he had been accused of. Now that was proved to be wrong. It was something to do with the confusion of these guys changing their story during the trials really.

04:00 And I think Phillip Confauld in his investigating for his story located some of this himself. And also General Imamura, who was the Japanese General in charge of Rabaul, while he had never really committed any atrocities himself, because of his high rank and his responsibility of being in charge of the Japanese there he was given a gaol term,

04:30 I'm not sure whether it was twelve years or fifteen years. And after we left Rabaul, the end of 1947, some time after that all of the prisoners in the war criminals' compound at Rabaul were transferred to Manus Island. Now what he did do? Imamura wrote his memoirs. Now in those memoirs I can't think of the, I don't think it's been published in English, in Japanese,

05:00 so in these memoirs he said that Katiama had confided in him in the war criminals' compound that he had carried out the execution of the Australian airman, Scott. Anyway the story that came out of that was that the film was put together I think in 1990 and myself and my wife were invited to

05:30 come to Sydney to, what's the name of the film crowd? Roadshow or something, Village Roadshow, to see the film. Well the film is very close to the truth but like most films there is some things put in there that are not quite right. One of the things, it's a while since I've seen the film, but one of the things in the shooting scene that's seen at the end

06:00 of the execution of Katiama they've got them standing up to shoot the firing squad, little things like that, and I think they only had five in it. Things like that but only little things. But then the main story where the some Baron is brought in as well, I can't remember now just what it is.

06:30 Some things are not quite true but it could have happened the way they portrayed it, quite a good film. Now in the beginning of that film you see the exhumation of some of the members of what were the remnants of the Gold Force that were part of the defence of Ambon. And the Japanese invaded there 1942, the Japanese

07:00 summarily executed some of them by beheading and some of them by bayoneting. And that scene in the film was very very realistic. Now eventually the film was to be released in Tokyo, and I think it was 1991 if I remember rightly. And John Williams was still alive then. The prosecutor and I were invited to Japan by the Japanese for the release of the film

07:30 under Japanese subtitle. So when it came time to go I had no idea how I was going to be received there, so we were flown by Qantas to the airport there and when we arrived at the airport, we got out of the aircraft and there was Japanese television crews and a lot of Japanese there to greet us. And when I say greet us I mean that.

08:00 And one Japanese by the name of Esio, can't remember his name now, Esio, came and embraced me in a tearful way and in broken English confided in me that he himself had been ordered to carry out the execution of an Australian, and he had done so, but he had long forgotten the name of

08:30 that Australian. And still at that time in 1991, he still had vivid dreams of waking up in the night. So it had played on his mind. So there were still some Japanese with some sort of a conscience apart from their culture, back as far as Samurai warriors are concerned. Some of them still had some understanding for Christian ways.

09:00 Anyway we went by train then to Sanduko for the release of the film in Tokyo. And it was first shown to a small group of Japanese media and other Japanese at that time. And once again when we were brought into this theatrette we were inundated with flowers and all kinds of things as we were introduced to them. Now we didn't get to see the film

09:30 under Japanese subtitle. They took it out of that theatrette to a press conference. It was in the same building. Now already only two theatres had agreed to show the film in Japan because of the sensitivity that was contained. So we were taken to this press conference where we sat at this table with television cameras and bright lights and all dressed

10:00 in suits, I'm not quite sure who was at my right hand side. There was John Williams and Brian Williams and Peter Unimea as well as Reverend Horichikaido the Japanese who Katiama had gone to when he was first ordered to carry out the execution. He too had passed on incidentally. And I thought, "Well what am I going to say when it

10:30 comes my turn to speak?" because each one was interviewed via the cameras so when John Williams was to my right if I remember right it came my turn to speak. And what I said was that I handed my hands to the people of Japan on behalf of Australia in friendship. And I said, "Particularly my right hand that rested on Katiama's shoulder

11:00 and he thus prayed for himself and those about to take his execution." So after the press conference, members of the Australian Embassy in Japan had said that it went off very well, and what I had said which was on the spur of the moment which I thought was an inspiration, heavenly inspiration if you like, to say that. After that twenty-seven

11:30 other theatres wanted to show the film, after our press conference was shown through Japan. Now young Japanese who consisted mainly of those that were present, and some of the Japanese Ambon veterans were seen to come out of the theatrette openly crying, especially the young Japanese because all of that had been hidden from them, they had no idea these things had happened.

12:00 So we stayed there, I think we were there ten days, and we moved around to different things but everywhere we went we were overwhelmed with friendship. So it was a wonderful thing to be a part of that reconciliation. I corresponded for a time with Ross Westcott who was part of the Australian Embassy staff, and he told me that that film went right through Japan and that it had been seen right through Japan.

12:30 Now it was part of a reconciliation and a better understanding between Australia and Japan. Now having said that, something that I have to say. That being an ex-serviceman and being involved with Japanese, there are still today Japanese in Japan who given the right circumstances would do the whole thing they did before. Because when you consider

13:00 that there is about one per cent of the Japanese population that are Christian, they're predominantly still governed by their previous culture. Now we just hope that, it has been wonderful being a part of the reconciliation thing and it's to be hoped that it sort of goes on forever. Well we seem to have a very good relationship with the people of Japan now.

13:30 Well younger Japanese have changed their attitude, they're not the Japanese of the 1940s. There is no doubt about that. So the film has been used really greatly and it has been great to be a part of that. But you know, Father Paul Glynn when I started to correspond with him, he helped me come to a better understanding of my problem. In other words when I speak to a number

14:00 of groups that I have had a healing of memories. And the major concept of that is and it's effective for anybody who has suffered any kind of trauma in their life, if they have got a Christian understanding as I did have, to go back in your mind's eye of those things that happened and sort of imagine the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ there at the time with you.

14:30 And it had helped me greatly with that anyway. So it was a healing of memories that I had, led by Father Paul Glynn, even just by corresponding. And I have got copies there of all of his letters. They actually had a, when they found Yuri they actually had a mass for Katiama in Japan at that time and there is a colour print there in my scrapbook, just depicting that that you people

15:00 might like to have a look at. In fact you might be able to record it I don't know. Now I don't know just how far on you want to go with this, actually one of the things I perhaps should say, in spite of the fact that I have had a healing of memories, it is just like if you have an injury. I've got a scar on my leg where I had a bad burn at one time. Well the pain is gone but the scar is still there. And I remember that eventually I had to leave

15:30 the ambulance service through stress. And when I was over at Bonalbo I went to a fatal accident one day and it was a person that I knew but I didn't know them very well. And what he had done, he got tangled up with a bridge rail, with a bridge on his way to Bonalbo and the bridge rail had come through the bottom of the vehicle, he had a compound fractured

16:00 leg and the bridge rail had taken his head off. Now it was, I couldn't understand why I didn't want to drive over that bridge, I had to pick up all these remains of this person and I didn't want to drive over the bridge and I didn't want to answer the phone. I got a bit strange. So I got under the care of a psychiatrist in Lismore Hospital.

16:30 And in his counselling of me he put his finger on the button. It was part of in my subconscious the beheading the Japanese had carried out on the Australians. And so I had accumulated sick leave of about six months and he gave me about six months to decide whether I wanted to get out of the ambulance service. I already had an entitlement, Veterans Affairs. And I decided, "Okay it was time to get out,"

17:00 he said, "You've had thirty years service, time to get out." But I still, it took me twelve months to get over it, I still wanted to be back there. Well that's about it in a nutshell, the most interesting part of

that. That was in, I think I left there in 1986.

Can you tell us more about Yuri?

Yuri? Well I don't know a great deal because I never got to meet her. I would have loved to have met her and I think

17:30 the only persons I did meet for the release of the film were Katiama's brothers, I met two of his brothers. I've got a photo somewhere of them.

What was their response to you? Their reaction to you?

Well because they didn't have any English at all and I only saw them briefly, I only wish that I had been able to talk to them more fully. Now one of the things that I should talk

18:00 about there, we have got some photos that were taken at our press conference. And the Japanese who I correspond with in Japan, I still do, is Peter Unimea. He himself, I'm not quite sure when he was stationed at Ambon, but he has helped me a lot in my relationship there. He met us there when we went to Japan and as I say he still corresponds with me.

18:30 And it was Peter Unimea's vision, and I think there's a copy there somewhere of his introduction at the press conference and the response to the invitation, it was his vision that Australian and Japanese veterans would one day go back to Ambon together. And what

19:00 I did do, I did begin to correspond with Rod Gabriel, retired lieutenant colonel, who is in charge of the remains, the remnants of the Gold Force Association in Melbourne and because of the sensitivity, if you just think of Gold Force, I haven't talked to them in depth. But if you could imagine most of them say an average age of early twenties if you like

19:30 and when they capitulated to the Japanese in 1942, they surrendered to them and the Japanese summarily executed about three hundred of them. That's what you see in the film. I quite understand how they can't forgive, I don't ask anybody to forget but in our scripture reading, Heavenly Father says, "If you, how can you expect me to forgive you

20:00 when you can't forgive others?" But I quite understand how they can't forgive because if you just put yourself in that situation and knowing you can't do anything about it while your friends, your mates if you like, are being executed for no reason at all as prisoners. So it's a pretty difficult situation, I quite understand where they are in that. You know, Peter, I just

20:30 about lived all of the war trials that I was court orderly for. I became permanent court orderly at the end of 1947, every day I was in the court. So I heard all of these things and saw all of the Japanese, some of them when they were given the death sentence to sing out, "Bansai, bansai, long live the Emperor!" And I sort of lived it as far as the execution of Australians and others are concerned.

21:00 So it weighed heavily upon my heart while my war was certainly different to others.

Was there any counselling offered by the Australian army to, like, people like yourself at that time when you are dealing with all of this?

Well no, well they wouldn't have realised that I had a problem really because I hid that within myself. Well in those days it was called, we had one military police corporal we had send home he had gone what they call 'troppo'.

21:30 Did all sorts of strange things, I was on the very edge of it. I know that the very first time that I would have had a weird experience like this would have been some time in 1947 toward the end, and I had been, I think I might have been over to the war criminals' compound and brought a Japanese, could have been Imamura, over for interrogation, and speaking. And I had taken him back to the compound and I was on my way back

22:00 on my own in the jeep. And not far from back at our camp at Nonga this terrible feeling came over me and I can't explain it, I just felt as though I had to stop the jeep and walk around the jeep and sort of snap myself out of it, so I must have been on the very edge of going troppo myself I suppose. And then even then, after that I used to wake up of a night time and have this terrible feeling come

22:30 over me. And I remember getting out of my bunk and going outside and putting my fingers down my throat to make myself sick to sort of snap out of it. So I was glad, that must have been near the end when we eventually came home. And I nursed all of that within myself for forty years until the story broke in 1980, over there with Father Paul Glynn. And I correspond with him, I keep in touch,

23:00 because I'm an ecumenical Christian and I have a lot of friends in the Catholic Church although I have been brought up a Protestant.

Can you tell us, perhaps talk me through what happens at the trial? What the layout of the building is, the procedures, that kind of thing?

Yes, well there's a bench, I just can't think how many on the bench.

23:30 The judge adjutant is either a full colonel or a lieutenant colonel and the others were all majors. I don't think it does harm to mention names. I always remember there was, one of these was a lieutenant colonel and one was a colonel I'm not sure which. One was Colonel McDonald the other was Colonel Smith and there was majors, Major King,

24:00 Captain Gherk, they're names that come to me. But there are others there, I can sort of visualise their face but I can't think of what their names are. And what happens is you have a defence counsel and also a prosecuting counsel, the accused is standing in a witness box just about the same as a, while it's not before a judge and jury, the

24:30 judge and jury is the war trials tribunal, the court itself. And the court orderly's job, while you're sitting in the court with a loaded pistol, some of the time it would be, I can remember one Japanese I can't remember which one it was now, when he was given the death sentence I thought he was going to jump out of the witness box. Sang out, "Bansai, bansai!" and got a hold of the bench, I actually had the flap off the top of my pistol.

25:00 I'd have done it, because I didn't know what he was going to do. But they didn't all perform like that. Also those that were going to be executed by hanging, we walked them up the steps, a military policeman on either side, and I have actually helped to adjust the hood that is put over their head, never ever pulled the lever. The hangman would adjust the rope. And just before

25:30 we pulled the lever to drop the trapdoor they would sing out, "Bansai, bansai!" Quite arrogant most of them, I can only remember one who we, we didn't have to push him but you could see that he didn't want to walk up those steps for his execution, but most times most of them went to their execution, calling out like that. And of course the difference between the two,

26:00 when you think of Katiama who prayed, whereas the others, well, all arrogant, calling out, "Long live the Emperor!"

What was the feeling of the Australians there towards the Japanese?

Well I think there's, I'm just trying to think now, there was lots of comments.

26:30 The war trials were open to anyone, you could come in if you wanted to sit in a war trial. I think I just started before to say the court orderly's job is not only to guard the prisoner but to transfer papers from the defence to the bench and also from the prosecutors to the bench and vice versa, and the interrogation that took place,

27:00 the feeling of Australians, well the war had been won and the feeling was of the war trials that all Japanese were guilty, as far as the attitude was concerned I think. The thing is that we had Japanese cooks there, and there was a good relationship between them. They were billeted in the same area we were,

27:30 at Nonga. They certainly had guards, they had New Guinea Infantry Battalion guards on them of a night time, but none of them ever did anything out of place.

Generally speaking, would you say it was a fairly hostile feeling toward the Japanese?

Well not that was exhibited as such, it was just a case, well see the Japanese that most people come in touch with there were not those

28:00 in the compound, the ones in the war criminal compound. Lots of other Japanese had gone over and I think it was a great, amongst the Chinese community, a great relief, a feeling that it was all over I think. The Japanese in Rabaul had carried out executions, certainly a lot of executions had taken place there, not only of, I can't think of the name of the battalion that was in

28:30 defence there when the Japanese invaded Rabaul, but there were some of them that escaped and of those that were taken prisoner a lot of them were executed, including missionaries. And then there is the story about the Montevideo Maru, some of them were being sent back to Japan, where a ship was torpedoed off Luzon by an American submarine and there was a book been written by Margaret Reeson called

29:00 Whereabouts Unknown. Pre-war missionaries, and I met some of their widows later who went back as missionaries in the Rabaul area. And the story goes that they were put on this Japanese ship and it was torpedoed, but there is another story conflicting with that. I don't think they were all on it, in fact I was talking to someone just recently, a lot of

29:30 delving into trying to find out the truth about this has been tried. But I think the story was eventually accepted that the missionaries and others were on this ship, I think it was mainly to satisfy relatives and so forth that were left. But I don't believe that was the true story, in fact I was only talking to someone about this not so long ago, someone

30:00 who had some connection with it somewhere. In fact I think Joe Backhouse, might have been talking to Joe. See, Joe Backhouse was the officer in charge of the firing squad. And Joe got discharged and was married and managed a plantation for himself in the Rabaul area, well on New Britain anyway. The other person who was very significant was

30:30 Les Croydon, he was our WO1 [Warrant Officer First Class], commonly called Harry by nickname, married a Chinese lady. Well Harry passed on 19-, he died 1999 I think, and by that time they had returned to Australia. They too had plantations in the Rabaul and New Britain islands

31:00 but Barbara his wife she was a Chinese from Rabaul and Chinatown, and during the Japanese occupation she had actually cut, she had a barber's shop, she cut General Imamura's hair. And when we were there after the war she cut our hair, and Barbara, she is eighty-something, she lives in Sydney I keep in touch with her. Yes,

31:30 she is a Chinese lady of some renown. But Les Croydon who was a good guy who was dead against the Japanese of course, like a lot of others, and he transferred over to war criminals' compound. Yeah, lot of people involved there. And you'll have to give me a bit of a lead if there is something else you want, I'm trying to think of what else I can add.

32:00 **What were your feelings in relation to Imamura's account of what happened?**

Well General Imamura, he was a refined old gentleman, no doubt about that. I would love to, I don't think his memoirs have been translated into English, I wish they had because I would love to be able to read them, someone like that.

32:30 Now there is someone else who comes to my mind. When we went to Japan for the release of the film, John Williams stayed on after we returned to Australia, he stayed on. And he went to visit the Japanese widow of a captain by the name of Captain Wasanabi Shiruzu, he went to visit Mrs Shiruzu.

33:00 He was impressed by this particular Japanese, he was a captain, but while he never carried out any atrocities himself he accepted responsibility for those underneath his command who had carried out atrocities. And because of that, I learned of this later, that he had been executed by firing squad some time in 1947

33:30 but John Williams, although he was the prosecutor, had a feeling for this man so he went to see Mrs Shiruzu. Well he actually produced a letter written in Japanese which he had translated later, and it was a letter written to his family by Wasanabi Shiruzu, to his family the day before he was executed. He wrote that in the war criminals' compound.

34:00 And in the letter he stated that they weren't to hold any grudge against the Australian authorities for taking the life of their father. So there were some Japanese that had high ideals, if you like, amongst them.

What were your expectations when you're on the plane, on your way to Japan for the release of this film which you think by all means is going to be very controversial?

34:30 Well I had no idea, in fact one of the feelings I had was, "How am I going to be received?" Because over the period of time I was there I helped to execute some of their forbears. And because of, we've all got people in our different communities who go off the deep end, I had no idea if I might be shot at or what? John Williams had a wonderful reputation with the Japanese,

35:00 while he had been prosecutor for the war trials, he had also helped some of them with their defence I understand. Very remarkable man. And something that should be mentioned, I should have mentioned it earlier, the Williams family are all devout Catholics as well. And the, a piece I had given to me recently cut out of the paper to find this other judge,

35:30 Douglas Chambers, who had been seconded to help the Japanese with their defence, and was actually helping them with their case of Katiama. I found that terribly interesting really.

Was there other things such as the airman on the board for the Katiama trial that you think influenced the trial?

36:00 Well I can understand that, he must have been strong in helping to convince the tribunal that Katiama should be given the death sentence. You see the airman, whether a court marshal of those airmen actually took place is doubtful. There is just a lot of, a lot is not known of that particular part of

36:30 the story really. They could have had a war trial but they, the plane was on a reconnaissance flight, there was no idea of bombs or anything like that, it was called a reconnaissance flight. And one of the things I have felt deeply for over the years, the remains of the crew, and I don't know if it was three or four of them,

37:00 that were all beheaded, including Flight Lieutenant Scott, how it must feel for Australian mothers, I'll have to be careful here, very sensitive isn't it? To come to the realisation that maybe they

37:30 had grown into a man, and then was executed by beheading. It'd be pretty difficult. I think the ones that suffer the most are probably the mothers. And the terrible atrocities that they did, do you know the story of Jan Rough at all? Well she was as a young girl, I think

38:00 she was an Australian citizen then. She was in Java or something, in a convent, taken as a seventeen

year old and used by the Japanese as what they call comfort women. In other words they were part of a brothel situation where she was. There had been a trial in Japan not so long ago, others that have come forward from Chinese, in the Chinese invasion by Japanese.

38:30 And she was continually raped day and night. And in a recent trial when she went over to Japan, now she can forgive Japanese, having gone through that, she is a grown woman now, wonderful story really, quite remarkable. If there is anyone that should bear a grudge on Japanese

39:00 it should be someone like that I imagine.

We'll leave it at that point because the tape has just about run out.

Tape 3

00:31 **I just thought we might go right back to your early days for a little while.**

Well before we do that, I'm not sure where you want to put it in, but the way I see it myself, any Japanese that had been ordered to carry out an execution was usually given a gaol term. In Katiama's case, and I have mentioned this elsewhere, he appears to be a kind of

01:00 martyr if you like. Because without Katiama's death there is no story, there is no film Blood Oath or anything. So, and the fact that it has been used as a reconciliation of better understanding between Australia and Japan is remarkable really when you think of it.

Did you want to keep going with this period?

Well I'm happy to be guided by you now.

01:30 Because I've already told the best part of that.

Well I'm just wondering if we can go right back to your time as a messenger boy in Brisbane and just tell us a little bit of Brisbane at the time and what sort of things of interest you came across when you were doing that job?

Well lets see, Charters Limited I first started off with, they were in Empire Chambers on the corner of Wharf Street and Queen Street.

02:00 And, well Eagle Street that runs off there too, I don't know if you know of Eagle Street but down the bottom of Eagle Street was Jackson and Company's horsedrawn vehicles. They had to cart stuff all around Brisbane in the Brisbane market and things like that, draught horses. And there's a big fig, I don't know if that fig tree is still there? Do you? Is that right, that fig tree is still there? Well

02:30 right around that fig tree at lunch time there'd be these four-wheeled drays which are like carts with at least two draught horses on each one, and they'd put their nosebags on them and feed them there. That's one of the things that comes to memory. Well the message boys, we had bikes, single bikes and mostly running errands around to the various offices. We also had a tricycle, two wheels and a box on the

03:00 front and you'd put typewriters in there because it was a typewriter company. And you used to take them some fair distances, right down to Newstead peddling this jolly thing. Of course it's all motorised now, that sort of delivery. They were great days really, and they were the times, beginning of the war, because there were air-raid shelters built everywhere, all the way

03:30 along the major streets like Queen Street, Adelaide Street, Elizabeth Street, they were big these big diameter pipes. I think they were maybe fifteen or eighteen inches diameter for, with hydrant positions all the way along in case of air raids, fires that would supposedly break out. They had huge pumps on the Brisbane river and all they had circulated through them

04:00 was salt water from the river, instead of using the fresh water supply. Actually at that time, well it wouldn't have been early, see that was at Charters Limited and I just can't think how long I was there for. Then I went around to Martin Wilson, I wasn't real interested in, I could have taken on an apprenticeship in typewriter's mechanic.

04:30 But I was more interested in something deeper than that so I went around to Martin Wilson Brothers in Adelaide Street, not far around the corner from Wharf Street, where I was apprenticed as a fitter and turner. And they were making then for the Americans compressors, air compressors. That's mainly what they were producing there, lots of little companies they were, apart from being automotive. But that didn't appeal to me

05:00 either, and then there was the possibility of becoming an aircraft engineer with Qantas that had appeal. So I took on that and joined up from there.

You must have been pretty fit, riding to Archerfield every day, how long did that take?

I'm trying to think how many miles that was because our house was not far from Mount Coot-tha, we were right over

05:30 off Hillston Road and Gregory Street. We were brought up with walking in the bush at Mount Coot-tha, of course you can't do that now because of that Eastern Freeway that goes through there. Yeah, in those days we all had our bikes and hiked around on bikes and we finished up with horses. That was another thing, we all had horses. All those flats that used to be there are all gone, its all covered up with houses now.

06:00 Yeah. They were good days. About that same time my best friend, Ted, joined the air force and got away, he was a bit older than me, and he had relations up at a place called Rockton up near Flinders Peak. And we started off, I think we took our bikes and I think we went up on the train to Ipswich

06:30 and there was a motor rail that used to run out as far as Boonah I think it went as far as Boonah. We sometimes took our bicycles on that. But other times we bicycled out from Ipswich to Rockton. And they were just under Flinders Peak,

07:00 that mountain that was out there. And the Americans, on this farm they had a dairy herd and Amberley Airport was going and there were mostly Americans there. And I remember the American fighter planes, I think they were nearly all Hurricanes I think. Hurricanes I think. They used to fly in there and use the peak of the mountain, where there was a rock face, as target practice. You'd see them coming in like this and fighter planes and

07:30 'boom!' you'd hear these cannons go off. Use that as target practice. They're some of the things I remember from those days. At that same time, Ted and I, as we got older, we must have been, well we were seventeen by the time we were volunteer firemen at Taringa and all other suburbs. They had these small groups of volunteer firemen, ours was on the corner of Swan Road at Taringa. There was a big doctor's

08:00 near the railway bridge there, I think it's still there. Can't think of the doctor's house, double garage. We had a permanent guy there with a utility set up so you could sit in the back and we had a fire pump that we used to use, go out and practice, had uniform and all. I'll never forget the fire we went to when Patterson's Sawmill went up at

08:30 Toowong, right next to the railway station at Toowong. Went up the Sunday night and they called all the volunteer firemen out as well. This time we had a fair dinkum fire, we used to practice fighting fires and so forth.

Can you tell us about fighting that first fire? Were you afraid?

Well, if I remember right we heard the fire siren go off and I was keen to find out what was

09:00 going on, you could see the glow in the sky from our place where our home was. So I got on my bike, I had a really good bike in those days, very nice bike. I went down to the volunteer fire station only to find the vehicle had gone. So I rode this bike over to Toowong, over to where this fire was, put my uniform on and I had that bike stolen, I had it parked beside the Toowong fire reel.

09:30 And went in about nine o'clock at night and they put me on a hose with somebody else and I think we gave it away about one o'clock in the morning, the whole thing had burnt, all the timber and everything else. Where that is now, I can't think of what's there now, there's a big building there now where the sawmill used to be. Practically

10:00 on the western side of the railway station at Toowong.

So you said you had a top bike at the time can you describe it?

I can't remember the brand of the bike but it had a beautiful chrome headlight on the front and dynamo light, they were a nice bike.

You would have been lost without it?

Well I was, I had to get another bike because I was riding to work at Archerfield.

10:30 Yeah I don't know what transpired between getting another bike. It was a freewheel bike and I know the next bike I got was fixed wheel, wasn't anywhere near as good as the other one. Yeah they were the days.

Do you remember whether when the sawmill burnt down whether it had a big impact on the community?

It would have done it was one of the major sawmills in the area, tremendous amount of timber, smouldered for days afterwards. And a lot

11:00 of people would have lost their jobs because it never got rebuilt again. Never started up again after that.

Can we jump forward now to your training, you said you arrived not long after the Cowra

breakout had happened at the camp?

Where was that again?

I think you said that when you went to do your training?

For the military police?

Yeah for the military police.

11:30 Yeah we went to Kelvin Grove.

And you said you were right opposite, across the way was where the Japanese had escaped from?

Oh yeah that was at Cowra.

At Cowra, yeah so can you just tell me about the early days of training?

Not only were there, I belonged to the, well I haven't corresponded with them for a while because a lady that really had put it together was the Cowra Breakout Association. Have you ever been

12:00 to Cowra at all?

No.

Well there's the peace bells in the Main Street of Cowra, I can see Peter nodding his head over there. Well there is peace bells in an enclosure in the Main Street of Cowra and it was the concept of a Japanese, whose name I have forgotten, that they would melt down these medallions and different things from different countries and it went into this peace bells. And the Japanese Gardens there are really really beautiful.

12:30 In fact last time we went down to Adelaide we called in there and there is still remains of the old Japanese prisoner of war camp on the hill. There is still some of the cement footing and things like that, part of the building. They have got a very good plaque where they tell you all about the camp. And if you look across the valley to where our camp was, well it's all farm land. And we did, well we did several years ago go down for a reunion of the camp,

13:00 Marion Star is the one that helped put it together. She was a newspaper person on The Guardian I think it is, the newspaper in Cowra. And not so long ago, just the beginning of this year, we got a letter from her, I think a card at Christmas time and we hadn't replied to it because we knew we were going to do this trip down to Adelaide to see my wife's brother and

13:30 go through Cowra, so just prior to getting there, we went and visited some friends of ours, a couple who used to have, Barry Dalton and his wife Faye, they had a tyre business in Murwillumbah. And they'd sold out there and gone down to a property, what's the name of the place they have? Not far from Orange actually,

14:00 somewhere in that area. And they invited us to come and have a look at their place, so we decided to go and look them up on the way to Cowra and when we got there and had a look around their property, they told us that they thought that Marion Star had died because they knew her as well. So we made a phone call only to find out that she had died only, not long after Christmas, that she had a hidden

14:30 heart disease that no one had known about and she died in her sleep. So we looked her up her widower, Harold ,at the time that we went through there, and spent a bit of time with him but he was pretty devastated. But she was involved with the Cowra Breakout Association and I think mainly through people that she'd contacted that

15:00 were involved with the time of the breakout. There was an army officer by the name of Broncaster, and I think there is some connection with his family and her family. Yeah, there were not only Japanese in that camp, there were Italians. I can remember in our training, we were on training battalions there. If we were out on a bivouac in our particular platoon that we had an Italian guy, Minazo was his surname,

15:30 can't think of his Christian name now. He spoke good Italian, and we came across some of these Italians that were working on some of the properties that, they had guards, and Minazo carried on an Italian conversation with them. Yeah little things like that. And I can't think how long we were at Cowra. And we were still in a training scene really when we were transferred and went to Bathurst with the 19th Infantry Training Battalion. And how long we were at Bathurst I have forgotten too,

16:00 and then we went from Bathurst to Singleton.

So what did your training involve? What did you do?

Oh, learnt how to kill Japanese mostly, with the map reading, rifle shooting and training in bayonet drill. All that sort of thing because we were an infantry battalion,

16:30 foot soldiers in other words. We did training in machine guns, Bren gun. As well as some of the anti-tanks guns that they had, anti-tank rifle. Because of my background I top scored in a lot of those, rifle

shooting. I come from a rifle shooting family. At Singleton, just when the war finished, that was in August '45,

17:00 in fact I think today is the celebration of that. Funny I looked at the paper, we get a paper thrown here over the fence on a Friday, and while it's the anniversary of Vietnamese Day on Monday, today there is no mention in it, but I'm sure its either the end of the war or the armistice when it was signed, 15th of August 1945 anyway.

17:30 And there was nothing in the paper this morning about that. But just when we were at Singleton I think they didn't know just what to do with the unit for a while. They sent us on the longest route march that any unit had, I think we did two hundred mile, and we averaged twenty mile a day.

18:00 All around the headwaters of the Hawkesbury and all through there before they disbanded us and then sent us up to, well we came back to Camp Cable, Logan Village.

So when you went on that big trek what sort of provision were you taking with you?

Well we, every time we came to a, we had to camp out in the open, there was two guys together and they had issued

18:30 in those days what they call a ground sheet, but you could use it as a cape. And you could join that together, two of you and make a little hootchie out of it, and that's where we used to camp of a night time. But our main sleeping material, blankets and things like that, were carried by truck. But we had to march in army uniform, and I think we had a haversack on our back with our mess gear in for eating, like

19:00 dixies and things like that and a water bottle and a rifle. And whenever we came to a town that we went through we had to march at attention. Sometimes it was (UNCLEAR) had to march through at attention all the way through. Then we marched at ease with the rifle just slung over your soldier. It was pretty strenuous. And then there was one, we came to a town on the first weekend that we were away, I just can't think of the name of that place,

19:30 so we camped there the whole weekend then did another week and got back to Singleton to the army camp. There is still an army camp at Singleton now. But I think it was not long after that that they broke us up and sent us back to our own states and I would have come up to Logan Village then, then to military police.

20:00 **So what was the average age of the guys that were becoming military police at the same time as you?**

That New Guinea Force Provo Company, they were all older than Doug and I. Doug Wallace and I, we joined them, they all would have been older. And most of them now, I knew some of them actually when they got discharged, one of them Doug Fury by name. He was not a signalman, a conductor on one of the trams in Brisbane.

20:30 And Roy Kilvey was a driver of one of the vehicles, they're both gone now. But I used to see both of them every now and then when I came on the staff here in the ambulance in Brisbane. So they were still alive in those days. One of the persons who was a sergeant in charge of a vehicle, he is older than I am, he is eighty something or other and I tentatively keep in touch with him, he now lives at Clifton up

21:00 on the downs. And we went up there to his eightieth birthday, oh it'd be a while back, he'd be around eighty-two now I think. That training at Kelvin Grove, as I say we did the foot patrols in Queen Street and of a night time we did road patrols. They had road patrols, but a lot of Australians were being

21:30 returned at that time, because that was the end of 1945, from New Guinea at that time, it was nothing to pick them up drunk in the gutter with hundreds of pounds in those days in their pocket. So we took them up to the cells at Kelvin Grove and gave them a blanket for the night. They were never charged, they were let go again the next morning when they came out of their stupor.

Can you tell me some more stories about things like that?

22:00 Oh goodness me, I can't think of anything outstanding there. There used to be a few brawls every now and then that we had to go and break up because there was a lot of troops in Australia at that time, in Brisbane anyway.

Was that between Americans and Australians or …?

Oh well, amongst themselves and between Americans too, yes, because there was a bit of jealousy there. The Americans boasted about looking after their, there is a story about a troop

22:30 train that passed through somewhere or other in Queensland with Americans in one side and Australians in the other and the Americans were singing out that they would look after their girlfriends for them or something or other and I don't think that went down too well. Yeah things like that.

So were you permitted to, say if an American soldier was doing something wrong,

23:00 **to pick them up or did they have their own military police or whatever?**

No they had their own. They had a military police camp in Victoria Park not far from the hospital and there was a patrol I think they used to do of a night time, I was only talking about this with Doug Wallace recently. Where we'd go on a combined patrol, two Australian police and two American police in one of their vehicles, so

23:30 that if there was any problem between the two organizations, Australians and Americans, whoever's fault it was that we had to arrest or whatever and they'd take theirs off. I just don't know. They had a big army gaol out at Grovely at that time and I didn't get out there very often. Some of the incorrigibles that were really bad, they were locked up out there.

Can you describe that for me, when you went there?

24:00 Well I just only vaguely remember the barbed wire fence, the high barbed wire fence all the way around, guard on the front. Pretty vague that one yeah.

What about, you said before Camp Cable having Americans, can you describe that for me?

Well I didn't get into the main camp there because I had a mechanical background. Our small light armoured workshop was

24:30 really on the perimeter of the camp. And we had our own, we must have had our own, I'm just trying to recall now, no we didn't have our own cooks. We must have gone up to the main mess hall up at the main camp for our meals, but we just had our little group of fellows there and did repairs on vehicles and what not. I couldn't have been there very long when I was called up and

25:00 met Doug Wallace for the first time and we were offered to the New Guinea Force Provo Company at Kelvin Grove.

Okay we might stop that for a minute.

Of course the word bayonet, B A Y O N E T, they had some system where each one of those letters and B stood

25:30 for blood lust if you like. And A I don't know what the rest of it was, but each one of the letters had some representative. In other words you were brainwashed to kill if you like. I wonder if that's changed at all? I don't know whether it would, when they're in training now you see something on television,

26:00 training shooting, and marching across the paddock and training with guns but the actual verbal training I don't know. A lot of it was parade work, there is no doubt about that. I remember one of the training sergeants and he was a funny guy and it was a bit of a joke for some of us, he used to say, "Orders for myself only, fixed bayonet." And he'd go through all of this, "Orders for myself

26:30 only." He was a bit of a joke to everybody because we weren't supposed to respond. He'd give himself an order and go through all the actions of all the orders that he had given, bit weird. And one of the things in the camp that they did have, now I never got to do this but apparently Doug Wallace, we were just talking about this the other day, that if you ever did anything, I just can't think what the penalty would be for, you might have been not paying attention or something like that

27:00 in an instructor group, they had you in small groups. There was a hill there called DP Hill, 'defaulters parade' in other words. If you did something to default they'd make you run up this hill with a pack on your back and all the way down again. And it was a fairly clear hill, it was a steady run up the hill. I never got to do that, I was making sure I didn't of course. Holding what I wanted to say, if you were speaking out of turn.

27:30 I don't know what Doug got it, he couldn't remember what he got it for the other day either. But he remembers a run up there. And of course you did your duties too in your turn at the cookhouse, if you were going to peel potatoes or whatever, part of the team, part of the training.

Having a strong faith did you struggle during training and later on with, I guess, duty versus what your beliefs are?

28:00 Well it was war time and I can't see that I had any conflict about that. Even if the Japanese were in that compound or in that prisoner of war camp on the hill, the training was if they broke out we were going to shoot them. See when they first broke out, some of the trainees in that camp were given bayonets to go out and hunt

28:30 for these Japanese that had got out of this compound, Japanese that had seen service and were proper trained and had been in a war situation shooting Australians and killing Australians. So some of the Australians lost their lives, I can't remember how many. They're buried there now, of course there were more Japanese. They overran the machine gun posts, that many of them. Quite a story isn't it?

29:00 It's funny how you forget about these things to give it in detail because it was a sensational breakout, really it was the only one Australia has ever had of an enemy breaking out of a prisoner of war camp. See the Japanese, their philosophy is it is a shame to be taken prisoner, you live for the Emperor. And die for the Emperor.

29:30 So those that got out of the camp, they committed suicide anyway, certainly some of them did kill some of the Australians. But they suicided by putting themselves on the railway line, some of them hung and all kinds of things. Committing harikari. Yeah I've just, pretty gruesome isn't it when you come to think of it? They had these special knives

30:00 that they used to use to disembowel themselves. This had happened with Japanese later on. Whether these are some of the Japanese at breakout camp did anything like this or not I don't know. They actually cut themselves across the front of their stomach and then pull out their intestines, just imagine? They're fanatics some of them. The even thought of doing that would turn you off wouldn't it?

30:30 **So do you remember when you started your training being briefed about what had happened in the Cowra breakout, like do you remember the specific details of how they broke out and how you should react to the future if something like that happened?**

When we were at Cowra you're talking about?

Yeah.

Well we were trained in various means of camouflage and hiding behind some sort of a protection and things like that. But I don't know that there was

31:00 any specific training as to, what we would have done was shoot them on sight I suppose.

Do you remember ...?

And because there was only, I don't know how many battalions, we were issued with .303's, everybody had .303's because you were trained in rifle drill and fixed bayonets and so forth. But I think we, we didn't get to the stage of issuing us with live

31:30 ammunition in case that happened, it didn't get to that stage. We were trained in shooting, they had a rifle range there for shooting, shooting practice. But it never got to that stage, they never broke out again. They realised their mistake in just being complacent about the Japanese in the prisoner of war camp and just having the

32:00 machine gun post there. And they just threw their blankets over the barbed wire fences. A lot of them were still hanging on the fences after they broke out, they just broke out in the thousands. Can't think how many were in that camp.

Do you remember the feeling amongst the general public around that time?

Well the, a lot of people were frightened for sure. But those in outlying farms and places like that,

32:30 where Japanese turned up, they were never really threatened by the Japanese that broke out of the camp. I think they were scattered, they weren't in little groups. And those that were seen by farmers and general ones that were really no threat to them, didn't appear to be anyway. That might be in depth, somebody else might have a different idea to that, I just can't think what the background was,

33:00 the demeanour of people in the outlying area when people did break out.

Do you remember your time in training as being an exciting time?

Yeah yeah it was. Well I think any young man, you're sort of caught up with that in all wars. Young guys are open for an adventure to a point, apart from the fact that you

33:30 are doing it in defence of your country as well.

(UNCLEAR)

(UNCLEAR)

But that was all we could do, we couldn't do anything other than that.

34:00 **So I'll just get you to describe where you were when you heard that war had broken out?**

Well that's going to be pretty hard because I would have been at school. To recall just what my reaction was I don't know you see? It's very difficult to think back to what our reaction was. We probably thought, 'Well here we go and maybe we're going to get to shoot people,' or something. Don't know.

Do you remember your family, your parents, maybe their reaction?

34:30 Actually that's interesting you should bring that into it because my father was born at Rous Mill in New South Wales and he lost his father when he was eleven. That left he and his sister and grandma, and they were not far from Alstonville at Myotome at that time and eventually I think they were on a

35:00 lease farm, I think. So the breadwinner had lost his life and I remember grandma went out milking cows at a penny a cow to begin with. Then they moved to Brisbane. Well they lived, they lived somewhere, I've got the name of the street, I can't think of it now, its up the other side off Ludwich Road if that's what it's called now, up the other side of the Brisbane General Hospital there.

35:30 There was a little street just before you got to Newmarket Road, ran off to the left there, they lived there to begin with. I've actually got a photo of him, he, not only did he get into rifle shooting and he volunteered and actually joined up. Because those army records are available, I've got it in there somewhere,

36:00 the, grandma, because he was the age, he joined up but because he was the breadwinner of that family, they had no other income, she must have made and I have often thought about this, it was never talked about when we were kids. But he was with a Moreton Regiment, and I have got photos of him in uniform and he was a great bandsman.

36:30 At one time he was champion trombone player of Queensland, I've still got his trombone in there. And he got into the services but somehow grandma got him out so he didn't get away. And I think the reason that we didn't hear anything about those days was because he must have felt bad about that. Because a lot of friends would have went overseas and been killed. Some returned of course.

37:00 In fact my mother, I just don't know, well by that time they were living at Taringa, and she, her name was Young, she was attending at Taringa Baptist Church and because he came from a Methodist , I suppose they must have been going to that church at the same time, he must have met Mum there. Well Mum was already, I don't know whether she was engaged, there are other people, a

37:30 cousin of mine she would know more about this than me, whether she was engaged to this guy who went overseas and didn't come back. So when you think of the trauma, and none of that was ever shared with us, I don't really know the background of all of that, but I think Dad would have carried that pretty hard, that he didn't get overseas. But what he did do, when we were young guys he, because of his background,

38:00 that probably and rifle shooting, he was the captain of the Brisbane Rifle Club at that time. He became, you've heard of the, well in England it was a bit of a send up of Dad's Army, the VDC, Voluntary Defence Corps, and when we were young we had lots of guns in our house. Dad used to, he was part of, an instructor with the VDC, mostly, some of his army

38:30 training that he must have had must have been part of that. But yeah, that was something that I had forgotten about really. VDC, they're not heard of today. Whether they were ever recognised, we as part of the volunteer fire brigade, we got some recognition, some certificate eventually after the war. But the VDC, I don't remember whether they got anything,

39:00 but he was a sergeant instructor I do remember that. We had all sorts of guns in our home, Thompson sub machine guns, Owen guns, and at one time when we were kids.

Do you remember what sort of training they did?

Well basically the same as we did in army training. They did bivouacs and jungle training out in the bush, all

39:30 that kind of thing. We weren't doing it then, I suppose it would have been something similar to the army training, I think they did go into camps. Yes, my father was a wonderful Christian gentleman, Christian businessman. At that time that he got into, he played with several bands, in Brisbane Federal Band, Brisbane Excelsior Band, he won Champion Trombone Player of Queensland

40:00 at one time. I don't know why he didn't get us taught. I learnt to play later in life, I taught myself the trombone. I'm out of practice now. I've got a fugal horn in there as well, belonged to a small band at one time down at Murwillumbah. Something I was going to say there.

Probably have to stop it there.

Tape 4

00:30 **The sound of the wind outside just makes you want to stay inside all day. If you want to keep going on with that?**

Well just getting back to Cowra and the breakout, something comes to mind. Brian Williams, who wrote the book and helped produce the film, is on about doing another film

01:00 and it's involving the breakout. Now whether it's ever going to get produced I don't know. I haven't been in touch with him for a while, he's in Sydney. And it's based on the breakout and it's called, the name of the film I don't know that it's general knowledge, anyway it's going to be called 'Giants at Dawn', and it's based on the breakout. Now

01:30 just how much has been done involving it and I think Toshi, Toshi Shiowa who is an actor a Japanese actor who plays the part of Katiama in Blood Oath, he's involved in that somewhere. And just one point they're up to, I think one of the main things is lack of finance. You'd know something about that better than me. Because its endeavoured to be financed jointly by Australia and Japan I think. So what

progress has been made on

02:00 that I don't know. That's all I was going to refer to on that I think.

So do you know what transpired to make you think, 'Okay I'm going to enlist'?

Hmm, this is a curly one. Well it is and it isn't. There is some sensitive stuff here Peter.

02:30 Well as a Christian I have to say that looking back it's hard to put it into words. If I knew what your Christian understanding was, or belief in God I'd have no trouble. Trying to put in an aspect so, I believe in looking back

03:00 and some of the things that happened to me, God had been in my life. Now I'm not trying to make myself out, I don't want to draw attention to myself, but in the course of events that happened. My best mate Ted, we'd been through school together and as I say a bit older than me and he joined the air force. Now logically because I had been working with aeroplanes you'd think I'd join the air force.

03:30 So Ted's in the air force and when I turned eighteen I wanted to join up too and naturally I didn't really want to fly because I had been involved in ground crew. I cut my teeth on DH.86s which is a really, the one that got Qantas off the ground

04:00 really, in Cloncurry and all of those other places up there. Gypsy Six, had four Gypsy Six major engines and smaller aircraft as well as the Dragon Rupee, the flying doctor aircraft, those sort of things. Certainly we got onto, one of the best aeroplanes we had there was a Lockheed Electra, the one that Amelia Earhart disappeared in. It was a

04:30 twin engine that was on that. So it was more logical to think that I would join the air force. So I got into trouble, a lot of apprentices got into trouble. There was lots of American stuff laying everywhere out there. Of our lunch hour we'd go up and go through these Liberator bombers that were already involved in the war. And it wasn't

05:00 uncommon to find bullets and fifty calibre rounds and tools. And they had emergency kits in them with, that had been broken open by the American crew, and emergency rations and everything like that lying everywhere, American tools. And a lot of us had these things in our possession. And there was a,

05:30 I don't know if I want to get to this. Pretty difficult, well okay, this is pretty sensitive okay. I am very conscious of something that I did that I shouldn't have had. In that particular aeroplane that VHAEC, I remember the registration numbers of that Lockheed Electra, there was a pistol up in the cockpit on the,

06:00 not on the pilot, the pilot's on the left hand side, the assistant pilot if you like, second pilot. And I was fascinated by this thing. It was only, it was a little, I think it was thirty-two calibre or something like that. And I had looked at it several times, wasn't, the bullets were there but it was never loaded. It was only protection because they did an air mail run as well, it was one of the things.

06:30 And one of the days I was looking at this blooming thing and clicking the trigger and of course it broke, the trigger broke. And of course I thought, "Gees, I can't leave this thing in here like this." So I left the pouch of the thing there, took the thing home, I was pretty good with my hands, so I took it apart, and we had a really good hotshot welder at the back of the hangar. This hangar is still there at Archerfield.

07:00 And I got him to weld the trigger mechanism together and I filed it down and reassembled it. Now I probably had it in my possession longer than I should have had. And the very day that I wanted to put it back in the aircraft I had it there in my locker, locked up, and already there was detectives from CIB [Criminal Investigation Bureau], were going through all these apprentices to see what we had that we shouldn't have had. And

07:30 I am waiting for the VHAEC to come in, was due in, and I can't think what time of the day it was. Anyway some of the other apprentices had been called in for interviews by the detectives, and my name at that stage hadn't been called and I was dreading when it would be called, and it was called and I am looking to see whether this thing is going to land and it wasn't and I knew I had the damn thing in my locker. Anyway I disappeared out

08:00 of the way. And then it was really demanded and others were telling me that I was supposed to be in the office. I think this thing in hindsight, but you know what I said before about God's hand on my life, so okay, this thing landed but because of the pressure I had to go and front up. And do you know

08:30 the, I know the way police work now, but I was very naïve. And everybody had tools and they wanted to know what I had done with this, and what I had done with that. And some of them I had thrown in the river as I was going across the bridge because we weren't supposed to have them. But that wasn't what they were after, and then it got onto this blooming, I don't know whether this was missing or something was missing, got onto a pistol.

09:00 And somehow it got around, it must have got out. And I said, "Well look, I haven't got this thing to steal it," but they wouldn't listen to me. All they had to do was take the, so one of the detectives came over to my locker, and then they went back to the manager's office, as this was happening the manager, they

hadn't told the police that this was missing. So that was part of the

09:30 drama of the thing. And I said, "All you've got to do is take the hand bits off there and you can see where the trigger …" But no. So I got charged for having that in my possession. Now I went through the court, I think I got, it was devastating to, I can still remember the old CIB building waiting there and then my father who was recognised,

10:00 had helped to train some of the police rifle squad for a start. Well liked Christian businessman, general manager of Seafoam Flour Queensland Corporation and he had started there sweeping the floor of this flour mill. Its all gone now, it was over on Southbank. So I was really ashamed of what had happened. So I went to court and I got charged. I got told to plead guilty,

10:30 I had someone to represent me. And I can't remember what it was but I was supposed to be, I was going to be on a good behaviour bond for six months, something like that anyway. So okay I was wiped as far as Qantas was concerned and nobody pursued my story anyway, didn't want to listen to that. So I went to try and join the air force. I went in there and the recruiting thing was

11:00 in Creek Street, I went through all of the examinations, all the colour tests for colour blindness all those sorts of things. And then came to an interview, now I'm just trying to think now. Well they must have known about this, so this guy wanted to get to the bottom of it. And I didn't want to talk about it, I didn't want to talk about it. So I just wouldn't open up and tell them, whoever the interrogator was.

11:30 So they wiped me. So I went home devastated. And Dad, because of his high standing, knew somebody somewhere, someone in the air force, some high ranking officer. And I can still remember ringing this bloke up and this guy must have said to Dad that I wasn't prepared to talk about it. And I can still remember Dad saying, "Well what the bloody hell do you think you want to do?"

12:00 In fact Dad was on my, could see why I didn't want to talk about it but it didn't make any difference. So I didn't get in the air force. And if I did get in the air force there'd be no Blood Oath, no military police if I had got in, in the air force. So I went and joined the army. Now that's interesting really, it is interesting for me. And then the sequence of

12:30 events of Katiama's trial and all of that involved with another Christian family who were all devout Catholics. I think it's amazing really, and the fact that the film …. There is a lot of things happen that we don't know about. But I have been ashamed of that all of my life. That's one of those things.

13:00 But had I not got caught or to put it that way or been involved in that in the first place, taking that silly looking pistol, I've often wondered because I just hated leaving, and I have thought about this even recently, leaving Qantas under a cloud. All they had to do to support my story was to pull this thing apart and see where it had been welded, but that didn't happen.

13:30 So be it. So anyway no, it's quite remarkable really, and other things that have fallen into place. Involvement with missionaries and returning to Rabaul and so forth, and then marrying a Methodist minister's daughter who I met on a blind date. And that's interesting too.

14:00 When I was doing agriculture training before going back to manage this plantation and I was on a farm at Duka do you know where Duka is? Other side of Allora between Allora and Warwick. And I'd go into church and it was at Allora, Methodist Church there, and I met this family, Rodney Neal, and I became friendly with Rodney and they had a farm just outside of Allora, been out to that farm a few times. Well then eventually

14:30 when, after my training and I did work for a time in waiting, I decided I was going back to New Guinea to accept this request by the Methodist missionaries to come and manage the plantation. So I had gone to Maxcrook where my brother had started off, with another (UNCLEAR) for a time until such time as they gave me notice to come down to Brisbane to go up to,

15:00 to go to New Guinea. So I'm at my parents' home at Taringa and I was at a bit of a loose end for a week or so. And I rang, or Rodney might have rang me. He had already come down into missionary training, into home missionary work and was at a home missionary training college somewhere in Brisbane, and in conversation with him this Saturday morning he wanted to know what we were

15:30 going to do and I said, "Well do you know a couple of girls we could take out?" He said, "Well I do." He said, "I'll ring you back." So he got a hold of Ailsa and her sister and he was already with Ailsa's sister. And so he said, "Yeah, its all right to go," and you know, when I first met her, you ought to look at that photo, look at that person standing at the back,

16:00 it was love at first sight, something like that. So we, that was just before I went back to New Guinea to manage the plantation, maybe that was a bit of a problem too, I suppose, with the other things I had on my mind as well. So I had gone back there and we were corresponding. And of course when I had to come back here we got married, 1951.

16:30 We'd been involved with church work and youth work, we ran a mixed youth group at Murwillumbah for all of the five years that David was at high school, Corlette Christian High, both boys and girls. So now we're involved with the Uniting Church here. (UNCLEAR) with this other business, it has with a lot of other people, I mean I've got nothing. In fact it is interesting because I have got a relationship with

Exodus International which is a group here in Brisbane.

17:00 They have an outreach to homosexuals, and Peter Lane and his wife Dorothy, I became involved with them when we were at Murwillumbah when there was a seminar held at the Church of Christ at Southport some years ago. And I first met with Peter Lane and I went to his seminar and I have still got the tapes of that. I met practising homosexuals and practising lesbians

17:30 and some who had come out of that scene, wonderful ministry really. It's nothing to do with the way people are born at all. In the year 2000, I completed a Christian counselling course, real struggle for me. So I have got an accreditation as a Christian counsellor with the Accreditation Council of Canberra . But I could have gone into the second year, but it was a real struggle to

18:00 keep up my assignments. I had to do a thirty page research paper, had to choose a topic out of a whole list of things, and what I chose to do was the research paper on the high incidence of suicide amongst Australian youth in therapy. And I was never a really competent writer at school but I did thirty pages

18:30 and I got a lot of material, I got an eighty per cent pass. And to go into the second year where you get a diploma, I knew I'd be flat out coping with that and of course in that drama in October of the year 2000, I get diagnosed with this malignant cancer of the colon, which in itself I had to get an extension of time to complete my assignments, but I got through that all right.

19:00 So it's a wonderful thing really to say that because of the Christian family you were born into and the Christian influence in your life that you can see the hand of God on you really in all the things that have happened.

Well I think it's really important to go back there to your early childhood, what are your first memories of your Christian upbringing, your faith and religion in your family as a child?

19:30 Well see we were brought up to be, I remember going in the really early years at the Taringa State School, which was right opposite the Baptist church, and every Tuesday, well different ones went to religious instruction. Those that belonged to that Baptist church were taken out of their class, we all went over to the Baptist church for religious instruction of a Tuesday. All of that and going to Sunday school.

20:00 My early recollection of Sunday school picnics, and the first picnics they used to have. What's there now? There's a cricket, do you know where Union Street, just below the Brisbane Boys College? Well that open ground there now was there in those days. We used to march in a procession with a banner out the front from Taringa Baptist Church to there to Sunday school picnic. I can remember that,

20:30 and then they started going to Moore Park at Indooroopilly. But the early recollections are in the Christian understandings of Christian teaching, the Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, which is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So we grew up in that. I've just thought of something else. So okay,

21:00 you know of the experience of accepting the Lord as your saviour. I experienced that as a twelve year old boy at a Baptist boys' camp at Currumbin years ago. While a twelve year old boy doesn't realise the depth of that really at that age, other things are flashing through my mind at the time that I think of it. Mum in her younger years before

21:30 she was married, taught Sunday school at that same Taringa Baptist Sunday school. When she died, she was a widow by that time, Dad died first, he died when I was at the ambulance at Murwillumbah, when down there 1968, but Mum went out to the Baptist home out at Brookfield there,

22:00 'Rest Haven' I think it's called. When she died and was buried, we went to her service from the Brookfield Baptist church, the guy that spoke there and conducted that was Reverend Ernie Edwards, he has since died now. He was a boy in her Sunday school class. So part of that influence, and I remember him

22:30 saying how she rejoiced as a Sunday school teacher when every boy in that class accepted the Lord. So all of that has rubbed off on me in my life. And having gone through that and thinking of all the other things that have happened too, it's overwhelming when you realise that part of your life has been thus far taking part in this reconciliation

23:00 thing in spite of all the hate and all the other things that were involved in it as well. Really it's quite a remarkable story really. And both of our sons are now, they're Christians. David, the one in Brisbane, he's got three boys, three grandchildren there, and John, the eldest one in Coffs Harbour,

23:30 has our granddaughter, only granddaughter, she's just been married not so long ago. They're all Christians. And her brother Andrew, the other brother, he's Christian. David and Linda here in Brisbane they go to Cleveland Baptist church. So the Christian influence on our lives is really remarkable. And

24:00 you can probably understand a bit better how I claim the healing through that business of having malignant cancer of the colon, something that has never shown up in my family anywhere. And I put that down to, I mean I am a really ecumenical Christian, I've got a great relationship with the dentist we go to here who is a, interestingly enough the, we had to find a dentist when we came here, we've only been

24:30 here for what, sixteen months? Something like that. And this guy is a Catholic, a very good deep Catholic. I have loaned him all of the material you have seen here, my scrapbook, and he had bought in his possession Father Paul Glynn's books that he's written. There's a connection all the way through.

25:00 And some of the books that Paul Glynn has written, the last one is Healing Fire from Frozen Earth. He went over Lourdes to do sabbatical studies on the miraculous healings that take place at Lourdes and it's actually amazing. I don't know why one place is singled out like that. And they don't, the healings don't

25:30 occur when people are just going through the waters of that little grotto they've got there, it can happen spontaneously just because they are present there. Remarkable, people who have been at death's door. And the Catholic Church because of the, always there's that sensitivity between Catholics and Protestants, it's sad really because

26:00 the doubt as to whether the healings actually take place by a lot of Protestants if you like. So the Catholic Church had a set-up of about twenty doctors or something like that, when someone has a healing there and they claim a healing they go through these doctors and the doctors will question them. And even then they don't accept them as having a healing. They say, "Well you go away and come back and tell us in twelve months' time," to make sure that their

26:30 healing is permanent. It was a remarkable thing happening out there. Well you take mine, I never looked, never fail to find an opportunity to say that my healing from malignant cancer, while I have had it there and I have had the surgery, I've got a big scar to show for it. But it's gone, and to have the group in our own church praying for me

27:00 and in the Catholic Church at Murwillumbah. And I was happy to have, there was one doctor, we got under the care of an oncologist and he was determined to have me have chemotherapy and I said, "No." I had the opportunity to say no. And the pathology came back, there was no need for follow up chemotherapy. And since we came up here, we've been up here what, just after we came up here what, sixteen months ago,

27:30 since we've been in this house, I went to Dr. Fanning at the Catholic hospital here at Riven Bay, to have another colonoscopy, which I had, and there is no need to have another one for another three years, I am in the clear. I claim a healing.

Can you talk more about your religious instruction in the army?

28:00 Well we didn't have any, well that's an interesting story, and this happened would you believe. This is another one of those remarkable things that fall into place in my life. Now when we were at Cowra there was this guy who had a Red Cross or ACF truck that was commonly known as Percy. And these trucks,

28:30 they used to put on coffee and what not after you finished training, after your training had finished of a night time. And he used to, he had a sound system and he used to play a lot of things I wouldn't have told you before until you got me thinking about them. He used to play requests. And I was forever requesting him to play this record, was a lady

29:00 was the singer and it was called The Stranger of Galilee. Now I used to get that, get him to play that every now and again. Now, okay, I can't think of how long I was at Cowra, then we went to Bathurst, so no more Percy. And then when I am at Singleton, blow me if Percy doesn't turn up again.

29:30 And we were on that route march I was telling you about, Percy reminded me, and his name was Pierre de Russet. And he was originally a Baptist minister I think before he got into this ACF thing. When we went on that route march he used to follow us with his vehicle and play requests again, well I remember, I wish I could think of the name of the town we stopped at that first weekend. And I didn't dance, I had never learnt to dance

30:00 but there was a dance in the town, so I stayed in the camp with Percy around a campfire we got going there, and we got talking about these things. So I sort of had a Christian experience there with him then, although having made that decision as a twelve year old I more or less rededicated my life. And at that same time, we were still in this Baptist church at Taringa,

30:30 and we had a missionary come there, name will come to me in a minute. We had some wonderful times there in keeping yourself tuned to the Christian Gospel if you like. Can't think of his name. I have to blow my nose. Now the interesting thing is that before I went to New Guinea in the army,

31:00 I decided I wanted to get baptised in that same church. Now the minister that was there, he was part of my Christian background, Reverend White that was at that time. Now that night that they had that baptism there was a group of magical singers that had been

31:30 invited to the church to come and sing. Well they knew nothing about my story, there was three in that magical singers and they didn't sing with an accompaniment, in other words they were just voice harmonising. And the song that was sung before my baptism took place, one of the songs they sung was The Stranger of Galilee.

32:00 The minister, who knew something about my background, said afterwards outside the church did know just how significant it was for me and it really was, just the icing on the cake if you like. So all through my life that stranger of Galilee isn't a stranger any more because I went to New Guinea and got involved in all of these other things,

32:30 and we have always been, Ailsa and I with our upbringing or our two sons too to steer them in that belief as well.

So can you recall there ever being church parades in the army?

Oh yeah, in fact, well most of those church parades were structured on the Anglican Church.

33:00 And I can still, they were significant to me, particularly communion in as much as you recited the creed and while, strangely, I got to the stage where I could recite that creed without having to look at the little booklet that we had. To do it now, I don't know, I just pick it up when it is used now in the

33:30 same communion type of service in the Uniting Church, but I know it was important to me and I used to enjoy church parades in those places. And funnily enough there seems to be this association with guys in the army who are Catholic. I had a very good friend at Bathurst, and I can still remember going to the Catholic cathedral vaguely,

34:00 and I have lost contact with him. He was only called Macca, McNamara his name was, he came from Inanga. And he's another one I should look up and see if he is still there. But I don't know. But the association with Catholics is significant. That RSM [Regimental Sergeant Major], that Mick Slater that I mentioned in one of the photo's I've got there,

34:30 when we were (UNCLEAR) military police, Mick was a devout Catholic and I can remember going to the Vudopopy Mission which was a Catholic mission on the other side of the harbour at Kokopo now. Because Rabaul is blown up and the main centre is Kokopo, and I went there with him and that George Longman who was Catholic too.

35:00 And this would be somewhere in 1946 I would think. And we went on a most significant experience that I felt for me anyway, that they had a ceremony in a service in the Catholic church in the Stations of the Cross. That to me was a wonderful experience, never forgotten it. And that Vudopopy Mission at

35:30 Kokopo, that would be pre-war because some of them were German. Some of the, where we were, in our camp at Nonga we went past the Catholic mission, all the nuns there that wore a white habit and I can still remember picking them up in my jeep. And I remember if they were wanting to go to Rabaul we'd give them a lift in. I can still remember sometimes when they went to get in,

36:00 look the other way while they do because there is no door to get in, just lift up their skirts and get in. Yeah. So there's an ecumenical relationship there.

So what would a typical church service in the army involve?

Well it was conducted by an army padre, usually a captain. And most times there'd be a sermon or homily if you like to call it that.

36:30 Some singing, some of those places, we definitely had army bands at Cowra, had army bands there and they would be involved. We had two bands at Singleton when we had church services there. One was a brass band, that battalion that I was involved with was the 13th 33rd Infantry Battalion. And the 32nd 41st Battalion, they had a pipe band. One of those bands

37:00 in Reveille first thing in the morning would march right through the camp to play at the beginning of each day. Sometimes it would be the pipe band, sometimes it would be the brass band. But those services, they were structured on I suppose it was a book that was put out by the army. But it was mostly structured on the Anglican faith.

37:30 **What sort of attendances did they receive?**

Oh well some of the, a lot of the army service early in the piece was another parade you had to go. Just how half, some of them were half hearted about going but you had to go, you had to attend. It was mandatory like another, it was a church parade, and any

38:00 parade you had to be there.

The gentleman you were talking about before that used to play that song for you, Stranger of Galilee …

Well yes, let's come back to him. This is interesting because Pierre – how many years later? – I can remember Percy saying to me once, probably when we were on that march that time,

38:30 and I used to think it was just something that he said, that, "God had something special for me." Now later on when we were at Murwillumbah, one of the ministers that came there while we were in the Methodist Church, there was John Robbins who had been a missionary

39:00 in New Guinea in that same area I was and most of the time was spent on New Island, and him and Nola had spent sixteen years as missionaries up there. And their first circuit that they came to when they came back to Australia, because their family had to go to school back here, was Murwillumbah, and we became very friendly with them. Well he's a retired Uniting Church minister now, and he lives at, they live at Ferrule, and somehow

39:30 in our relationship with them and I just can't think when this was, Nola his wife went, came from Balgowlah in Sydney and that was where Pierre de Russet came from, I knew that. And one day somewhere back in time, I just forget when, I said to them about Percy and she said, "Oh we know Percy,"

40:00 and I actually got to meet him before he died. After all of this New Guinea thing. And he told us that his daughter was a nursing sister who was on a mission field in Africa one time. Now it's a wonderful story told and I won't have it exactly as it was told. Now she was in some danger while, Percy would have

40:30 told us this …

Actually we might stop you there, if you start the story here it will get interrupted.

Tape 5

00:31 **Okay you were just telling us about when you went back and met Percy?**

Yes, that story I was going to tell you about, Pierre de Russet, his daughter was in some great danger somewhere in some situation in South Africa. Now the group that Percy was involved with at Balgowlah I should imagine,

01:00 he told me that they were constrained in a little house group, wasn't in a church service I don't think, it was a house group. They were moved to pray for her protection at a certain time. And it turned out that it was exactly the same as when she was in this danger in, and I can't think of what the danger was. But I do remember the significance of that anyway at that time. Of course he's gone now,

01:30 it's just another one of those things, part of my life that sort of fell into place really. Where do we go from here?

Well continuing the same thing. When you were up in the war crimes tribunal and your faith and the faith of Idio Katiama, can you tell me about the interaction you two had

02:00 **in regards to your faith?**

Well see I didn't meet Katiama very many times, and to recall it now after trying to push it out of your mind, didn't want to talk about it. So the interaction was only as much, I remember my first introduction with Katiama was at the office through Gordon Young introducing me to him. And then later I talked to him through the barbed wire fence

02:30 later, just sharing our faith, just letting him, what we talked about I don't know I wouldn't have talked for very long. In other words we shared our faith, that's about all I can say about that. Yeah I don't know, what's happened to all those Christians now that he influenced that came out of, and that photograph of that silk that was made by the

03:00 group in the war criminals' compound and given to Gordon and Grace Young. Gordon asked me what to do with it, well it was my idea that it should go to the archives somewhere in Canberra and I should ask about that. But it would be there somewhere. There was someone there trying to get a hold of it when they heard about it, I can't remember who that was now. Someone that reckon it should be in the RSL [Returned and Services League] archive but I don't agree with that,

03:30 I think its better in the National Archives really. But some of those Japanese names are on that, and I'm fairly certain, whether we'd see it on the small size of that print, the original cloth was about that big. Katiama's name is on there, as is Adachi's. And I think Imamura's name is on there, who else I don't know but they signed their names on there.

04:00 **Can you tell us a bit more about Gordon Young?**

Yeah I've got a whole heap of stuff on him somewhere.

Well you could start with when you first met him and …?

Well that'd be in Rabaul, but you know we kept in touch with the, some of the missionaries on the mission staff in Rabaul pre-war

04:30 all came from Adelaide, and the last ones that were, that are still alive, Gordon and Grace are gone now. I'd have to ask Arthur, they've got a son and a daughter who I have met but we don't sort of keep in touch. The daughter, she's deaf, completely deaf. Got a little dog, they've trained them.

05:00 If the doorbell rings the little dog runs in and tells her. All sorts of little things like that. And the son Ron, he is down there as well. In fact there is a bugle up in there, you can just see it up in there that was given to me by Grace Young after Gordon died. I don't know just what significance it played in their family, but I have sounded the bugle call a few times. Another story, you don't know about that one.

05:30 I was involved with a reconciliation service, invited by Father Paul Glynn to be held at the St John's College in Sydney. There were representatives, if I remember right, from that Jan Ruff association which is to do with comfort women. I think there is a video of it in there,

06:00 they didn't do a very good video. I was in uniform and it was a reconciliation service of different people from different countries, and I sounded the bugle and that was the last time I sounded the bugle calls for The Last Post and Reveille. They wanted me to sound The Last Post and I said, "Look you can't sound The Last Post without sounding Reveille," because The Last Post, the significance of The Last Post is

06:30 part of the (UNCLEAR) of the Ode (UNCLEAR) 'Let's grow old,' etcetera, etcetera. I'm trying to think of the rest of the words, but The Last Post is the lament for the departed soldier. So that's the departing, but in the minds of all ex-servicemen, there is that relationship that

07:00 nobody else can experience, in other words you have to be a part of it, even as I shared a part of that in the war trials. And nobody can really comprehend the relationship there is between men who have seen action, as part of that, it is something you have to experience. And Reveille, the words to Reveille, whether it is The Last Post I don't know. You see you know how 'duh duh duh duh,

07:30 duh duh duh duh. Get out of bed, get out of bed, get out of bed now'. So the significance of that now is the soldier rises to whatever glory there is after death. So it was good to be a part of that. They also had it again, he wanted me to come last year

08:00 for another service which was to be, I'll have to find his letter, in the cathedral in Sydney. But because of my other drama of the, I was out of practice, I didn't know that I could do it, but I did dress up I was in uniform for the reconciliation service that was held that time.

08:30 So it's been good to be a part of that really. I've told you a lot of things that were in my mind that I didn't know that I was going to talk about. And whether this, I often wonder if I should write again to this Rod Gabriel who is part of the Gold Force, 2nd 31st Battalion, the remnants of Gold Force, because it was, I think I told you it was Peter Unimea,

09:00 you should take the time to have a look at this somewhere, vision that Australians and Japanese veterans would go back together to Ambon. And I took this up with Peter Unimea who I correspond with in Japan at one time but he said he tried to search it out, but there were still Japanese that had the same feeling. That they can't bring themselves to do it either.

09:30 What next?

Did you cover all you wanted to cover on Gordon?

On Gordon? Now Gordon and Grace, the two that are still alive that were pre-war missionaries in Rabaul is Roger Brown and Cath Brown. Now I first met them when I was there and he

10:00 came back to Rabaul as a chaplain also in 1946 because they were returning missionaries. And then eventually they took up mission work again in that area, in fact he was in charge of, when I went back to manage the plantation which was called Winakambi plantation, Buni Ruma was where Gordon was with George Van College, a Christian college,

10:30 he was in charge of that. Well now he's well and truly in their nineties, they're still alive. Gordon and Grace have gone, they would be in their eighties when they died. But Gordon at the beginning of the war he was an engineer. And because they were short of engineers at the beginning of the Middle-East campaign someone must have got in touch

11:00 with him and he was partly, had started his training as a minister. So that had to be interrupted, so he joined and he was a mechanical background. And how he came to be in Tobruk, was in support of maintaining the armoured workshops and I'd have to read all of his

11:30 notes, which were given to me by his wife Grace after he died. But his wife Grace went to Sunday school with Kath Brown, the one I've just mentioned, they were all South Australians together, went onto the mission fields. Now some of the others that supposedly lost their lives on that Montevideo Maru when it was torpedoed by an American submarine, I don't think it's true. I thought some of them

12:00 might have been on it but talking to Joe Backhouse just recently and he knew something about that. He felt they weren't on it at all and there were lots of cover ups like this that didn't come out. The Japanese would have taken them out in the jungle and around Rabaul and machine gun or bayoneted the lot of them, the ex- missionaries and those that were left from the army that were left in defence of Rabaul.

12:30 See when the Japanese first invaded Rabaul, I can't tell you now what year that was, the only air force unit that was there was Wirraways, do you know about Wirraways? One of their most famous sayings

was, I can't think of how many Wirraways it entailed, but when they took off to help defend it, the last

13:00 thing that whoever was in charge of that radio said, "We who are about to die salute you," the famous saying because they weren't a match for the Japanese hero at all. Lots of interesting stories. Well Gordon, we didn't really finish on Gordon. So what Gordon did, having gone through Tobruk and came back and

13:30 then completed his ministry training, and became a chaplain in the army. And first of all he was somewhere in the Atherton Tablelands with the troops there before going back to chaplain and padre at 26th Battalion at Rabaul. So he would have been chaplain at Rabaul at the 26th Battalion when I first met him and the association began.

14:00 Something interesting about them, when I went back to the mission field and was there as a lay missionary operating that plantation, Gordon and Grace felt the call and first of all Gordon went on his own with a district officer, they were the first ones that took the Christian gospel into the highlands of New Guinea, Mendes, where you've got Mount Hagen and all that now.

14:30 And they were so, Gordon followed them. Also another missionary who I knew when I was there in the army was George Walker from Queensland here, from the Walkers, the family at Mirraburra. Yes he, Joyce became 'Mother of the Air' for the Christian bush children here in Queensland some years ago. She's gone now too.

15:00 Well she went with them eventually to Mendes and New Guinea highlands and because she was a trained sister. The wonderful stories that those people can tell that I can't think of the stories properly. Some of the things they encountered, with treating people for arrows, pulling arrows out of people when they first went there.

15:30 Yeah well, then Gordon and Grace their youngest, their daughter, she is stone deaf. And Gordon I think is a foundation member of the Better Hearing of Australia I think. He certainly was figured high up in that in South Australia anyway. When they used to be returning, I was on the ambulance staff in Brisbane then, when they were coming back

16:00 because we corresponded with them when they were missionaries in the highlands and in New Guinea, whenever they were coming home on leave we used to go and meet them on their way to South Australia and meet them at Brisbane airport and have a little bit of time with them. All interesting stories. I suppose it all should be written down, I better get a copy of all of this. Yeah well a lot of this stuff should be written down shouldn't it?

16:30 It's only in your mind, and to bring it forward you're losing bits of it all the time as you get older, so it is important that what you people are doing to record it for posterity.

Sorry to take you back here, but back to the story about the pistol and subsequent not being able to get into the RAAF [Royal Australian Air Force] because you didn't want to talk about it, was

17:00 **the decision pretty much made up then for you that the army was the way to go and can you tell us what happened then?**

Well see, when I joined up I volunteered for commando training. I was keen on that sort of thing. And I was partly trained when the war finished so opted into military police which was a different scene again. I would have never volunteered for military police but I certainly wasn't going to knock it back. Fascinating really isn't it?

17:30 And with the option of possibly going to Japan well that didn't happen either, we went to New Guinea instead. Yeah.

Did you do any commando training at all?

No, see the war, all we did was basic training, see when we were interviewed when we first joined up they wanted to know what part of the army you wanted to be involved with, so I came to volunteer then. And I would have gone on from Singleton

18:00 to Canungra, what do they call it now? Land Warfare Centre. That didn't happen.

Can you recall how you went, how you travelled to New Guinea?

New Guinea, yeah well interestingly enough I went up, not the Kanimbla you've got now, we went on the Kanimbla which was a troop ship. And I came back from New Guinea on the same ship. I went up in early 1946 and came back on the end of '47 on the same ship. And there was a guy I met on the crew

18:30 of that ship who I actually went to school with, Lenny Dunsmore. He went to Taringa School. Lost track of him a long while ago.

Can you tell us what the memories of your trip up there are like?

Yeah, I'll say I can because we went from Sydney heads and there was a cyclone up the Queensland coast I have never been so sick in all of my life, even some of the crew were sick. Hundred mile an hour

cyclone they reckon,

19:00 it was just off the Queensland coast. Be early in 1946. Blimey I was, I can recall that all right. You didn't feel like eating or anything. And we were all in those swinging bunks, hammocks, that they had on troop ships in those days. And where the mess hall was when you decided to have breakfast, you'd decide well you better go and have something to eat. And you'd go down these steps to go into the mess hall, and the bottom of the steps there is

19:30 two big rubbish tins where you have to put your scraps in after you had finished your meal. And there was one either side of the steps. And you'd get to the bottom of the steps and it'd be one bloke over one bucket and turn around and go back up again. Oh dear I shouldn't have put that in there should I? Well when we got to Rabaul I remember Kanimbla we had to scramble over the landing nets off the side of the ships, taking our

20:00 packs and so forth, and get down in the landing barges, that was how we departed and went into Rabaul to the experience in Rabaul. Troops everywhere. I think they, the Kanimbla, I think when we left there to come home she was pulled up at the wharf at that time. You often think the Kanimbla that they've got now, whatever happened to the other one I don't know,

20:30 it was a troop ship.

So what were your first thoughts when you got there?

Oh goodness me. Overwhelmed I suppose, I can't think of what my thoughts were. You know, it's funny you know. When the war looked like coming to a close there was another guy and I can't,

21:00 I was only thinking of him the other day, we joined up together at Redbank and his name was Jimmy Glynn, now I don't think he was any relation to these other Glynns at Lismore. But went through all of the training with him and he was still with us at Singleton, Cowra, Bathurst, Singleton. And then we came to Camp Cable, I lost track of him, how did I get onto this story?

21:30 Escaped me now. Must have been some relationship with something that happened somewhere. Well anyway I'll digress a bit there, it might come to me. But when we were training at Singleton,

22:00 one of the, we were all in tents there, one of the training sergeants was a guy by the name of Frank Thurley, and he was a Tasmanian. Big tall guy, in fact he used to walk with a funny gait and we had a nickname 'Tangle Foot'. Well years and years after, Ailsa's brother was the engineer with a hydro-electric commission

22:30 in Tasmania, and we had gone down there, I think it was the first time we went on the Princes of Tasmania to go down there for a holiday, and I walked up the gangway, and here is this bloke, I had lost touch with him years before. And up the top of the gangway and I said, "You're Frank Thurley," and he said, "Yeah, you're Don Ball," he remembered me. And he was a security officer,

23:00 apparently he was in the Tasmanian, he's gone too, he died some years ago. But I think there are some relations of his now that advertise in the Sporting Shooters magazine. Theirs is Thurley's Firearms or whatever. Because he was with the police force in Tasmania, and he was a security officer on the Princess of Tasmania when we first went down to Tasmania. I can't think of what I was going to tell you about Jim Glynn, I've lost track of him.

23:30 Well there was some of us from that first training battalion at Cowra and I'd have to look at my note book. The names are all there in the front of a little old notebook I've got. There was Jimmy Glynn and Jimmy Jay, who I did track down some years ago, was living at Mount Isa, now he wasn't well so whether he is still alive or not I don't know. But I've never been able to find Jim Glynn again although he was at Brisbane, Brisbane based person.

24:00 Might have gone to live somewhere else, don't know. Wonder what it was that I was going to say in relationship to him. Might have just been a connection that wasn't true, I don't know, with the other Glynns. Yeah that's an interesting story about the three Glynn brothers who became priests.

Well while you're back at Cowra, can you tell us how differently

24:30 **the Italian prisoners of war were regarded as opposed to the Japanese prisoners of war?**

Tell me that again.

What was the feeling towards the Italian prisoners of war that were in Cowra?

They were segregated in the prisoner of war camp, I really don't know how to answer that. I don't know what relationship there was there between, the Italians of course a lot of them spoke English more so than the Japanese.

25:00 And when we came across them, we often used to come across them, we came across these Italians several times in working parties working on properties, and different type of people all together to the Japanese. Japanese weren't allowed out like that I don't think. I'm sure they weren't. Because the Italians were part of the other campaign that had happened previously. Can't give you an answer there.

25:30 **And how were the MPs [Military Police] regarded within the Australian Army by other soldiers?**

There's, actually there is a book that's been written, I don't agree with the way the guy wrote this book and I actually met him, when I say met him I didn't meet him, I only met him by telephone and by corresponding. And I met him through that George Caldawell who now lives at, George had something to do with him.

26:00 And he was part of the, what do they call it? Can't even think of what his name is now, he wrote a book, well put together a story of military police, and I think the first one he did before it was in book form was a transcript in foolscap paper

26:30 Provo's Enemy or Friend, I think it was called, something like that. But I can't think of what his second book was called, I haven't got that. But the motto, that's the motto, 'For the troops and with the troops,' and that's still the motto of military police here today. The military police here in Brisbane in 1 MP Company,

27:00 no it's not, it's 4 MP Company. And while there is always, same as civilian police, there is always someone who will give the police a bad name and there were rogues in that the same as there is in the police today, in civilian police if you like. But even in those early days of New Guinea Force Provo Company, when we had to arrest

27:30 people and various things, I can never, I have never been ashamed in anything I have ever done in handling other troops really. I never got into brawls if I could help it, you had to manhandle people who were in brawls. And there is lots of stories told of men who were absent without leave, particularly if they had been servicemen and seen

28:00 battle and whatever. Went AWL [Absent Without Leave] probably, it was part of the law and the running of the, you've got to have, same as the police, you've got to have an organization of police somewhere to carry out the law of the land, same as the military law if you like. There's, certainly there is that underlying of bad feeling, but in a lot of cases

28:30 of guys when they have been trying to dodge the military police and you hear about them since, since the war was over, and a lot of them have done in funders, more or less in roguery, tried to get away and hide from the military police. But the Pommies were the worst military police I understand, funnily enough they were called 'red caps' and the military police uniform now are red berets.

29:00 Yeah I've got one somewhere, in fact it might be up there too somewhere.

Well speaking of names, what other names do you think the soldiers had for the MPs?

Oh well it was just the way the word was said. Oh 'provos' sort of thing. I don't know if they had any other names, might have done. If they did I don't know what they were, 'bloody provos' or something.

29:30 **Did that make your job harder, knowing there was a bit of resentment against you?**

Oh yeah. You always knew there was some animosity with the general run of the troops. But most of them looked upon you as a necessary evil if you like. Well I can remember in those early days in Rabaul, not only were we involved with the war crimes, we had to do road patrols. Oh that's a different story.

30:00 We used to put road blocks every now and again because of the unauthorised use of army vehicles. And you had what they called a 'G2'. Authorised, had to be authorised, signed if you had to use army vehicles or something. And this must have been early '47 or something I suppose. And this Rob Ross, this other guy, bit of a character Rob, and he was on duty in this road block this

30:30 day and Brigadier Naylon, who was in charge of the army at Rabaul at this time, had his family up with him. Anyway this woman, this young woman, comes along driving this jeep. Anyway Rob Ross pulls this jeep up and he said, "Who the bloody hell are you?" She said, "I'm the brigadier's daughter." And he said, "Yeah I'm the (UNCLEAR) corporal, give us a look at your G2."

31:00 But it was the joke of the camp for a while because she was genuine. Another thing, we had the open air picture theatres there, and they used to have lots of games of Crown and Anchor, I never got involved. Money used to change hands, big, lots of money. They used to bet pounds, lots of pounds. I never got involved. But really

31:30 we never stopped them from doing that. Prior to the open air theatre coming on or something like that they'd be milling around, and you'd see this Jones would have a hurricane lamp or some light going there, and the Crown and Anchor thing that they used was on the ground. Tossing dice and what not, I couldn't even tell you how it was played. But we were only there to stop them getting into fisticuffs with each other and that sort of stuff.

32:00 **Can you recall the entertainment unit being up there?**

Oh yeah there were several concerts that we had there and I can't think who the performers were. Well we even had, at Singleton we had a couple of the entertainment groups that came there. I can't seem to think of any at Cowra or Bathurst but yeah, there were a couple there. But I can't think of any

significant persons of that scene, who were

32:30 appearing there.

Can you remember any of the films that were screened?

Oh yeah. Arsenic and Old Lace, that's funny, that one jumps into your memory, Cary Grant I think it was in that. That story was about these old dears, these dead-beats that used to be around the sticks

33:00 and they'd nod their head if someone came in with a sad story and then take them in and give them a laced wine or something or other. And they had them all buried down in the old cellar. Arsenic and Old Lace, must have been arsenic they laced it with. What's some of the others? Gone with the Wind. Some of those old films, yeah.

33:30 **What about newsreels, did you get plenty of newsreels?**

Oh there were newsreels. And some of the naughty ones down there used to get involved with prostitutes and what not, and the army showed terrible pictures of all different VD [Venereal Disease] types of disease you could get. Newsreels, yeah I suppose there were newsreels that we got to see. But they'd have been here in Australia,

34:00 I don't know that we saw newsreels in New Guinea, there was just all of these entertainment mobs.

Did you find as a provo that your work would get busier when the times of boredom were more frequent for the Australian troops? Like when the fellows were sitting around doing nothing would they get into more mischief?

I don't know that I can answer that one.

34:30 See there were less, towards the end of 1947 there weren't many units there anyway. The only reason you were there so you can be in the war trials. But it didn't seem to be, because you had a bit of freedom, while you still had to have authorisation to use a jeep, I think that got pretty lax towards the end, we didn't have roadblocks any more. And Chinatown was functioning, you could go over the other side where Chinatown

35:00 was and Chinese restaurants had started up again. We went out looking to shoot pigs one time, out at Caravellos. I'll never forget a 'guria', we call a guria an earth tremor, earth tremors all the time. The volcano didn't erupt while we were there. I'll never forget that time, we went out there and picked up these people who knew where the pigs were. We never shot any pigs, we never found any. But it came, a guria

35:30 as they call it in pidgin English, there'd be something wrong if you didn't get an earth tremor every week, everything shakes and shivers. But this time you could not stand up, oh it was really frightening. You could actually see the waves going like this through the ground. Oh it was really frightening, I'll never forget that one. And when we went back we had coconut palms across the road and everything

36:00 on our way back into Rabaul. Got back there and some of our shacks and things had all fallen down. Yeah volcanoes are really amazing aren't they?

What opportunities did you have to explore the local area?

Yeah well there was plenty of opportunities to do that. Well I got involved with the Methodist missionaries that were returning, and

36:30 Duke of York Islands which are outside of Rabaul, can't think how far away. You can just barely see them, I used to get over there with them, in fact that's where it looked like I might be going over to manage a plantation on Ulu which is one of the islands. But I finished up at Winakambi on the main island. Yeah the,

37:00 there were a lot of ships in those early days that had been sunk by bombing in the harbour at Rabaul, they've all gone now. Even out at Kokopo the Japanese had, if the war hadn't finished we'd have never got them out of there. They were too well dug in. Had caves and tunnels everywhere with stocks of ammunition and war equipment. They had submarines, many smaller submarines, not real miniature ones.

37:30 And they had this great big crane, monstrous crane where they used to use them, it was out towards Kokopo on the other side of the harbour where they used to lift them up and put them on railway tracks, and put them and hide them in these tunnels. Tremendous amount of equipment that was up there. All scattered through the jungle everywhere. It's all pretty well disappeared now. Not much left there now.

38:00 There was interesting, that was in Germany, that interesting bomber do you remember that in the news? Was shot down, only just found recently, and I think it was an Australian crew on that. They brought their remains back to Australia and were buried back here. Hidden all that long time, amazing isn't it really?

38:30 **Well we might stop it there.**

Tape 6

00:31 **Ready.**

(Plays bugle) I hit a wrong note.

That's all right we'll do that again.

01:00 So if I make a boo-boo I can stop and start again.

Absolutely.

(Plays bugle: The Last Post)

01:30 (Plays bugle: The Last Post)

02:00 (Plays bugle: The Last Post)

02:30 (Plays bugle: The Last Post)

03:00 You want Reveille on top of it?

If you want to.

Won't need that.

You won't need that for Reveille? Was this just sitting up here Don, leave it up here?

Yeah. I can recite the Ode for you if you like.

Just a little bit this way Don. That's it.

03:30 **That was great.**

I can recite the Ode if you want. 'They shall grow not old, but we that are left grow old. Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember them. Lest we forget.'

04:00 **Can you say a few more words?**

You want me to say it again?

Yes please. Just crank it right up.

'They shall grow not old, but we that are left grow old. Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and

04:30 in the morning we will remember them. Lest we forget.' (Plays bugle: Reveille)

05:00 (Plays bugle: Reveille) Want me to play that again?

Would you like to do that again or?

05:30 **(Plays bugle: Reveille)**

06:00 **(Plays bugle: Reveille)**

Rolling. I was wondering if you could talk us through a typical day, what did your job entail from morning to night as an MP during the trials?

Oh goodness. Right.

Sorry we'll have to stop there. And rolling. Can you tell us what a typical day for you was as an MP during the trials?

06:30 Well during the trials, particularly towards the end of 1947 when I was permanent court orderly, it would be a matter of getting up early, making sure the brass on the equipment was nicely cleaned and polished. And then just loading the pistol, putting it in its

07:00 holster, it was kept in a locked safe in, well towards the end it would be in my care because the warrant officer in charge had already transferred to the war criminals' compound. So a matter of loading that, putting it in the holster and walking up the road from where our quarters were to the war trials' court. Now someone, because at that stage I was permanent court orderly,

07:30 it would not be my job to go and pick up the accused from the war criminals' compound. Somebody else would do that, bring them to the war trials' court. We would then get the okay to bring the court to attention. And as court orderly I would be sitting in my position in the left hand side of the court itself,

they're facing the body of the

08:00 front entrance, I'd be on the left hand side sitting. And the accused would be in the witness box on the far side, the right hand side of the court bench, and the court bench wouldn't be in at that stage. As they started to come in through the door I would call out, "Stand to attention," call out, "All

08:30 stand." They would all come in and sit down and then call out, "Please be seated." And then the first one to speak would be the prosecution, speaking possibly to the witness, asked him through the interpreter who he was, if he was so and so and he replied accordingly. And then he would put in his case to the tribunal, and then if any enquiries were

09:00 required, cross examination, if you like, would be still done through the interpreter. And then the defence would present their case. Sometimes, depending on the length of that time, sometimes there would be an adjournment. And there definitely would be an adjournment for lunch time, have a break, and then it would be announced, the adjutant general of the court would say, "Court adjourned to…" whatever time,

09:30 and then you'd go through the whole procedure again when they came back in. I can't recall a case that ever lasted one day, you'd have to come back several days. But mostly that, but if there were written statements or whatever, or witness procedures to be passed between the

10:00 accused and the prosecuting officer or the bench, defence , or vice versa I would have to do that. Whenever you approached the bench you had to salute, because it was full uniform, present whatever document it was, and step back, salute again and then sit down again. It wasn't necessary to salute the prosecuting officer or the defence.

10:30 But those in the, yes they did have their, the bench would have their head gear on as well. So that would transpire throughout the day until the court was adjourned for such and such a day or the next day or whatever. Then that was all done so you'd go back to camp again and try to relax.

11:00 **Don, there was something in the notes about someone who wore sandals?**

He was what?

He was wearing sandals or something, is that a story?

Where did you pick that up from? I didn't tell you people that.

No, it's a note from the researcher. You must have spoken on the phone briefly about it and they've said ask him about that.

For heavens sake. Oh well that's interesting, I don't remember telling anyone about that. Well that's just one of those things that happened,

11:30 because anybody coming into the court had to be regimentally dressed. It wasn't necessary to have head gear on but the rest of your army uniform had to be on, with boots. This person who was a lieutenant, whose name escapes me now, came into the court wearing sandals. So I didn't do anything while the court was proceeding, but as soon as there was an adjournment I went and approached this person,

12:00 had a funny idea I might have saluted him even though he wasn't wearing a hat and I was of course and he had a rank. And I can't think of my exact words, but it would have been something to the effect of, "Excuse me sir but I have to draw attention to the fact that you are regimentally undressed, you're wearing sandals." And straight away said, "Well I'm going to have you for insubordination, I want your name," and so forth. I said, well you know I was taken aback, never had it happen before,

12:30 "Okay," I said, "Well I'll give you mine but I still require yours." So he did that, and whether the break was, it wouldn't have been lunch because it re-adjourned pretty well straight away. And I went back and sat down and he sat down still with his sandals on. Come the lunch time break, I remember who it was, it was Colonel McDonald. So I went out the back and told him about it, and you know I told him that

13:00 this guy was going to charge me for insubordination, he said, "Go back and sit down, don't worry any more about it." I'm not sure whether he, well nothing would have happened then, but at the end of the day this guy never appeared in court again and I never heard any more. And funnily enough I am almost sure that a day or so after that, I don't know how long it was after that, I was down on the wharf and there must have been a ship in and we must have had a reason

13:30 to be there and there was some troops going back to Australia, and this guy was down on the, I kept my distance from him, the same guy. He went on the ship and came back to Australia so he was short lived. But he must have been something to do with the legal section. Came up there to get a big medal or something for having attended, something like that. Fancy you picking that one up.

So those things like dress code and everything, everything is taken very, very seriously?

14:00 I don't remember telling anybody about that, I must have told somebody.

What about the defence lawyers, where did they come from?

Well the defence lawyers were from the Japanese legal section, they had a legal section. But they were assisted, they had an assistant. There were two interpreters and the two interpreters in the court was a Japanese, Ishimuro by name, and one of the other

14:30 Australian army sergeants was a Gus Dodderich. There was another guy but I can't think of what his name is. I'm just trying to recall where the defence is, I know through knowledge that has come to me just recently, through the Courier Mail, that there was an Australian who has since died,

15:00 he was a judge later in life, was seconded and given the rank of captain to help Japanese in their self defence because really in Japanese culture from memory I don't think prior to the war that they had such a thing in their defence system, in their legal system. I don't know much about that, other than

15:30 that. So really that's all I can tell you there. I fancy there were times when they were, mostly they spoke English, the Japanese legal section. If there was a point of order in the difference in language, they did receive some assistance in that at that time.

So those defence lawyers, was there just a handful of them that handled all of the cases?

Yes they did

16:00 but I think with the help of Australians who helped them prepare and, like I said previously, I know that one of the reasons that John Williams was looked up to was that he had helped some of the Japanese legal with their preparation.

And how many prosecutors were there?

16:30 I can remember just by mind two in particular and they were both majors and I've got an idea that one of them might have been Major Kingdom at one stage, and the other guy, I can put a face to him in my mind's eye but I can't think of what his name was.

What sort of temperaments did they have?

17:00 Oh typical of legal people, nothing was said in anger, quantitative speaking but nothing was said in anger. It's like you see in television programs and that sort of thing.

How much documentation was going back and forth, in other words, how much evidence?

Oh quite a bit, quite a bit of evidence, and if it was legal

17:30 points, verbal words would be said. But if something had to be substantiated by documentation well that transpired throughout the day. You might have to approach, well when I say I don't want to seem as though it's kept on going all the time, I think on a day's hearing on an average you might have to approach the bench and the

18:00 other, oh seven or eight times something like that. Just off memory.

In the movie Blood Oath there's a scene where they're appealing for documentation and people to come from Japan, was that something that happened in other cases?

Yeah, there were other cases where someone would want to call a witness. There were witnesses in some of the cases,

18:30 some of them were local Chinese, in particular to local atrocities that were held in Rabaul. Relative to Japanese, things they had done, but in other cases where the accused was accused of something that happened elsewhere in New Guinea, other witnesses were called in. Some of them, I can remember witnesses from Nauru, there were cases of Japanese atrocities in Nauru.

19:00 There was one, and I can't think of the particular Japanese responsible for the Sandakan Death March, but there were other Australian witnesses as well as, in some cases, Indian witnesses. I can't remember what some of the oaths that they were asked to, the Japanese had some wording, it would be relative to Buddhism or Shintoism

19:30 or something like that, where they were required to swear by whatever that oath was. Indian would be the same and Chinese as well according to whatever they believed in their jurisprudence. Australians of course, well they had to swear on the bible in similar manner.

Was it hard for,

20:00 **we'll say the Australian witnesses obviously because they were speaking English, was it hard for them giving evidence and were they able to keep their emotions out of it?**

In most cases yes, but in some no. Chinese that had been, I can remember Chinese that had been brutalised and abused by Japanese, there were problems there. And I think too I can recall there were sometimes adjournments

20:30 too because of that so that they could, their demeanour could have to be changed or counselled in some

way. It's a long while ago, just little things coming back to my memory, a long while ago.

Was there a general feeling on both sides of the legal teams that people were being cautious, you know, in terms of getting fair judgements I guess?

21:00 I can't remember anything like that. I don't know if I should add something of my own opinion there, I don't think I should. Well maybe I should but I can't recall anything of that nature at this point in time but I know that through other

21:30 information that I have read, mostly through books, and one book in particular which I am having trouble getting a hold of but I have a loan of a copy. It's written by James MacKay and it's called the Betrayal in High Places. Who this person, the story is about this person, actual true story and I think they were sunk on one ship, forgotten the

22:00 name of that, and they were in lifeboats and the Japanese were encouraging them to come and give themselves up. Otherwise they'd go away. Might have even been torpedoed, yes it was. It was a Japanese submarine that torpedoed this ship, and those that were left were in lifeboats and the Japanese on the submarine, in broken English, were trying to get

22:30 them to come aboard and get good treatment, you know. Otherwise they were going to disappear and leave them in the middle of the ocean somewhere. And those that were involved eventually succumbed and got on board and of course they were brutalised as soon as they got on board. Well that particular person was eventually taken into a Japanese camp, prisoner of war camp. Brutalised, and then after

23:00 the war because he gained a certain amount of experience and was able to speak Japanese, and he was a New Zealander, and his name escapes me, and he became part of the interrogation and prosecuting team. And because of his understanding and knowledge of Japanese language, and was part of General MacArthur's legal team in

23:30 Japan at that time in interrogating Japanese, he knew when they were lying and when they weren't. And he said they were great deceivers, full of deception. So there was many problems in interrogating Japanese because you never knew if they were telling you the truth, and I do remember that was true.

So you were present at times during interrogation?

Oh no, I'm just telling you now something about, I was

24:00 never present when they were interrogated, that was part of the legal system, military police weren't part of that. I'm just saying that my impression was, from the stories I have read, and that was an example of one of the true stories. It's very difficult to interrogate them, just to know if you're getting the truth, but this man had the knowledge of Japanese language, unbeknown to those they were interrogating

24:30 and was able to pick them up on that.

What about what you saw in court that supported that argument?

Well what went on in court, pretty hard to remember back that far. I know there were times when whoever the prosecutor may have been, whether he wanted to get the witness that was being questioned to bring out a certain point,

25:00 that there was sometimes difficulty. And part of that may have been the differences in language, because that all had to be done through an interpreter. So you had both interpreters there, who if there was a problem with the definition of what the accused said would have to rely on the Japanese, Ishimura, who I understand was, I think he was educated in America I think, so you

25:30 had to rely on his interpretation of it. And because there was an Australian interpreter there too, if there seemed to be something that was not quite right, well then he could put a query in to make sure that the truth came out if you like.

What about at the end of the day, did you have much to do, even socially, with the defence team, was there a feeling

26:00 **of you all being part of something together, talking, you know, I guess dealing with the stress of what was going on?**

Yeah I suppose you could say that. This, what I'm going to tell you now didn't happen, no I don't think it did. This didn't happen in 1947 this would have been in late 1946, because,

26:30 I might be wrong in that it might have been 1947. I don't think so, I think it was 1946. Because of your involvement on the war trials and the officers that were taking part, and I'm not sure if I can remember the name of him, and the relationship that existed between myself,

27:00 those that were in charge of the compound if you like and the hangman and various others. I can remember socialising, but I don't think in those occasions, parties, some of those people had their wives there and they lived in Rabaul proper. Hangman in particular, and other, some of them. And I think he had been a part of the New Guinea

27:30 scene pre-war, and I'm not mentioning names, but they, I could mention them although I don't think it's necessary. Although in some of the stories I think that were part of, I'm almost sure the ones that Phillip Confauld did in The Australian newspaper, I'm almost sure they named some of their names, not the hangman,

28:00 but those in charge of the compound were in there and I think it's better that I don't mention those names although I can recall them. There were times when we did socialise, a night party or something like that in a residence in Rabaul. But I can't recall them ever discussing any of the court proceedings at any of those parties.

So was there only one hangman?

28:30 There was one that was recognised the hangman, but there was another one that sometimes did take that place. And then I do recall there was another lieutenant that arrived on the scene some time and I got the impression the only reason he turned up there was to be able go back and say that he hanged Japanese. Whether that was true I don't know but that was the impression I got because he wasn't there all that long. But there were two majors, and one in particular that featured

29:00 mainly as the executioner in those cases. And of course if you want to talk about the shootings, which there were less of, there was the person who the archive is yet to interview, and he will be known as Lieutenant Joe Backhouse, there is no harm in presenting that name. And he was in charge of the firing squad, gave the orders to

29:30 take up the rifle, aim and fire. And he'd be able to speak more on that from his side.

So the hangman that you were friends with, obviously that's a very unenviable job, how did he cope with, and did you sort of counsel him? Was he a man of faith as well?

No they were men of renown you could say, strong conviction for what they were doing.

30:00 Part of the, I don't know whether you'd call it legal system, I don't know. I do know, and you mustn't see this as a, there was something that's often referred to as 'Dutch courage', as an execution there would be a small table there with a bottle of whisky on it.

30:30 I never, in fact I couldn't stand the stuff. It was known as the Dutch courage, but no one was ever, it wasn't a drunken party or anything like that. But I do recall that. And in fact there's a story attached to that I suppose I should tell you. So in my bringing up of my two

31:00 sons, I don't mind a drink every now and again, I don't like whisky or any of those, I particularly didn't like whisky because it seemed in my mind to have an association with those executions. And I found it interesting when our eldest son went to university and obtained a degree in forestry, in his first

31:30 year out of Armidale University and he came home at Christmas time and there were friends of ours at Murwillumbah and we had gone out there to these people's place for some fellowship and it was Christmas time. So when we arrived there this friend said, "Well what will you have to drink?" And someone said, "Well what have you got?" And he rattled off all the things. And this eldest son of mine, who I thought I had been giving a good example, said, "I'll have whisky."

32:00 So much for my trying to steer them away from that sort of thing, and you know I was a bit flabbergasted because my association with whisky is always associated with the Japanese hangings and executions in general, one of those things that seems to be a mindset that you pick up.

Did your son know that story though?

Well I think I told it later,

32:30 he didn't at the time, I was a bit too flabbergasted to say anything and I didn't want to put him in a position where he was uncomfortable then. So I wouldn't have said that, told them that much later.

Can we just go back to, you said you went to learn about agriculture before you went back? Can you tell me about that time?

Well because I hadn't had training in agriculture and I thought well it was appropriate and it was available to do rehabilitation training

33:00 in many things. And I expected to go back, I knew nothing about copra and cocoa which is what the plantations were producing. But funnily enough in that training that I did, I did do a bit of a correspondence course with the department, and the property that I went out to was a mixed farming, Australian farming. There was a dairy herd, grew wheat

33:30 and other feed crops. I had pigs as well and sheep. There was nothing related to the sort of farming there was in New Guinea. Whereas a plantation up there, it was really management I suppose. And yes the plantation I went to was copra and cocoa. And when I first went there they were drying both the copra and the cocoa out in the sun which was pretty primitive. All of

34:00 the drying kilns had been flattened in the bombing, part of the process of war. And eventually we rebuilt

those. The remains of the old hot drying, cement fire box at one end and another at the other end, with round steel

34:30 pipes of about that diameter where the hot air comes from the fire at one end and up and up through the chimney. And fully enclosed with trays and all of your cut up copra and cocoa beans were on that for drying. So all that was gone with the exception of the fireboxes so, this was a mission project, we had someone there helping us, a builder. We got the pipes, they were made I think in Rabaul, they ran

35:00 from the firebox and up to where the chimney was. And then the trays were all made with mesh, but the walls of that building were all made with forty-four gallon drums. They were the end cut out and the drums flattened out because the material was hard to get. You had a galvanised iron roof for sure. So that was that scene, it was better than trying to dry it because you'd get a cloud

35:30 come over and you'd have to run out and cover everything over with canvas or something, and it didn't dry too well. But cocoa and copra are pretty interesting to farm really, particularly the cocoa, the cocoa bean, when it is ready to harvest it is a bean about that long and about that circle, and when you cut it in half, you've got the beans inside about as big as the end of your thumb, but

36:00 they are all covered with a, like a type of a pith that had to be fermented off before you could put them out in the sun and dry them.

So how challenging a time was that? That was quite a big change in your life?

Yeah, oh yes it was. Yeah well see I was single then of course, and my

36:30 house that was built out of kunai grass, photo of it here somewhere, was built out of jungle material. But it was on the old pre-war site, the cement footing of where the original house was on the plantation because it was a pre-war plantation owned by the Methodist missionaries.

So how many missionaries were there working? And how many natives were working for the plantation?

37:00 Well on the plantation, the work line, there was two rows of houses, all kunai, bush material, kunai grass and thatched roof. There was a single quarters along one side, they'd be about fifty yards apart I suppose, and married quarters on the other side because there were married boys and single boys there. I think there was about twenty-five on the work force there.

37:30 Was mostly for harvesting the cocoa beans or gathering the coconuts in after they had dropped. They had to be split open and, the pith which was set hard, that had to be taken out and dried. That's what turned into copra.

So how many natives were working for you?

How many natives there? Well the line would have been twenty-five, something like that. Some of them were single, some of them were married, and married quarters had

38:00 children as well. But they were all, the Toli people from around Rabaul aren't really recognised as being good workers on that kind of thing, so most of them came from a place called Nakanai which is further down, about half way down the coast of New Britain. They came from Nakanai and therefore they didn't have the local language, I just conversed with them in pidgin English.

38:30 As far as white missionaries were concerned, I don't know if you were talking about them, there was most of them were married, and there was some single sisters there too of course, nursing sisters. In fact there was a new one came who we still keep in touch with more or less, she lives at Coffs Harbour now. Quite interesting really. Her name, Cynthia Smith when she came there, and after

39:00 I left there she married a chap there who was in the forestry by the name of Alex Lloyd. They're still alive, they still live in Coffs Harbour. And where Cynthia was, she was out at Irinma for a while out near where my plantation was. Then later she went down to this area, Nakanai, further down the coast. And the name of the area where she was, was called Malalia. So when Cynthia got married,

39:30 the first child she had was a daughter and they named her Malalia. Now Malalia, I think she might be home again now, until recently she has been a missionary herself, over in Bangladesh. How we going?

Good.

Tape 7

00:31 **I just wanted to ask you to continue on with the plantation life and the conditions up in New Guinea?**

Yeah well I don't know what else to say.

Can you tell us, the decision to go back to New Guinea was that a hard decision and how did

you come to that decision?

Yes it wasn't easy,

01:00 like I say they, when I was there in the army missionaries were returning, and because I had some leisure time and I went out with some of these missionaries, particularly Roger Brown, he is still alive in Adelaide, ninety something or other. He's starting to slip, his wife Cath does a bit more, she's probably not as old as him.

01:30 I got involved with the going out in the villages, and somewhere, probably over there, I've got a, I was selling Kuananui hymn books, written in the Kuanua language. And somewhere I've got a Kuanua bible, so I got involved with that in leisure time in the army. And because of that association and the fact that Gordon Young had

02:00 had got discharged and was on the mission staff there and my relationship with him, and he was encouraging me to either to get discharged there and then or come back to manage a plantation. He kept in touch with me, because it was the post-war period and they were just trying to get those plantations into a viable position again. Yeah, who was I talking to the other day about this?

02:30 Oh well Joe Backhouse was talking there because see Joe had done the same thing. He bought his own plantation and built it up from nothing. Also on New Britain, bit further south on the north coast below Rabaul. And that in his book talks about that, and I said, "Well I still remember how much I was getting for copras produced at the plantation and it was in pounds." And copras which we sold to

03:00 Burns Phillip was fifty pound a ton, and cocoa we sold to Kallia Watson and it was three hundred and twenty-five pounds a ton, much more valuable.

Can you remember, was there any government assistance to try and get those plantations going again?

Well there was at Caravat, which was out further than my plantation. There was an experimental farm there, in fact it's still there, where they do experimental growing of plants and different

03:30 species of things that are, and it's gone ahead, there is a lot of things grown up there now that were never grown in New Guinea before. What that come under, it's like an agricultural centre. Yeah. I never went to any schools there. Somewhere I found not so long ago, I had a lot of information on copras and cocoa, written information,

04:00 but I never went to any school about farming the stuff.

Did you personally carry a bible with you at all times as a soldier? Or what was your …?

Well that's interesting. We all, when we first joined the army, you were given a little New Testament. And I don't know where that disappeared to, but I had that right throughout my army career, still had it in New Guinea.

04:30 I think from moving place to place you lose various things, I've got a couple of things, in fact I've got some photos that have disappeared, blowed if I can find them. Yeah you lose things like that when you move around and somewhere that has got mislaid.

So when was the last time you were up in New Guinea, up in that part of the world?

The last time would be,

05:00 I'm just trying to think when the eruption occurred for the volcano, that's the last time I was there with some, if you were hear long enough I'd show you some of the video. Are you going, what are …? Not that it's going to matter to what you're doing anyway, just an interest thing. I can loan you that video if you want to loan it. You can hang around here and look at it, there is only the one, I wouldn't like to lose it.

05:30 **You said before when you were telling us about the day in court and it was pretty full on and then you went home at night to try to relax, what was the method of relaxation, what would the fellows get up to at night?**

Wasn't much night life, because really only a party, maybe a beer party or something. I remember going to, I could never get interested in playing cards but we used to play cards.

06:00 Up at the, one of the guys was a postal sergeant, because the army had a postal section there and I can remember going up there playing cards there, blowed if I know what game. And we did have, we had a pool table, it was for everybody, wasn't just for military police. I just don't know where that pool table came from but it was like a ACF-er, Australian Comforts Fund.

06:30 Was a pool table and various other things there, yeah I've forgotten now.

Can you recall what sort of beer you drank up there, was it local brew?

No way, I'll tell you what we used to get issued and I have never forgotten it and I have never been able to get one as nice as it since. Reschs Waverley Bitter.

And that was brought in from Australia was it?

Oh yeah yeah. Definitely yes. And well, you got so many bottles of beer a week, I just can't think how many it was now, it might have been three or four or something like that.

07:00 **What other comforts were brought from Australia for you fellows?**

Well the Australian Comforts Fund they sort of fostered those ACF huts, the recreation huts. And those billiard tables would have come through there, there was table tennis as well. I think there was a bit of a mini-library there, I can't, I wasn't a great reader in those days, can't remember the library.

07:30 We could always make tea or coffee or something like that there.

Now because of your faith I guess you had a bit of the conflict of these guys, these Japanese prisoners that were going to be executed, how did you deal with that in your own mind? What was your philosophy on that?

08:00 You're right, I'm glad you brought this up actually, otherwise I would have missed it. Well I'm a great one to read my bible as the word of God, and in the Old

08:30 Testament the rules that were laid down for living, whilst they've certainly changed and there're now a lot of man-made laws, for the taking of life and various things like that, once again like I said in the beginning, if I knew what your own understanding of Christian doctrine was it would be easier to speak. But because I was brought up

09:00 that it was unlawful to kill, and even then in those younger years I wasn't as aware then as I am now about those Old Testament laws, and when I see or hear about on television or other media, the things that people do now and are given a life sentence in bad cases, much worse things than

09:30 the Japanese did that we executed them for. I'll give you an example, and this happened some years ago and I've got an idea the town was Nowra, I think, where this ten year old was taken from the safety of her home by some character, taken out in the bush and raped and the, her naked body was tied up with wire and she was

10:00 thrown into a dam to drown. I believe in the death sentence although I have been involved with Christian teaching, and if you look at the Old Testament, that was part of the rules. And man-made laws we have come so far away from that now that it isn't funny. And we love everybody now sort of thing to the point of where the death sentence doesn't apply any more, I don't agree with that. Because

10:30 some of the horrendous things that are done now, are as I say were much worse then what we executed Japanese for in the post-war period, now it's peace time. Now the way I saw it, if I was against taking a life and both of those, hanging particularly is barbaric, shooting is more in line with the execution, but

11:00 the way I saw it in my mind, I had to come to terms with that from a Christian background and I, I'm trying to search for a word here, I saw it as a, because we could not apply a sentence if you like which was appropriate for the crime that had been committed, particularly in rape cases like that

11:30 and murder of small children in particular, that because we are not able to, to take a life we don't have the death penalty as law in Australia any more. And I find it interesting that the Australian Prime Minister said in relation to this character that's now been convicted of the Bali bombing, he's not saying in so many words that he believes in the death penalty, but if you see between the lines he is.

12:00 So I had rationalised in my involvement with the execution of Japanese that I saw it because of the horrendous things that they were doing, that they were given an opportunity to speak in case of Buddhist or Shintos, one of their priests, in a Christian background there was a Japanese Christian minister within the compound that

12:30 administered to Katiama before he was given the death sentence. But he made his own reconciliation with God, if you like, in reciting The Lords Prayer. So in view of that we are sending them across to the creator of all life to decide what he wants to do with them himself. I believe in another life and no one can say what form that takes, no one knows. In spite of what they might say, they've got no idea.

13:00 But we all live on, I have come to see this. There is not many people can stand up and can say, "These hands are the last hands that touched people, that handled them before they were executed and they lost their life, this earthly life. And these are the same hands that delivered babies in the back of ambulance vehicles," quite a number back in those early days.

13:30 So I believe I know something about death and I know something about life. But I do believe we all live on but those who don't live with the faith in this life will live entirely cut off from God in that next life, never to be able to return. And that's the sad thing about it, what the Christian Gospel is all about. So I felt that we were sending across to him to deal with

14:00 what he thought about them as he is the creator of our lives anyway in the first place.

Having said what you just said, do you think sometimes your service in the ambulance service

was a way of equalling the ledger?

You're right, that's a good way of putting it. I believe so, I am more settled in my own attitude now if you like because of that.

14:30 Thirty years in the ambulance service and half of those in Brisbane where you just went from one job to another, one case you were in abject poverty, and the next one you might be in plush money-wise, whatever. What do you call it? Rich people. So you saw both sides of life. And you know, some tragedies among it, children were the worst ones injured in bad accidents.

15:00 I've been a witness in a few murder trials in Brisbane, and definitely a witness in road accident victims, where you are the first person who arrives there, as a police witness.

Having served in the military police was there any thought given to joining the Queensland police when you returned?

Yes there was, I thought about that.

15:30 In fact there was a particularly, he's gone, passed on too, he was older than me, was our police sergeant at Taringa, name was Vince Grant, and he went on to be an inspector before he retired and passed on. And there was one time he was trying to encourage me to join the Queensland Police. I sometimes wonder if I should have, but the leading seemed

16:00 to be into the ambulance service, I felt led into that service. Because I was at that time searching for something where I could be of service for my fellow man. And I did have a very good job, I worked as a mechanic for a garage here in Brisbane and because it was only a small garage out at Rosalie, the guy that had the garage there the work started to disappear

16:30 so it was only a one man show until I came on the staff, so he had to put me off. But I finished up with a job as an inspector on General Motors Holden. It was the best job I had really, it had a really good future in it. I was the last inspector on the production line down at Newstead before the vehicles went out of Newstead. But at that same time I was an honorary bearer in the ambulance service.

17:00 And during the Christmas break one year a job came up on the board to join the staff of the ambulance service of Brisbane, and I had had about eighteen months of honorary service as well as certificates. And I dropped money, in those days something like five pound a week, to come onto the ambulance staff but I have never regretted it. Wonderful career.

17:30 **Now with Katiama's execution, that was the last execution, and as a result of that you knew you were going to be going home soon, was there a mixed emotion? What were your emotions dealing with both of those things?**

Well I can still remember, it's hard to explain because I was still remembering leaving Rabaul on the Kanimbla again as it pulled out of the harbour, and sort of leaning on the rail and

18:00 looking back and thinking of all the things that we had been involved in there, and just wondering what the future would hold I suppose. And fully knowing that I had a bit of a problem there which would be the stress of being involved in those things. And of course that stayed with me until that was released with Father Paul Glynn in some forty-four or forty-five years later. As a release from

18:30 healing of those memories, they still stay with you.

So can you tell us about when you were actually demobbed, when you finally got out of the army, how did that all transpire?

I was demobbed out of Indooroopilly, I lived at Taringa. And really the guy that demobbed me, I wanted to go, I felt there was a call to go back to that mission field.

19:00 But the guy that demobbed me was another officer and I told him what I wanted to do, this rehabilitation training. And he said, "Oh there is no future on the land laddie," you know sort of thing. So it was him that convinced me to go back to my trade again. Not at Archerfield or aeronautical engineer but in mechanical engineer if you like. And I stuck that through, I had a job.

19:30 (UNCLEAR) Motors, funnily enough I think what we were doing was converting jeeps from left hand drive to right hand drive. All the time I was corresponding with the Methodist missionaries in Rabaul. So finally I gave it away and did this rehabilitation training and went back there. But yeah, leaving there, I just don't know how to explain, all

20:00 of that, all the things we had been involved with was in the mind, mixed up with my Christian background as well.

So was there a time after you were demobbed of being really unsettled?

Oh yes, leaving Rabaul it was good to be rid of it. Not to be involved with it. Yeah there was. In fact before I, that first time when Ailsa and I were married,

20:30 ’51, and I had worked with these friends of ours only because they were looking for somebody. And we were in a remote area, we were up at Kilton. And I decided that we’d be better off to come back to Brisbane and took up mechanical work again. Because there wasn’t very much money, I wasn’t share farming or anything like that, I was just helping this

21:00 guy out. So then I went through various jobs for a little while, some of them in the mechanical game. I actually drove the ‘Coca-Cola’ truck at one stage. And then working in this garage at Rosalie and then being a honorary, at the same time, honorary bearer so that was part of that.

Did you ever consider going up with the army to New Guinea

21:30 **with their involvement with the PIR, The Papuan Infantry Regiments? Did you know about those?**

No I didn’t, I rubbed shoulders (UNCLEAR) New Guinea Infantry Battalion. Yeah well I just really wanted to come home. I suppose the thought crossed my mind a couple of times because I had a good relationship with New Guineans.

22:00 I’m very interested in these things that have been happening with the Solomons at the present time really, that looks to be coming to a conclusion now, seems to be, as it was there was a problem there for a while as there was a time back with Bougainville. But I don’t know about whether I had any expertise to be of usefulness there. I stopped at the ambulance service, the ambulance service was my life

22:30 really, it was a good way of helping others and of being of service, a really wonderful service. And see those days when I came on the staff here in Brisbane, there was still guys there that could relate to the horse and buggy days. They related to that era. And some of the, they’ve gone ahead in leaps and bounds in expertise now with paramedics. But we saved lives, there is no doubt about that. But some of the stories

23:00 that those guys told, and I actually met at that time, one of the remaining handful of men that belonged to the Moreton Regiment who began the ambulance service, not only in Queensland but in Australia. And that was all, see you’ve got the exhibition on now. And what happened was they belonged to the medical wing of the

23:30 Moreton Regiment. And this man’s name was Mr Eustace, Mr Eustace Jack. He lived at Red Hill and he was the only one that was still left. And the formation of the ambulance service in those early days, somebody had a fall or something in one of the equestrian events at the exhibition grounds, and the person had a fractured leg. And because of the way he was, it was just a simple

24:00 fracture and because of the way he was mishandled it turned into a complicated fracture. So that helped then with some of their medical knowledge to decide to band together to form an ambulance service. I remember him telling me they existed with donations from a Finny Isleton Company

24:30 that supplied some of the material that they had. Now the building that, it was called the Old Courier Mail building, it was on the corner of Edward Street and Queen Street, now they started their base there. To put it in perspective, I don’t know what building it is now so you know the right building. You know where the post office is further along? Well it was on the opposite side, on that corner of

25:00 Edward and Queen Street. And in that 1894, remember that big flood?

1974?

No no, the one 1800s.

I don’t know the exact year.

They floated out of the first storey, that’s how much water was in Queen Street. They floated out to get some more stores because they were operating from there to begin with

25:30 on makeshift bandages and stretchers and things like that. That’s how it all began. And they met in the home of a guy called Seymour Warrian which was, I’ve got a magazine somewhere with some of his old photos in, was in Annerley Road somewhere up past, somewhere near where Bottle Road Gaol used to be. Somewhere in that area there. How’d we get onto this?

26:00 **Can you give us your thoughts on Anzac Day and the RSL?**

Well the RSL is a wonderful organization for ex-servicemen. Like I said before, nobody, the drunkenness that may have been involved, and I say ‘may’, with guys who had been involved with horrific experiences tried to drown their sorrows, some of their

26:30 stress. That’s all gone. We’ve only just recently, when I say recently, sixteen months we’ve been up here in this house. And I was hospital visitor for the RSL at Murwillumbah, and I haven’t waved the flag here, well I transferred my membership to Redland Bay, their meetings are of a Sunday and it clashed with our church service so I haven’t been and I miss that a bit, the organisation. And it’s not an

27:00 organisation just for ex-servicemen. The money that is raised there certainly is on war service homes, not war service homes, like nursing homes, like Ballin RSL Home and others like that up here in

Queensland, but there are other organisation that are donated to as well. And what's the other one you asked me? That was the RSL.

Oh just the Anzac Day?

Anzac Day

27:30 is still in a growing process, there seems to be more interest in Anzac Day now then what there has ever been. I can still remember going to Anzac marches with Dad as a boy in Brisbane. And there was lots of interest then, but then it seemed to wane across the years. But now, particularly the dawn service has become really important for people now,

28:00 the significance of it. And even the number of Australian young people that now in tourism are going to Gallipoli, the significance of the Anzac spirit was born at Gallipoli. Where those that were killed, you men in the prime of life in defence of their country and what they believed in, it

28:30 was a wonderful example of the Australian sprit of Anzac really.

Do you think that the troops, the Australian troops in World War II, really carried that spirit? They all ….

Well yes and no. Because a lot of them sort of joined up for adventure if you like and the other sort of grows on you as you get

29:00 to know the in depth of what you're about really. Some joined just for the adventure, but because of the type enlistment is looked for and looking for people to defend the country, of course there was a great understanding then of where we came from, from England. As the monarchy

29:30 if you like, so it's for King and Country, God, King and Country. And a lot of that was instilled in them even in their background if you like, in the home life in those days, it's still there.

Now I don't like to ask you this because you have already given us a thorough description of the execution of Katiama. Can you

30:00 **tell us what the executions by hanging were like? What the procedure was and what it was like?**

Horrible. In a television program where you see a hanging and the body just drops there and that's what you see, that doesn't happen. The distance that a person drops

30:30 from when the trap is set underneath them, and the length of the rope if you like, has some formula about measuring the length of the rope. Because they can alter the length of that relative to the weight of the person. Now what it is designed to do is when the person comes to the end of the rope and it stops like that

31:00 is to break the neck of the person. But even then with the nerve reaction of the body it, the body just doesn't hang there at all. You have to remember their legs are strapped together at the ankles, and their hands are handcuffed behind their back. But that body swings on the end of that, and that's the term that's been used in hanging if you like in television programs, it really does swing.

31:30 I've seen the legs swing up to almost waist high until the body reactions, in fact you wonder whether the neck is broken or whether they are alive and being strangulated. People that suicide by hanging never die of proper hanging, they die of suffocation. Because they haven't, they don't know the formula to be able to break the neck and

32:00 what it amounts to is that they die of suffocation. They've been strangled in other words. The natural reaction of the body, they urinate, sometimes their bowels move. I just can't think of what period of time they would have to remain there until we took them down. But then when we take them down the body is place on the stretcher, then the doctor who is ever in charge

32:30 has to be present there, and the first thing he does is check to see if their neck is broken by movement. And then of course using a stethoscope to say that life is extinguished. So pretty barbaric. Now if I ever had to be executed I would choose shooting, all the pain that a person shot, not live, nine live .303 rounds passing through that

33:00 white disk. I never saw any that missed, no misses. They might be scattered on the six inch disk which has been placed over the heart area. Well there is an almighty hole at the back of that person when you take them down and see where the bullet came out. So all they would feel was a tremendous blow in the chest, wouldn't be any pain attached to that. And I suppose the neck breaking, while it looks barbaric,

33:30 it's probably, the fact that they know they are going to go that drop would be more frightening then having to be trussed up with a blindfold on to know that someone is going to shoot you.

Did you ever feel that there was justification in the crimes these people had committed linked to the way they were going to be executed?

34:00 Oh yeah. This is pretty barbaric, and I can't think. I'm almost sure it was a Japanese trial there was a

few of them we tried there but I can't remember which one. And one of his favourite tortures for a prisoner was to tie the prisoner to a coconut palm standing facing the palm, take his samurai sword, insert the samurai

34:30 sword to the hilt, through his anus. Up through his body. Just imagine the pain there would be in that. And then lift the sword up. Now there is other cases of missionaries and nuns as well included being taken out of the field where the Japanese had overrun a mission station, where pregnant

35:00 missionary station women have been there, standing there and with a samurai sword gone like that straight down the belly of a mother, the babies dropped out onto the ground. That's just some of the atrocities, barbaric. I saw something not so long ago, months back, I was switching on the television and it was a couple of Japanese

35:30 that were being interrogated by somebody on this program, I didn't see the beginning of the program, and it was to do with the butchering of Chinese when Japan invaded China. And these two guys were speaking and in English were speaking and one of the things was he was not exactly proud but not ashamed of what he did in the rape of young Chinese women. And

36:00 this guy actually said, I don't know whether I should be saying this because it was something that I saw on SBS [Special Broadcasting Service] just recently, where he raped this young Chinese girl and then killed her, cooked part of the body up and then ate it. What sort of an animal is that? And that was actually on television. I was sorry I didn't try

36:30 to follow it up to find out what the program was on SBS but I don't know how you could find out. But it just happened to be, just turning around because there are some very remarkable programs on SBS really.

Was there ever any comments made or callousness or black humour from the Australian troops to the Japanese ?

No, I can't recall anything like that. Well anyone that's ever had anything to do with them, I don't know who

37:00 (UNCLEAR) Joe Backhouse. Him being part of the legal section and interrogating Japanese would have a better idea then I could. I know what his opinion is. But I have to let him speak for himself really. And I hope that whoever the interrogators are they really get to the background of someone like him, really. Because he had been through so many

37:30 campaigns in the Middle East and seen other enemies like over there. But Japanese, now I don't know. Of course the big worry now is North Korea isn't it?

Are you able to tell us was the hangman of rank? Was he an officer?

Yeah he was a major.

And do you think that was a decision made for any particular reason?

I don't know,

38:00 can't answer that one, you'd have to find someone out of army legal authority could answer that better, with the rank, but he was a major I'm sure.

Did anything amusing ever happen at the trials or while you were there?

Probably did but I can't think of, there was sometimes a problem with interpretation of what somebody said.

38:30 I can't think of anything off the cuff really, no. No, it was really a serious business.

So if you could go back you'd do it all the same or ...?

Oh I guess if it fell my lot just by the way things, fell into place, yeah,

39:00 have to do it all again. I mean it's all very well to say now that your experienced you might do it differently but you can't because you would just be in that same category again that you were when it all happened.

And how important do you think your war life has impacted on the rest of your life?

Oh I think it's, given that background, certainly in my attitude to what's happening in the world today if you like,

39:30 in relationship to others, yeah. Yeah particularly this present time when we've got the threat of terrorism. It's all in my opinion there is never going to be peace in the Middle-East. There seems to be a breakthrough every now and then, this is probably the same everywhere else.

40:00 Now like I said before, it's hard to know just what your view is but there's no harm in expressing mine I

don’t suppose, I believe there is, the phenomena in Christian teaching of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, there never will be peace on earth until that happens. Now

40:30 there is even talk on Catalyst program last night about this asteroid that’s heading to earth that mightn’t happen for another eight hundred year, when it strikes the earth, what is it, it’s a kilometre wide? What impact it’s going to have on the earth. But we’re on this planet, it’s only a star when it all boils down, somewhere in history, I don’t know how many thousands of years, nobody knows.

41:00 But it’s all going to disappear some time or other. I can get on to some fascinating things now. Now do you understand the, I don’t pretend to understand it myself, in this philosophy if you like is what I am giving you now, about what light years are? The speed of light, you’d have some inkling of this because of what you do. Speed of light. So the telescopes that we’ve got now, so sophisticated, we’re thousands of light years

41:30 out there and they can’t find a beginning and they can’t find an end and they’re never going to. Because there isn’t a beginning, all the big bangs and everything that is happening out there, they have been going on forever, now with our minds we can’t comprehend this at all. Somebody will say, “Well who made God?” Nobody did because he was always there and we can’t comprehend that either. Because with our minds

42:00 we’re not able to comprehend, but they’re never going to find. That goes on, what’s out there, and this is the magnificent…

INTERVIEW ENDS