

Australians at War Film Archive

Jack Verity - Transcript of interview

Date of interview: 15th August 2003

<http://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/623>

**Some parts of this interview
have been embargoed.**

The embargoed portions are
noted in the transcript and video.

Tape 1

- 00:38 **Thanks Jack, I would like begin by asking you for a brief summary of your life, something like where you were born, where you grew up and so on up until now?**
- Up until now, well that's a long way. I was born in 107 North Road Newport
- 01:00 in Melbourne.
- Which year was that?**
- 1920, and went to school at Williamstown which is three miles away. I don't know what that is in kilometres but it was three miles away, and many a time we went bare footed there to school and back. Dad was a slaughterman at the abattoirs at Spotswood and he had it tough during the Depression.
- 01:30 I think I was the youngest at the time and then there was my sister, Freda, above me and then Len and then Essie and then Watson, and he had to support all those and during the meat strike he didn't go on strike for that reason, he had a lot of children to look after. To cut a long story short he finally got the sack from there and we moved
- 02:00 to South Caulfield in Pine Street, South Caulfield, and then he borrowed money from a friend of his and started a butcher's shop on the corner of the Elsternwick Market. I don't think it exists now, but it was on the corner of the Elsternwick Market and then he brought another shop down further which was the Victory Meat Supply
- 02:30 and he kicked on from there because the war was on. Before he bought the Victory Meat Supply the war was on, and let's see what happened then? Then June was born. She might have been born at Newport, I'm not sure. June was born and then were Alan, Eric and Ray all born at Caulfield. We had nine children and
- 03:00 the eldest one was working at Myers [department store] in the glove department, and I don't know where she was working. Len was a butcher, and I was the only one that went away after doing my Militia and then I joined the AIF [Australian Imperial Force] when the Japanese came into it, and then let's see.
- 03:30 **During the war where were you stationed?**
- All over the place.
- Name them?**
- Name them? Fisherman's Bend, not in order, Fisherman's Bend, LHQ School of Mechanisation, Maintenance Course at Kooyong Road, South Caulfield,
- 04:00 Bonegilla, Bandiana, a short time at Bacchus Marsh, this was in Victoria, then to Mount Martha, Balcombe, from Balcombe to Rooty Hill in New South Wales. From

04:30 Rooty Hill to Lae, from Lae to Madang, from Madang to Karkar Island to Aitape, from Aitape into the Shropshire and back home. That's all the places that I did.

Did you go to Wewak as well?

Sorry, yes, Wewak. I discharged at Wewak and moved from Aitape down to Wewak

05:00 to be discharged through an occupational release. I wasn't drafted out, I was an occupational release. There was an architect in our unit and he was real crook on me getting my release and he couldn't get one and he was an architect.

What sort of work were you involved in the armed forces?

In the armed forces?

Yeah, the Militia and the AIF?

I was mostly driving and maintenance. I was driving

05:30 and maintenance instructor at Balcombe Army Camp for a while teaching. Oh, that was another thing; I went to the Osborne House School at Geelong for officers. I went for an officer's promotion but I didn't like the idea of that, the way things were being conducted down there.

So you had the potential of becoming an officer?

Yes, I did, but I didn't like the idea of people being bribed.

What do you mean by being bribed?

Oh well,

06:00 in those days silk stockings were hard to get and so was chocolate, and you have a corporal training a major or something and the major wanted to get to a higher position and he would give the corporal some silk stockings for his girl or something and the major would get his promotion. I was a corporal and I was in charge of a private and we both went down there and within a couple of days the private come up to me, and we both in the same sleeping quarters and he came up to me and he said,

06:30 "Jack, I have just got my chit [form] for the officer's uniform. I'm moving out to the officers' quarters." I said, "How the hell can you do that?" And he said, "I've got it, ha ha." and how do you think? He hasn't even done his exams and he's an officer. So I finished up going to dances of night time. I couldn't be bothered studying. I thought to myself what's the good of this, you're suppose to learn how to control men, how to lead men and here's a bloke

07:00 can just go in like that. People's lives are put in his hands. No, that's not for me. I gave that away and anyhow,

Which Militia battalion were you in?

2nd Corps Troops Supply Column.

2nd Corps Troops.

2nd Corps Troops Supply Column, that was the Militia and that was at Fisherman's Bend and that's where I got my non-commissioned stripe,

07:30 NCO [non commissioned officer].

Why did you choose to join that particular unit?

I didn't choose it at all. I was put there. When you go to the drill hall in your civvies [civilian clothes], you go there and they interview you, they find out what your occupation is and so on, and me being a bricklayer, I don't know how it worked out but I finished up in the supply. I didn't mind it and then

08:00 I did my three months and after that was over, back in again. The war was on in earnest and so I was back in it again, the Militia, and I was put to the 2nd CDSC and that broke up, split, and I went with one lot that went to the 16th AASC. I don't know where the other lot went but I went to the 16th AASC which is another

08:30 service corps and it was from that one that I went to the officers' school with the other fellow, I went to the officers' School. I think Captain Mayor was the captain, the CO [commanding officer] at that time, and then back to the 16th and then that split up and my half went to the 151 AGT and I am now in the AIF. I joined the AIF by now because the Japanese were starting to come down

09:00 looking very crook, you know. So I thought I'll have to go and do my bit. A little point at the time, I had a .22 rifle and I said to Jean, and she hates guns, Jean being my wife, and I said, "If the Japanese get down here and come right into Melbourne I want you take this gun and blow Jeanette's

09:30 brains out, (that's my daughter), and yours too." because at this time we were hearing these horrific stories about the atrocities the Japs were doing and I didn't want that to happen to my wife and

daughter, but whether she would have done that I don't know. I think she would have if she was confronted, well if the Japs got into our street sort of thing, but anyhow that was that and thank God it didn't happen.

10:00 **Which AIF unit were you stationed with?**

That's what I was trying to work out. I joined them in the 16th AAC that's when I was transferred to the 151 AGT, Australian General Transport Army, or Army General Transport, and they were the 6th Division just come back from the desert in the Middle East, and of course us not being

10:30 overseas, they've come back, we were looked down on. We were sort of reinforcements, we were reos and it was strange that your own race can look down on you like that, but that happened. We were reos.

You were stationed to go to?

I was stationed at Balcombe.

Were you expecting to go to the Middle East at any stage?

No, not then because the war had finished by that

11:00 time. It was now the Japanese; we had to fight the Japs. The war had finished in Europe at that time, or just about. Anyhow, yeah, it was at the 151 that really a situation took place which I think really saved my life. Having done all this driving and maintenance courses and teaching

11:30 driving and maintenance and so on, this sergeant who will remain nameless, he was giving a talk one day on something or other. We had come back and we had been riding our motorbikes and we had just come back and he started giving a lecture on something or other, and one of the things he lectured on was the maintaining of your bike. One of my pet hates was when you

12:00 have finished riding your bike and you prop it up to park it sort of thing, the last thing you do turn your petrol tap off. Now I looked at his bike and the petrol tap was on, so I just went like that with my foot, just kicked it and shut it, and a couple of my mates saw that and nodded in approval. Anyhow, the next day the sergeant's gone out on his bike

12:30 and we got a notice come back that I was to be put under arrest, and I said, "What for?" And they said, "For sabotaging Sergeant so and so's bike." and I said, "What a lot of crap that is." So I was fronted to the CO and had to explain everything, what I did. I said, "Yes, I pushed the tap off with my foot and

13:00 it was incorrect in leaving it on when it was parked." Anyhow, that didn't hold any water, so I was then placed under guard and taken down to South Melbourne, from Balcombe to South Melbourne and to a general court martial and even though I had witnesses, they just didn't listen. I don't know what it was, but they seemed to have us under the gun, the reos, so much so that this warrant officer who come down with me, we used to call him Luther,

13:30 a bit like Luther in Mandrake [comic strip], so we called him Luther. Anyhow, I was de-ranked from a non-commissioned officer to a sapper and as I walked out here's this Luther standing there with a razor blade ready to cut the stripes off. I thought good luck to him. Anyhow, so then back at the unit I thought this is mad. I couldn't live here now with this crowd the way they are, so I applied for a transfer to forestry.

14:00 So I got the transfer. Now I said earlier this may have saved my life. This is the point, the 151 Unit, the platoon I was in, there was a set of twins in there, I forget their names now but they were twins and we were good mates, all of us in that tent, we were good mates. They went to Port Moresby and they got the hell blown out of them by the Japs

14:30 and the story that I got later, I found out when I was travelling, that one of the twins got hit. The others all nicked off and the twin that was OK came back to the tent to see where his brother was and he saw his legs sticking out from under the tent, so he grabbed his legs to pull him out and that's all he got, his legs. He was blown in half, and I

15:00 got a hell of shock when I heard that. That was my point, if I had stayed in 151 would I have been in that tent? Would I have been blown up? Maybe I would have been the one with my legs blown off? How do you know? I think it was destiny. Thank God for that. Anyhow that was the 151.

What did you do when, there were some aspects of the questions I want to ask you?

15:30 **Can you sort of walk me through the latter stages of the war? So you said you were on Karkar Island, and then was that your last posting, Aitape or Wewak? Wewak, wasn't it?**

No, Aitape was the last posting. Wewak was just disembarking, an embarkation point.

And then you came back to Australia?

Yes.

After the war what did you do?

After the war?

16:00 Immediately after the war?

Yes.

I went back to bricklaying, but first I asked my father hoping he would say come to back into butchering, but I said, "What's the larks dad, what do I do? Do I go back to building or do I come back to butchering?" And he said, "No, you go back to bricklaying. There's money in bricklaying." Today's funny story. Anyhow I went back to bricklaying and

16:30 I stayed for a while with, well AV Jennings [construction firm] got me the occupational lease so I went with AV Jennings and worked for a while with them until I got back into the hang of things then I went out on me own. I became a sub-contractor in bricklaying.

I didn't know that AV Jennings was around then?

Pardon?

AV Jennings was around then?

Oh yes, Albert Jennings, yes.

17:00 I remember Albert and Les Herring was his head bricklayer and I worked under Les. Anyhow, we did a lot of travelling all over the place. We went to different parts of Victoria. It's a great thing

So there was good money in it?

For a person to have a trade like that, a building trade, a carpenter, butcher, carpenter or a painter, bricklayer, whatever,

17:30 you can travel the world with that and I travelled around Victoria. I didn't go interstate I don't think, no, all around Victoria, and did the dairy up in Castlemaine, farmers' cow bales and things in Devenish, Benalla and Korumburra. I did the skim milk place there at Leongatha, and that was a

18:00 shocker there at Leongatha. It rained like mad and it bucketed down, and the rotten thing about this game is under union rules, if you say our week finishes on a Wednesday and you get paid on Thursday, and it rains on the Wednesday and you don't lay a brick, you still get paid for it. Now on the Thursday you get paid and it's raining and the next week you only get paid for that Thursday. You were only working four days. It was stupid. Two days and weekend you lost money.

18:30 Naturally I went bankrupt after that, but that was Korumburra and I did a lot of Housing Commission work in Pines Estate in Frankston, Frankston North, and built the extensions on the

19:00 Moorabbin Hotel. I did a church in Warragul Road near Surry Hills somewhere, and that was a bit of artistic work. That was all archways, semi-elliptical arches and things like that.

You were twenty-five years old when the war finished, 1945? It would have been around then?

Yeah.

Twenty-five. You already had a child, did you?

19:30 I had the daughter then, and then within three years we had the three boys. No, had Heather and then Robert and then Trevor. Yeah, I had the four and we moved to Frankston North in Pines Estate and I told the kids when they moved in, "Now don't get

20:00 too settled here because I am going to build a place down at Rosebud." Well, I'm still in the Pines Estate, I haven't build the house at Rosebud, they are all grown up now and I even have a great grandchild now, so so much for Rosebud. Anyhow, we are still here and we know the neighbours. It is better the dog you know than the dog you don't know.

That's fantastic.

Obviously we will see our lives out here I suppose.

Thank you, that's great. What I want to do

20:30 **is get more detail about your earlier childhood now. You said you grew up in Newport, could you please tell us more about what Newport was like in your childhood days?**

Newport, well, what I can remember about Newport is at the end of North Road there was a sub-station, an electrical sub-station, pumping station which supplied electricity to Melbourne and what have you,

21:00 and as kids we used to go down there and swim in the water coming from the big generators. It was warm and that's why we swam in it. If you get out further in the Yarra [River] it's cold, but we used to swim around there and there was a bit of (UNCLEAR) used to get around there and there was a grille

like that and the water came out from the turbines, otherwise if you go in through there you might get sucked in so

21:30 so we used to swim the other side of the grille. Also at the bottom on North Road there used to be a big rubbish tip and right in the middle was a sort of a hill and in those days kerosene tins were known for kerosene and stuff and oil would be put in these cans, tin things, and they used to be dumped there so we used to cut them up and put wire through the ends, the corners, and

22:00 we'd go up the top of the hill and slide down on these kerosene tins, great fun. At other time we used rubber band with a shanghai [catapult] and shoot, with staples and try and shoot the rats. It was great fun. A bit different from today, and I have already told you I used to walk to the state school three miles and whip behind the baker's cart coming back.

22:30 Many a time I got whacked with a whip.

I'm not sure if you told us that for the camera?

We had a thing with Dad, he was a bit sadistic. I'm going to talk Dad down now. He was a great father but this is one little part of Dad's life which a lot of people would say he was cruel, and he was a bit cruel, but after all I am still alive today

23:00 and it taught me a few lessons, do as you're told, and Dad used to take to work with him the machine strap, a leather strap that goes around a sewing machine, the old Singer sewing machine. It's about a quarter inch in diameter I suppose, and through it a wire goes right through it, and he used to roll this up and put it in his pocket and he would go to work with that, and when he came home if he found us playing out in the street

23:30 after a certain time, out would come the strap and we would be whipped with it. But as soon as we saw Dad come we were in like a shot. Anyhow one day at South Caulfield when we moved there, I got home late, one o'clock in the morning. You don't do that in those days. Twelve o'clock to one, one is the absolute limit. Twelve is the limit, one is the absolute. I came back at one o'clock and I walked in through the gate and

24:00 everything went black. I got a back-hander from the old man. He was standing by the gate watching me walk down the street and he went whack and I just took off and I said, "That's it, I'm off. I'm running away from home." and I just ran down the street with my brother after me, grabbed me and brought me back, and the next thing I'm in the kitchen and Dad is chasing me around and around the kitchen table with this whip and I am as tall as him. I'm only about fifteen or something, or fourteen, and he's chasing me around this

24:30 table and I can see myself doing it now. He said, "I'll teach you to stay out late." and he's waving this thing around and all of a sudden I stopped and I looked at him and I said, "Don't you hit me with that bloody thing again." and he looked at me and he went white and he said, "I'll see you in the morning." I said, "Right." and in the morning from then on not a word was said. He never used that whip again to anybody. I called his bluff, and I carried a welt on my leg for years from the

25:00 whipping I got one day when I was in having a bath, and prior to that I was down the backyard with my sister and I said something about, I said, "Oh shit." to her and she said, "I'm going to tell Dad." and I said, "Don't tell him, don't tell him." I was scared stiff. Anyhow, I had the bath. Dad said go and have your bath and I'm in the next room. The bathroom is there and I'm in the next room. I just had a towel around me and I walked in my bedroom and I just took the towel off and was going to put me pyjamas on and in walks Dad

25:30 and he's got the strap in his hand and I went white, and he lammed into me. He said, "I'll teach you to swear at your sister." and he lammed into me, this is when I carried that welt for years and my mother came in screaming, telling him to lay off, you know, dragged him off me. But he was very sadistic and I will never forget that. But other than that he was a good Dad. He worked hard.

We'll finish the story.

26:00 So anyhow, as I say, he was a good Dad and he supplied us well. What else happened at Newport? Yes, Newport. We used to go to the Empress Theatre of a Saturday afternoon. It cost us threepence. What would that be today? It would be what, three cents I suppose, or two cents, three cents, whatever,

26:30 and we would go to the pictures in the afternoon. We loved to go and see this Tarzan and more of Tarzan and all these, there were all these continuation serials, and Tom Mix [cowboy star] and all this rubbish. We would go and watch them for a threepence and I think for a penny you could buy a whopping big bag of jelly beans. What else was there? There wasn't much else there, and then we moved.

27:00 I think that's about my school days now there, then we moved to South Caulfield and I went to the Caulfield South State School, number 773, and it was there that I saw a girl by the name of Joyce Constable and she couldn't care a hoot about me, but I thought she was a good sort, you know. Anyhow, she learned to play the violin at the school. (UNCLEAR) chaps would come around there of a Wednesday after school or Thursday after school

27:30 and he would spend an hour there and you'd pay a shilling or something to learn the violin. So I thought well, I will go there and learn the violin and be close to Joyce Constable. So I learnt the violin and she left and I kept on going and my mother encouraged me a lot. My eldest brother, Watson, played the piano and whenever he was playing the piano and he was playing some tune I could play, I'd come in and I would start to play it and he would walk out. He just wouldn't back me at all.

28:00 But Mum would come back in and say, "Come on Jack, come back in. I'll play it for you." So she'd play and then we'd play "In a Persian Market" and "Melody in F" and all that sort of stuff, and then this Herbert C Wilson was the fellow that used to teach us and he had a big symphony orchestra in the Exhibition Buildings every Saturday afternoon. So Mum used to take me in the tram, in short pants in those days, I was a kid, and Mum used to take me into the Exhibition

28:30 Buildings and I'd play my section of whatever I had to play and it was great fun playing with all these people at that place, and all these violas and what have you. It was a good time and Mum spent every Saturday afternoon taking us up there. It was great. I don't think it was every Saturday, it may have been once a month, but from the

29:00 violin I went on to the mandolin and he banjo mandolin, which I play now, and jumping ahead I have played the banjo mandolin on Red Faces [television talent show] and got \$250 out of that. I ran second.

Do you still play these instruments now?

Yes.

Do you remember any of the songs or tracks or whatever you would do in those days?

Well, on the violin I used to play "In a Persian Market." and "Melody in F" and

29:30 (UNCLEAR) and (UNCLEAR) memories and the "Blue Danube Waltz" and all that stuff. But as far as the banjo mandolin was concerned on the Red Faces I played "Under the Double Eagle" and I play by ear now as far as the banjo mandolin is concerned.

30:00 I gave the violin away a few years back I just couldn't get the, I seemed to have lost it. I was alright in an orchestra because you get covered up with that. If I made a mistake in that at the Exhibition Buildings, he'd stop, he'd stop the playing and they would pick you out and you feel as small as a threepence and he would tell you where you went wrong, "Go back to bar so and so. No, so and so, that was a sharp, not a flat." you know.

30:30 So anyhow, you would have to go back and play it all again. But then later on just playing around the house and so on. I used to play at the church, Mum would play the organ and I would play the violin.

Did you ever play these in the army?

No. I took a little banjo ukulele with me, a little fellow, and I had that on the train on the way up to Townsville to get off to New Guinea. I could muck around with that and get a tune out

31:00 it. I think I sold it up there. I'd sell anything. As the wife says, if she stood still for long enough I would sell her.

Now what about Newport? Newport was a working class area and has been...?

Yes. That was where the railway workshops were and many a time we would go over there and

31:30 fossick around and try and find the big magnifying glasses that come out of the steam trains, their lights, and sometimes if they get chipped they would get thrown out and we would find them and get these things and look at the papers and read to bring the small print up, or put a torch through it and it shines. I remember one day we had at the back of our place at North Road, Newport, there was

32:00 straight out the back door there was another door which led into a sort of a stable with a loft and Dad transferred the stable to a bedroom, a sort of a sleepout, so my brother and I slept out there, Len, my brother and myself slept in the sleepout, and I was only a little kid then and this particular day I went to bed early, but Len hadn't turned up and I don't know where he was but he came in the door and I had just got off to bed

32:30 and it was all dark and then the door opened and this walks in and he's got a torch in his mouth and he was going, and I could see this ghostly figure coming towards me with a red torch in his mouth and I screamed, I went right off. It was this idiot brother of mine with a torch in his mouth scaring the day lights out of me, I think I might have wet the bed I was that frightened.

Tell us

33:00 **about your family, more specifically like their background? Your father, was he...**

He was a Yorkshireman.

A Yorkshireman. OK, so he was actually born in England?

Yes, and my mother was a Lancashire girl.

I see. Can you tell us about their history and how they came to Australia and their background?

My mother was over in New Zealand with her mother, my grandmother. They had opened a, they had a boarding house there in

- 33:30 Christchurch I think it was. No, wait on, it wasn't Christchurch. No, it was the North Island, it must have been Wellington, Lower Hutt, somewhere up there anyhow. They had this boarding house and then of course Dad went over to New Zealand looking for work as a slaughterman and he got work there and of course he went to this boarding house and stayed there and fell in love with the boarding house-keeper's daughter,
- 34:00 my mother, and they had Watson. They got married of course, then they had Watson, I think Essie might have been born there too, and then Dad had a call to go, (UNCLEAR) was in New Zealand and (UNCLEAR) was opening up over in Spotswood in Victoria in Melbourne, so they transferred him over there as the manager slaughterman to open up there. So he went over there and of course Mum and the two came with him
- 34:30 and that's how they come to say in North Road, Newport. Watson, the eldest boy who is now eighty-eight, and he is finding it very hard to get around. He has a pacemaker and he has had a pretty tough life. He used to work, as I mentioned before, in the glove department at Myers and that was in the basement, and of course breathing the air, there was no air-conditioning
- 35:00 in those days and he used to walk over crunched up. He never used to expand his lungs at all, and his mates said would he come out horse riding one day, so they went horse riding and the horse started to bolt a bit and he tried to pull him up and by the exertion he tore his lung away from his rib cage. Not having the exercise, it had grown to his rib cage and he tore it open which is known as pneumothorax
- 35:30 and he was walking down the passageway in our house in Pine Street, and Dad had gone to bed and I had just come out of the lounge room and Watson was walking down and he was hanging on, trying to support himself along the wall to the bedroom trying to get to Dad. So I raced into Dad and said, "There's something wrong with Watson." and he was bleeding from the mouth. They raced him off to hospital
- 36:00 and that's when they found out that he had this tear in his lung, pneumothorax. He was there for quite a long while, so he more or less had lung trouble all his life from then on. He has weak lungs. He never did any really hard work. He was a butcher himself later, he took on butchering and he worked in Dad's shop at the corner of the market and then he had a shop of his own across the road from there.
- 36:30 Anyhow they are all gone now those shops.

Did your relatives, like did your father have brothers?

Yes.

And your mother?

They were in Te Awamutu in New Zealand. Uncle Sylvester, he has passed on now and a cousin from him, his son, he's gone and all of them have gone I think.

Did any of them

- 37:00 **actually serve in the First World War?**

Yes, Jack did. Not me, but me Uncle Jack, cousin Jack, sorry. My cousin.

Tape 2

- 00:30 **OK, we were talking about your relatives, your uncles being in the First World War. You said there was an Uncle Jack?**

Yeah, but I don't know much them though. I don't know much about Dad's brothers. Only Sylvester who was from Te Awamutu, he come over and visited us.

Uncle Sylvester?

Yeah, but I just, I'm lost with some of them. One,

- 01:00 my grandfather was called Atey. I don't know what his first name was. We always called him Atey, and grandma, Grandma Atey. They are both gone but they used to be pretty regular visitors from New Zealand, and we had another cousin, I can't think of her name now, but she lived in Lower Hutt. My wife and I went over to New Zealand when her
- 01:30 mother died. She inherited some money from her mum and we went over to New Zealand and this

cousin was a funny person. She used to smoke a pipe. Only a young person, but not cigarettes, she'd smoke a pipe or cigars, but never cigarettes, and she had all these plates. You would go up the stairs and all along the wall were these plates stuck on the wall, different plates. Funny ideas that people have got, but

02:00 anyhow

So you can't remember any of the relatives who were veterans?

My cousin, what was his name? Another New Zealander, a cousin, a younger person, he was in the Merchant Navy.

In World War I?

No, World War II.

I'm actually meaning World War I?

World War I, no, I don't know much about them, not really.

What about Uncle Sylvester?

I don't know much about him. He has a farm in Te Awamutu.

That's

02:30 **all you knew?**

All I knew about him.

So why didn't your father take part in the war?

He was too old. What, in the First World War?

Yeah.

I don't know. He was probably over in New Zealand by then. He might have gone over there to dip out. I don't know.

He never mentioned anything about wanting to serve in the First World War?

No, no.

Did you find that unusual at the time, considering so many people had?

No, Uncle Jack went, was in uniform.

03:00 I think there was another one, I'm not sure, Horatio. The one about Horatio, he used to be a dapper sort of a fellow. I did hear about him. He was one of these fellows who used to walk along Brighton Le Sands or something and he would have a boater on and his striped jacket and swinging the cane like Charlie Chaplin. They reckon he was one for the girls or something. That's all I know about him.

03:30 No, nothing at all about them. I know Mum comes from Lancashire, but where I don't know. Dad comes from Brandon in Yorkshire.

Did he have quite an English type accent, your father?

For a start he did, but he lost it a bit though. When you get amongst slaughtermen you'd soon lose it, wouldn't you, Australian

04:00 slaughtermen? He didn't swear.

Your father didn't swear?

No, but he would be amongst the language there with slaughterman, but he didn't swear. He didn't go to church. The church roof would fall in if he went to church, but he made we all went. Mum went to church regularly.

You would have been Protestants?

Yes. At Newport our house went from North Road to Davies Street.

04:30 It went right through and our backyard, you could walk out on to Davies Street and just a few steps along you were on the other side in Davies Street where there was a place called the UFS Dispensary. That is like what we call them pharmacies now, but it was the UFS Dispensary, the United Fellowship or something or other, a dispensary of medicines. Anyhow, they had a hall there and that's where we used to go to church and Sunday School. That was at Newport. At Caulfield we went to the Bamborough Road

05:00 Church of Christ. Yes, until I met me wife who was there and things changed a bit quite a lot, but as far as the old folk are concerned I can't help you much there at all. Next question?

The Depression years, how did your family handle the Depression years?

Well, that was Dad again in the Depression at Newport in

- 05:30 the '30s. Yes, I'm glad you brought that one up. Aunt Violet, she came over from England. She was a World War I nurse, and excuse the expression, what a bitch she was. My brother, Len, was riding his bike around Williamstown State School and he slipped and hit his head on the corner of the brickwork and split his head open, so they brought him to the doctors and he got all
- 06:00 strapped up and he came back home to North Road, Newport, brought him back here, and who's there? Aunt Violet, and she said, "What have you been up to? Being stupid again I suppose. Give us a look at it." and whipped it off and he just went, "Ahhhh." Here is this big gash in his head. An old ex-army nurse, hey. She was a real tyrant and she had Dad bluffed, her brother.

What do you mean she had

- 06:30 **your dad bluffed?**

She dictated to him. She was there on a visit but she was going to straighten us all out including Dad and she did.

How did your father react to her?

He accepted it, but he wouldn't just wash dishes though, but he used to in the background. He never chastised us at all. He had nothing to do with us. He just kept in the background. Every night our lives were regimented.

- 07:00 We would come home from school and we had to be in by a certain time. My job was to chop the kindling wood and get it ready to light the fire the next morning, every day. The girls had their jobs, we all had jobs to do and when we had done that we had our tea and I think that Mum and Dad would wash up then while we all sat around a big table with Aunt Violet there with all our little pieces of cloth, cotton cloths about six inches square.
- 07:30 During the day Aunt Violet was cutting up Dad's old trousers into squares and this is during the Depression and then she would read a chapter out of a book called "William", not William the Conqueror but William is a schoolboy in some school, Eton or something in England, and there would be a story about him, "William", "More William", "William In Trouble" and all this sort of series like a Harry Potter thing, and we used to get wrapped in this
- 08:00 waiting for the next night, what's going to happen in the next chapter, but while we were listening to this, her reading it out, we were teasing this material, pulling it, taking bits and pieces off until we had a little bundle of cotton, and each one has got this bundle, and when she was finished the chapter and our bundles were finished, she'd say, "Righto, off to bed." and we would go off to bed and then the next day she was busy putting all this stuff and making pin cushions. Then on
- 08:30 the weekend she would go around to houses selling pin cushions, this was during the Depression to try and bring money in. So that's why Dad didn't say a word against her because she was pulling her weight. So, except she was a callous nurse. I'd hate to have her looking after me.

Why do you think she was like that,

- 09:00 **she was so authoritarian?**

Probably got it through the army, through being a nurse. They were pretty strict over there in England during the war. You had to do as you were told or else which is completely different today. It makes we weep sometimes to see the things these kids are getting away with. That's another story.

- 09:30 I've had an interesting life overall, a bit of everything.

OK, so your family had it pretty tough during the Depression, tell us about for instance, I know a lot of people would go hunting for rabbits. Rabbits apparently had a very central role for a lot of people?

Oh yes, well.

Your father was working in a slaughterhouse?

We didn't have to worry about food that way.

So food was always

- 10:00 **there?**

Yeah. One day he come home and said there was a big thing in the paper that measles had got to the sheep. You can't eat the meat because it was crook or it would be bad for you or something, and this rumour got around in the paper and Dad come home one weekend and brought home a roast lamb and put it on and it was Sunday lunch, Sunday dinner, and we had finished it all and it was beautiful lamb too, and he said, "Alright,

10:30 you've had your lamb and your roast potatoes, how was the lamb?" Everybody said, "It was good great." "Are you sure?" We said "Yeah, it was beautiful. Why?" He said, "That's the one that's suppose to have measles in it. There is no such thing. The rumour got around it had measles in it, no, not there. You can't believe everything you read in the paper."

It was found it be untrue?

Yeah.

So would your father also distribute the meat?

He was an inspector, meat inspector.

11:00 **Your father?**

Yeah, at the shop at the Elsternwick Market. This meat lumper brought in a hindquarter and he hooked it up on the hook and Dad said, "Hey, hey, hey, just a minute, hang on." He said, "You can take that back." and he said, "Why, what's wrong with it?" "I'll tell you what's wrong." and he cut into the thigh and all this green pus came out and he said, "That's why."

Your dad was an expert.

It was a cyst. He said, "There was a cyst in there." He could see it straight away

11:30 I didn't see it but he knew that it was there. So that was his job as well.

Did you visit your dad at work?

I worked with him. He taught me butchering and I left him and went to another butcher and he taught me more than what Dad showed me. That's when I met Jean and then upset the apple cart. I became a bricklayer overnight because her father was a bricklayer, I did the right thing, a bit sweet with my

12:00 future father-in-law.

So you said that your father pushed you into bricklaying. He said that's more for you? Is that what you really wanted to do though?

Well, that's what I knew. Actually I think bricklaying was much better.

Were there any other aspirations that you had?

I wanted to be a complete builder, you know, build a whole house but I never had the finance to do that.

12:30 Now I have a certificate of supervisory from the Masters Builders' Association. I am a supervisor though I don't act as one now.

But before you said that because you had a fairly regular supply of meat with your father working there, that really helped. What about your neighbours, did they have problems during

13:00 **the Depression? Did you father help them out in that way?**

Well, he could have. I wouldn't know. I know he has helped people in the past. He helped a lot of people, but he was the type of person that doesn't go about bragging about it. He just does it and that's it. If he knows of a case where the people were starving he would go out of his way and just drop it on the door step and walk away. He didn't look for any accolades.

13:30 **What were the worst aspects of the Depression that you remember seeing or experiencing?**

Oh, so many people out of work. My Dad was lucky. No, there was a terrible amount of people out of work and like I say, one of me aunties selling pin cushions. Other people

14:00 were, there was a Chinese person who used to come around every so often and he would bring these bags of tea with him in a horse and cart and he would come around with this tea every fortnight or so and he would sell Mum this tea for a certain amount and he used to give us liquorice. It was liquorice I think. Yes, cut up bits of liquorice and give it to the kids to keep sweet with us. And

14:30 old Maggie Horner had a little shop down the road from us. She had a little fruit shop cum milk bar cum everything. She was finding it hard, but she used to give a lot of credit to people because they never had the money and would pay when they could. She missed out on quite a few but she struggled through. No, of course that was the aftermath of the First World War and after the Second World War

15:00 we had a bit of slump too, but not for long though, thank goodness.

Do you remember seeing a lot of sussos [people on sustenance - the dole]?

Not really, I was only a little kid then. It didn't make much sense to me. I was just throwing my mind back to a few little things; I can't really remember any sustenance lines. There probably would have been in Spotswood but we never used to go to, I used to go to

- 15:30 Yarraville I think, Spotswood or Yarraville, somebody we used to call an aunty. She wasn't really an aunty. We used to call her aunty. She was just a friend of Mum's and she really took a liking to me and I took a liking to her and I used to feed her. My sister was going to go up there with another friend to this aunty's place and I wanted to go and they said, "No, you can't go." anyway they took off
- 16:00 and I was about half a mile behind them, but I still went, and the aunty you know welcomed me but the kids went crook at me and told Mum and Dad. "Don't do that again Jack. Only go when you are asked." "OK." That's another but.

Would sustenance workers actually come and knock on the doors and things like that?

They would come and ask if they could do any jobs for you.

Did they knock on your house?

- 16:30 **"No, no, we've got our sons to do work, thanks." No, that doesn't happen, we didn't take anybody in like that, but they did knock on the door. Can we move away from that?**

Yeah, sure.

I think I've just about gone over everything at Newport.

- 17:00 Nothing much else there.

Tell me about your schooling as well?

What, at Newport?

Yeah.

There wasn't much there really. I couldn't tell you much about that. I don't remember much about that really. Only that I walked three miles there and three miles back and got whipped behind the baker's cart and that's about it, full stop. We used to go down the pumps and swim down there and that sort of stuff.

Was Newport predominantly a

- 17:30 **a Protestant area or was it mixed with Catholics?**

Oh no, it was mixed.

Very mixed?

Yes.

So at school what sort of traditions did they pass on?

We had religious instruction there. We had the Protestants would have their little bit and the Catholics would have theirs too another day. Yeah, that was all right. Oh, the Williamstown Butts, the rifle range, occasionally we'd go down there and dig the lead out when there was nobody shooting

- 18:00 at us, dig the lead out of the thing and take it back to the metal buyer and sell that. Williamstown Race Course? No, I have never been there but there was a Williamstown Race Course. That's about it, all I appeared to have done. I hadn't danced yet. I didn't dance till I came over to Caulfield. So we moved off to South Caulfield and
- 18:30 Dad had a delivery bike. I had to do the deliveries and we had a fellow, another chap who used to work for Dad, his name was Tammy, a little baldy-headed fellow, a bit of a character. Anyhow he used to do the deliveries on the bike and Dad wanted him in the shop and I was going to do the deliveries, so Tammy said to me one day, "Jack, when you go to Miss Ames' place
- 19:00 don't ride your bike." He said, "Leave your bike at the gate and walk down the driveway and go around the corner underneath the clothesline and after that you can go back, get your bike and ride it down the sideway and make a lot of noise and yell out 'butcher'." What happened, I went down this day and she only used to order one or two chops and I had to deliver it all the way from Elsternwick, so
- 19:30 anyhow I went down and put the bike at the gate and it was a sunny day and I tippy-toed down the drive and I looked underneath the clothesline and she was stark naked having a sun bathe and I thought, oh wow. I was only a kid, so I go back up again and I get the bike and come down, didn't look at her and went around and said, "Butcher", knocked on the door and she said, "Here I am, Butcher." and I thought oh hell, and I looked around and she was standing there with a towel in front of her
- 20:00 and she said, "Leave it on the shelf and I will fix you up later." "OK, thanks Miss Ames." and I took off and I went back and told Tammy and he said, "I told you so." and I said, "No, not again." Dad said, "No, it's not worth it." Not because of that but just for two chops to go all the way from Elsternwick, no. We didn't deliver there anymore.

Were you a bit upset about that, not going back?

No. So then

- 20:30 we used to go to Sunday School at the Bamborough Church of Christ and I saw Jean there a few times but one day I'm riding this bike with a little wheel on the front doing deliveries and I had done the deliveries and I'm pushing this bike and I got my head down and I'm pushing away and I saw these two girls and I went like this and the next thing, bang, I was stuck between the mud guard and the car. There was a stationary car there and in those days the
- 21:00 mud guards were a little bit away from the body and I'm going bang, and I'm standing there. I didn't fall over, I just stood there like that and I looked at the girls and they laughing their heads off at me. I was making a fool of myself. That was really an introduction because at the next Sunday School I started talking to Jean. I was flicking elastic bands at her in the church to make her look around.

In church?

Yeah. Another time I was playing the violin and I could see her sitting there with a few boys and

- 21:30 I thought, this is no good, so I gave that away and sat up there with her. She only used to live in the next street so I used to walk her home from there. Yeah, we used to have walks. Every Friday night we used to walk down to Elsternwick and back, just window-shopping. It was just a night out. There wasn't much to do and there was no television in those days. Yes, so then we started,
- 22:00 we played tennis. We started to learn to play tennis and that's when I left Sunday School and we used to play tennis on a Sunday afternoon and we used to go to Caulfield Town Hall for community singing of a Sunday afternoon some other times and I used to play the violin down at the 4th Caulfield Scout Hall where the elderly people would play euchre, a card game, and after the euchre they would have a dance and that's when I played
- 22:30 the drums and you'd watch them play the piano, and my mother would play the piano, either one, and yes, so then I gave the drums away and just Mum played the piano because I wanted to learn how to dance. Mrs Fawcett, that's her name, the old dear, she was the woman who first taught me to dance and she taught me to waltz
- 23:00 and she had me standing there with her and she just said, "One, two, three." with the steps, like that, one, two, three, and as you are doing it just turn one, two, three, one, two, three in a circle and I did that. With my big clod hoppers I started getting around. Anyhow, I finally got the beat and it clicked straight away and before long I was waltzing, doing circular waltzes
- 23:30 and then as time went on I was doing Fox Trots that sort of thing, then Jean and I started doing it and we went dancing everywhere. We didn't go to a school and learn, we just picked it up and over the years and we have been dancing and dancing, and to jump the gun when we moved here, we were going to start a dance over at the local hall
- 24:00 and something happened, we missed out on the hall so I got the Seaford Hall for nothing, to run a dance with the Senior Citizens Club down there and we started a dance at the Seaford Hall and we finished up getting about eighty odd people turning up coming from all around Melbourne. I wasn't teaching them but we had a teacher there and he supplied the music and it was a terrific dance and we raised the first year about eighteen hundred dollars for the local Senior Citizens and
- 24:30 two thousand the next year, but the Senior Citizens mucked it up interfering. Anyhow, that is another story.

Now when you were in Caulfield what year did you move to Caulfield from Newport?

Well I don't know. I would have to try and guess that one.

It was before the war of course, yes?

That would be roughly what? I think I was twelve or thirteen

- 25:00 about '34, about fourteen, yeah, about 1933. I am trying to work this out, 1932 or '33 because I learned to play the drums at South Caulfield School
- 25:30 and the Duke of Gloucester came out on a visit and all the schools of Victoria, state schools of Victoria, their drummers met at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, the MCG. I was the drum major because I was the tallest. Me in this busby hat and a mace, black
- 26:00 busby hat, yellow jacket crossed with white arm bands, red trousers with a black stripe down each side, a red mace with a gold top, and here I am marching into the MCG with all these kids behind me swinging the mace and the Duke of Gloucester stood up and I was putting on an big act for him
- 26:30 and dropped the mace, didn't I? But he had turned his back; he was on his way to have his lunch. But as I dropped the mace I went down with it and picked it up and made it part of the act. I was disappointed that he went and had his lunch and didn't bother to watch us, and then later on we went to the Carlton grounds for a special day. Another day we went to the Carlton grounds, the footy ground, and put on a turn, and when I had finished I gave the busby hat back to the band master

27:00 and I left the uniform with a fellow on the gate and said, "Can you look after this for me until I come back?" It was in a box, and when I went back there was no sign of him or the uniform. It was gone; I don't know where it went to from that day to this. That was in 1933. What else happened there?

What was the difference between

27:30 **areas like Caulfield and Newport?**

Oh, Caulfield was more up-beat.

Right, more of a middle class sort of suburb?

Yeah.

What did you see the difference in people? Can you explain that to us, in their attitudes and views and things like that?

Attitudes, not really, not much difference that way. It was just the environment was different, and

28:00 North Road was a main road. It used to take us down to the punt and across the river into Fisherman's Bend and off into Melbourne but the other way never had a bridge over it and you had to go right around these rough roads. Now of course the Westgate Bridge is there, but that was a pretty busy road and there was smoke everywhere all the time with factories and so on, and smell

28:30 and the earth around there was like volcanic. When it got wet it was like chewing gum, black chewing gum. Whereas over in Caulfield it was a bit sandy, a bit clay. Sandy for a certain distance and then the clay. Here in Frankston it is sand until you hit water, so that is the difference between the three places as far as the earth was concerned.

29:00 Newport had the plastic factory, the shipping at Williamstown. Caulfield was a little bit up-beat from Newport, bigger houses.

Did you like Caulfield, you liked it?

Oh yes, why not? I met my girl, didn't I?

29:30 **How did your father manage to move? He had to borrow some money, did he, to move?**

Yes, he borrowed some money from a friend of his, Mr Dakin, and he paid it back with interest and all that.

It's interesting, that's not very common?

No, it's not.

Why did he choose to move?

Dad was a genuine man in that way where money was concerned. He wouldn't take you

30:00 down that way, but if he was doing business with you, business was business, and once your business was finished you would go on to something else, go and play cards. He used to play his cards and he used to like backing race horses too. That's what used to happen. He had a friend over there at Newport, a Mr Lewis, Tom Lewis and I used to call him Uncle Tom and I thought the world of him and he thought the world of me and we both sort of,

30:30 where Dad would rubbish me Tom would praise me and that is why I liked him. One particular case was, I built before I was a professional bricklayer I built a sleepout at South Caulfield onto the house and I built it out of bricks. The foundation was all half bricks. I got a big truck load of all half bricks and I put them all down and grouted them all in about that thick and so wide,

31:00 and then I built the brick work on top of that and built this sleepout and wash house. There was the kitchen there, then the wash house and then the sleepout all under the one roof. Anyhow Uncle Tom turned up to go to the races with Dad because every time the races were on at Caulfield Uncle Tom would come over and stay for lunch then they would both go over to Caulfield for the races and then Tom would go off on the train to Caulfield back home, and Dad would walk home. It's not far to walk. So,

31:30 he said, "Come here, Tom, and have a look at this sleepout that Jack's just built." and Tom said, "Yeah, it's quite nice. It's good, good on you Jack." and Dad said, "Yeah, but look at the size of the foundations, big enough to build St Paul's Cathedral." and Uncle Tom said, "Well Arthur, at least it is going to stay for ever, isn't it?" And he said, "No, it's a good job, Jack." and I thought well phew, big head.

32:00 So that's old Uncle Tom and they used to go off to the Caulfield races because that was his mate.

So with politics at least, now with the lead up to the war in the '30s, were you politically aware about what was happening around the world?

Oh yes. The

- 32:30 newspapers let us know that. A lot of propaganda went on and they had to sell it and they had to get men to get into uniform, but when I was called up for the Militia for the first time we were down at Fisherman's Bend and we weren't in uniform. We were just in civilian suits and we never had any rifles, we had broom sticks. We had boots; they issued us with army boots to march. We never had any
- 33:00 uniforms, we never had any hats, and as I say, we used broom sticks for sloping arms and what have you. Later on we got the rifles.
- Was your father a political man, was he aware of what was happening? Did he read the newspaper all the time?**
- Oh yeah.
- He did?**
- He was upward that way, yeah.
- So was he more Labor inclined in his politics, Labor Party?**
- I don't think so. I think he was more Liberal. I don't know how he voted, but I think he would be a bit more Liberal.
- Did he ever speak to you about**
- 33:30 **politics?**
- Not really, no. We weren't interested, not at that age. We were only interested in girls.
- In girls?**
- Yeah, girls and dancing and swimming and mucking around like the kids do today.
- What about your mother, did she speak to you much about politics and things like that?**
- No, no. We worked it out ourselves later on. You know in your own mind what and who
- 34:00 who you are going to vote for, and you know what religion you want to be and all the rest of it.
- Did you hear about the Spanish Civil War in the late '30's?**
- Oh vaguely, knew there was a war on there. General Franco and all that sort of stuff.
- And about Communism?**
- Oh yes, we soon learned about that one. Mr Menzies [prime minister] soon put us right there, didn't he, with the White Australia
- 34:30 Policy.
- That was another thing that I wanted to talk to you about as well, the White Australia Policy, but when did Robert Menzies start talking about Communism? Was it before the Second World War?**
- Oh yeah.
- Did you see Communism as a bad thing or a good thing?**
- As a threat.
- You saw it as a threat?**
- Yeah.
- Why did you see it as a threat?**
- Well, that's the way it was portrayed to us in the papers. The Bear of the North is going to invade
- 35:00 the south and all that sort of rubbish.
- What about the Communists in Australia, like the trade unions and so forth?**
- They didn't help either with their striking and one thing and another, and waving the Red flag and thugs. You get nowhere with that stuff.
- So they were seen as thugs?**
- Oh yes. Don't get into politics, get off that. Religion and politics are two bad subjects.
- 35:30 **What about the other one?**
- What, religion?

No, there are three bad subjects supposedly not to speak about for soldiers. That's politics, religion and sex.

And sex, yeah, I can tell you now about sex. As far as I'm concerned now, why? Because I have had prostate cancer and I have been de-nutted. Sorry, cancel that, castrated. I have no desire whatsoever. In fact when I see

36:00 this rubbish on TV it makes me feel sick. I am sick of it, all this distorting and cavorting about, it's stupid. There is this young sheila now, what's her name, the one that's over in England? The one that's over in England singing?

Kylie Minogue [Australian entertainer]?

Yes, showing her backside. Who wants to see that? You see plenty of that

36:30 in the abattoirs.

Rump. So yes, your understanding of Empire, what did Empire mean to you?

Empire was royalty, was the Kings and Queens that ruled the British Commonwealth of Nations, and we are getting around to the republic, are we? Do I agree with the republic or do I agree with royalty?

37:00 Well judging by other countries that have been republics there is always a lot of strife in it. There seems to be strife all the time when they are republics, so I am inclined to think maybe we should stick with royalty, even though they are going stupid now the way they are carrying on with this Camilla Bowles [wife of Prince Charles] and that rubbish. I don't think our present Prince Charles

37:30 would make a good leader and I don't think the kids are being taught the right way to look after the country. They want more discipline they have too much leeway, too much loose end at the moment. They should be straightened out.

So you like the Empire?

I think so.

What it stood for?

Yeah.

What did it stand for, for you?

Democracy, and unfortunately our country is not so democrat. I got real crook the other day

38:00 when the Muslim fellow wanted to have a prayer in Council. I thought what the hell is this country coming to? What did I spend all those years overseas for? If I had been in the infantry again and this sort of thing again I would go real mad, putting my life on the line to have democracy here in this country and this twit stands up and wants to Muslimise Australia. That's what it looks like to me. There is too much

38:30 religious interference in politics.

What do you mean? Did he want to put up a mosque or something?

No, he wanted to do a Muslim prayer. I think you should cut the prayers out of Council completely and get on with the job they are there for. But no, I am back on religion again and I shouldn't. I'm afraid this country is going to the dogs fast that way. If this thing gets out and anybody who is watching it

39:00 I think it is a case of when in Rome do as Rome does. If you come to this country as an immigrant to Australia you should toe the line with Australian rules and regulations. Don't try and push it down our necks what you would like to do, what your religion is, and don't try and push your religion. If you want to have your religion have it, but just keep it there. Yours over there and yours there. Don't

39:30 try and take over the whole lot. That's the trouble with all this terrorism today. It's mad, mad, mad.

So you have found that multiculturalism is something that you are not in agreement with?

Not to that extent. Look, I will put it another way. You come to Australia

40:00 but you have applied to come here, you come through the regulations, the medical stuff and everything else. Therefore we accept you as a migrant as in your case. You come here from India, we accept you because you have gone through all that, but I do not want these people who come out in boats in the back door. No, straight back. Turn your boat around, here is some petrol, and get off back. Don't even

40:30 put them on Christmas Island. To hell with that, you go back. You are deserting your country anyhow. If you want to come here and there is no embassy in your country, go to the next country where there is an embassy and get permission to come to Australia. Then we will accept you. We will look after you and do everything for you, but not these back door people.

Do you think John Howard [prime minister] is doing the right thing at the moment in that

regard with immigration?

No, no.

You're not happy with him?

He's molly-coddling them too much.

41:00 There are too many do-gooders around for a starter. They say, "Oh, they are human beings." blah blah blah. Of course they are human beings. They should know this before they leave, and if Australia turns around and lets the world know they are not going to stand any more damn nonsense, that's it, full stop. If you want to come here do it the right way, and if they haven't got an embassy

41:30 and they want an embassy, send one over there.

Tape 3

00:35 **OK, I just wanted to ask you now when your father was working as a slaughterman, what did you think of that? Were you proud of your father, did you think that was a good job?**

Always been proud of him,

01:00 except when he belted the day lights out of me but otherwise I've always been proud of him.

Did you ever go down to the slaughterhouse?

Yes, I've been in to see the kosher killing, the Jewish way of doing it. Actually it was a good initiation.

That was in Caulfield?

Yes, that's right, when I was in Caulfield. I was butchering then of course, yes. He went in there one day and called me over

01:30 and he said, "Do you want to see the kosher killing." and I said, "All right." Yeah, it's a funny way of killing a beast.

How is it different?

Well, the normal thing I have seen them do, how our beef was done, I don't know what it is like now, but it used to be done with a bolt. The animal would be driven into a race

02:00 and he can't go anywhere and the only thing that he can see is a hole in front of him, so he sticks his head in there and the moment he does that they clamp him down. Oh sorry, this is not kosher killing. I'll do the kosher killing first. They bring the animal into this race but it is on an angle like that with a floor and a roof, and the animal goes in and the only thing that he can see is daylight and he puts his head through and the moment that he does they put

02:30 things around him so that he can't move his head. Then all around that thing is pipes and it is oil, hot oil and that makes the animal's blood warm and thins out and hot, and the whole thing is turned over like that so the thing is upside down and his head is laying back.

03:00 then this little Jew fellow comes along with his little black hat on and a great big stainless steel knife about that long, the blade, and he just passes through rites over the animal and goes whoosh like that across the throat and stands back, and blood gushes everywhere and he walks away and then another chap walks in with a sort of a pick and he crushes the animal's skull. Now that's shocking in my book, he is not dead when his throat is cut,

03:30 his mind is still there and that's why he steps in with a pick and he must be going through hell. Whereas our way is a similar thing but no turning over, he just walks straight in and a fellow stands astride on a platform and he taps the head until he keeps throwing his head up like that and eventually he hits him with a pick and if you hit him in the right spot, out like a light and that's it.

04:00 Or they use a bolt a shot where it is shot, where it is not a bullet. It is a bolt and it sort of goes in like that, put to his head and the bolt goes in and hits the brain and that's the end of him. I didn't see the pigs but I believe they are given an electric shock on the head first and then they cut their throats.

So the hot oil, it's in tubes?

Jewish people don't like

04:30 much blood at all. I don't know why they don't eat veal, but they get rid of all the blood that way while it's hot. It takes it right out and that's why they do that, it's in their religion. Back to religion again.

In Newport you went to the slaughterhouse there?

No, no. I was too young then.

05:00 **The first time that you went did you feel revolted?**

Yes, I did but you get used to it. I went there one day, I went to borrow the van during my bricklaying career, and I wanted to borrow the van and Dad said, "I've got to pick some offal up and then you can have the van." and I said, "I will pick the offal up for you." He said, "Alright." So I went there and

05:30 the fellow said, "Well there's your dad's stuff now. We haven't killed it yet." I'm catching hearts that are still hot that have been beating in the beasts' chests and I'm catching hearts and putting them in a bucket, oh dear, and the livers and lots of stuff. So that day, I had had trouble with my back before this in the army, which I haven't got around to that yet, but I did damage me back in the army

06:00 and it went again this particular day and me back was going quite a lot. This day I did a stupid thing and I picked up this big round drum of offal and I was going to put it in the back of the van but instead of going like that I had to go like that, instead of walking around and putting it in I went like that and, "Ahhh." away went the old back, so I was three weeks off work and this used to happen quite a lot

06:30 because I've got arthritis of the spine or lumbar spondylitis with disc degeneration and the disc is, the number one is worn right out and this happened when I went to lift up a milk can in the army, taking milk cans off the back of a truck. There were two of us doing it and they were all empty except the one that I went to go for and I picked the empty ones up and took them down to the end so that the fellows are carting them away, and I

07:00 went to get this one and I picked it up like a normal one but it was full of water and away went the back and that was the start of it. I crawled off the back of the truck and we had been on bivouac and this Captain Hunt, I think his name was, he said, "You are a bloody malingerer, Verity. Put your pack on and march back with the rest of them." So I thought all right, I will, and it was bloody agony all the way and for a fortnight after that I was under lamps, normal,

07:30 the old heat lamps weren't in in those days. So we had to get a big bank of globes and they put them over your back to heat you up, but I was there for a fortnight taking tablets and stuff.

Did you have to lie down for hours at a time under the lamps?

Oh yeah, shocking. Those things can happen so easy and they said they were empty and they were empty except one.

08:00 Why, I don't know.

Your mother being from New Zealand, did she talk to you much about New Zealand?

No. My father really, he used to recite the Maori Haka, the war chant, "Kamati kamati, kara kara, blah." with the tongue.

08:30 **What was your impression of New Zealand?**

A beautiful place. You don't have to go over to Switzerland to see the snow and the Alps, just go to Mt Cook, New Zealand. No, it's a lovely place.

Did you ever go there as a youth?

Yes. We went there as I say, after my mother in law died and left Jean some money and we said, "Well, all right, we will go to New Zealand."

09:00 We went on a tour with my sister and brother-in-law and we went as a foursome on this tour. We went to the South Island and we landed at Christchurch. We went around Mt Cook and some people went up in helicopters, but we went up in a, what do you call them? A light plane?

09:30 **A Cessna?**

A Cessna, went up in a Cessna and a funny thing, we got up there and I've got my name up here, we've all got our name tags on, Jack Verity and Jean Verity and so on. I'm sitting opposite two women and my sister-in-law was there and my wife and brother-in-law, and one of the women said to me, "Excuse me, you're Jack Verity." and I said, "Yes." She said, "Did your father ever have a butcher shop on the corner of the Elsternwick Market?" I said,

10:00 "Yes." Here we are flying around Mt Cook, and she said, "Don't you recognise me?" And I said, "No." She said, "I'm so and so." and I forget her name now. She told me what her name was. I said, "Strike me, I haven't seen you since you were knee high to a grasshopper." and here we are flying around Mt Cook and you strike people like that.

She was a customer?

It is a small world isn't it? And then

10:30 Mum told us about how she met Dad. I'm going off the track there and then we went on to right along

the coast on the South Island and right up to the North Island across on the ferry to Wellington and then up to Rotorua and that's the only bad part of New Zealand, it stinks

11:00 like rotten eggs. We had a look around there and then we went up a bit higher and I got the flu or something so Jean went with another bus crowd and they went right up the north up the top end and they were in big busses and they were going through the sands up there and doing wheelies on the sands up there.

11:30 **Ninety Mile Beach?**

What was it?

Ninety Mile Beach?

Yes, Ninety Mile Beach and they were doing these wheelies up there. Then she come back to this other place where we was and I was still a bit seedy. I picked up the flu, some bug, and got rid of it and then we went back to Lower Hutt and saw my cousin and I have told you before about her smoking pipes and stuff and that's where Mum was hanging out there I think,

12:00 Mum and her. And then we got a plane back to Melbourne.

Is that recently?

No. That is about twenty years ago now.

OK. I wondered when you were working with your father in the butcher shop or in the slaughterhouse, did you ever talk backwards?

Backwards or back at him?

Backwards.

12:30 What do you mean, backwards?

Well, a lot of butchers have a secret language where they talk backwards.

No, I have never heard of it.

I just wondered. I have spoken to a lot of butchers.

The only two foreign things I know, I think they call it penny-farthing language.

Oh, Pig Latin?

13:00 Ot way may yoo yay. What name are you? Or pidgin English for the natives.

Now, I want to go now to your teenage years.

Don't go there.

You were talking before about some dancing and this

13:30 **would be about the time that you met Jean?**

Yes. I didn't dance till I met Jean and then we went off dancing then. No, dancing was our biggest social event. We were always dancing and learning the new steps, and the latest thing now is, we haven't danced for a couple of years, but prior to that we were doing a lot of new vogue stuff.

14:00 **And was this a once a week thing, you would go on Saturday nights?**

We used to do it Monday, Seaford Hotel, Wednesday at the Seaford Hotel and I think Thursday was at the Senior Citizens at Keysborough, about three or four times a week.

14:30 **But in the '30s where did you go?**

Then, we had been to the Palais at St Kilda and the Trocadero but its not there now. Melbourne Town Hall, St Kilda Town Hall, Caulfield Town Hall dancing there, Caulfield Scout Hall, Seaford Hall, Jack Verity Hall.

15:00 Where else have we danced? Oh, at Gippsland and a little place out of Bairnsdale, I can't think of the name of the place.

15:30 It doesn't matter.

You were going to a lot of different places. Was it more fun to go to somewhere, a new hall?

No. I think actually it was more fun to dance at the Seaford Hotel. We were all friends there and we knew each other, you know. Now it's unfortunate, the Monday dances have stopped and the Wednesday one. Both of them used to be free but now you have to pay two dollars or something

16:00 for the Wednesday one, which is fair enough because they get their scones and afternoon tea for free.

In the '30s did the different clubs have different styles, different bands?

They had different bands and some had different interpretations of the steps you have to do, but if you have learned one way, stick to it. Don't try and change it. Like the Melody Fox Trot.

16:30 When we have finished the sequence, just before we finish we take two side steps to the left. Some of them do four steps and they take one to the side, just one little thing, but they say, "Oh, you're doing it wrong, you're doing it wrong." Do it the way you are taught. Don't worry about anybody else.

Was there any trouble at these dances?

No. You don't have trouble at dances until you bring the grog [alcohol] into it. That's another thing too,

17:00 when I was in the army we were doing dancing down at Hastings. That's another story; I will get to that later.

OK, I will remind you. And you were in the Boy Scouts when you were a lad?

Yes, Caulfield Boy Scouts.

What sort of things did they do there?

Oh, learned to tie knots, make reef knots, sheep shanks and the bowlines and how to boil a billy and how to make a stew. I did that on a railway line, the Glen Waverley railway line before it was electrified.

17:30 That's how long ago that was. And wrestling and fighting and boxing and building towers, and one day I was wrestling with a fellow, and I don't know how I did it but I was just wrestling and he was on top of me in some sort of hold and I don't know how I did it but my legs went up under him and he

18:00 went flying right off the mat so they barred me from wrestling again in scouts because I hurt him. I didn't intend to but it was one of those things.

Was he OK about it?

Oh yeah. Later on in life I learned karate but not through the scouts, judo and stuff. I also learned the

18:30 commando stuff in the army too.

I wanted to ask you more about World War I. Now you had a couple of uncles and an aunty in World War I and you would have known other people or heard of people in World War I, what was your impression of it and your idea of the time that you had?

I was just a kid, I wouldn't have a clue. No, no impression at all. It was well

19:00 before my time. It's 1918, 1914, 1918.

They didn't talk about it?

No, we just learnt it in history, in our history books.

What sort of things did you learn about it in history?

The Battle of the Bismarck and some things like that, Gallipoli, which must have been a shocking thing. Yes, I read somewhere about Gallipoli that the Australians weren't supposed to be there in the first place,

19:30 or the British were down there further having cups of tea and one thing and another while the Aussies were up here, and I think they were suppose to be down there with the British or the British were supposed to be up with the Australians, I'm not sure which but which ever way it was it was wrong and it shouldn't have happened from what I read.

20:00 So probably people will see this and say this is right or wrong, I don't know. It's only what you read.

So when you were at school did you learn about Gallipoli as a great tragedy?

Yes, as a tragedy. It was a tragedy. When you compare the number of people killed in that campaign as opposed to a campaign in Tobruk,

20:30 it is not within cooee of it. Thousands and thousands got killed in Gallipoli, maybe a couple of thousand. I'm not sure of the numbers in the Middle East but they killed more in September 11 as they did in Gallipoli. That was a shocking thing, but where is the world taking us? But anyway, off the track again Jack.

21:00 **So as we are getting closer to World War II and you have said that you weren't particularly aware of things building up there but you had some idea?**

After World War I we learned about in school in history, that's all. It was history, that's it, history and as far as World War II was concerned it was starting to be history too in the beginning. In

- 21:30 1938 Hitler started making his moves and being stupid and taking this, that and the other, but we weren't radically concerned about it, you know, because it was up there not down here, and then as things progressed with him we started to take notice because the papers made sure we took notice. In 1939 of course when he walked into
- 22:00 Poland after saying he wouldn't to Neville Chamberlain, the Prime Minister of England, and I can see Neville Chamberlain waving now his signature, "There is no war with Germany." You are not going to invade Poland, bang, and bingo, they invaded Poland, that was it. Then war was declared and then did we take notice? Yes, we did because he wanted the world.
- 22:30 We still weren't, the call up came for those that wanted to join the AIF and fight overseas and that was glamorised, a free trip from the government and so on and see the world, and I wasn't very impressed about that. I was too busy going out with my new girlfriend and dancing, and that was over there and not here.
- 23:00 Then they kept on trying to get us to join with their rallies and things. Then of course the Japanese came into it and that was a different kettle of fish. But we will get to that one later.

When the Japanese came into the war that made you sit up and take notice?

Oh yes. More so when Singapore fell.

- 23:30 I don't know if you would call it a propaganda film, I think it would be pretty true, a film called the "Rape of Nanking". It was black and white and when you see that you come away, when we saw it as soldiers, are you there Jean? Block your ears, and when we came away from there out of watching the film, the bastards, fucking animals,
- 24:00 because we were really upset about it and I can't say on here what it was.

You can say whatever you like. For posterity please say whatever you like.

Well, I don't know if the film is around now, but the film showed Chinese women at Nanking being dragged into the back of this van and then thrown out

- 24:30 screaming with blood pouring out from between their legs, broken bottles had been stuck up there. Now don't tell me that's all right. It's not. It's not even barbarism, it is beyond belief, and what fun they would get out of that I don't know. This is the Japanese for you, in those days, just unreal.
- 25:00 **And you saw this at the picture house or at school?**

In the army. It was a propaganda film to get your blood up and it certainly did. It did the job.

So it was used once you had joined up, not as an enticement?

Oh yes, I had joined up before I saw that. It didn't influence me that way but it made me more determined to do something about it

- 25:30 **So in the time between when war was first declared before you joined up, what were those war years like?**

I was working laying bricks and what was I doing?

- 26:00 When the Germans were into it in the first part of the war our lives went on just the same and we saw a few soldiers around and we knew that they would be going overseas and that was their prerogative. They joined up for that. It didn't worry us.

So in the time

- 26:30 **between war was declared before you went into the army, what were those years like and what did you do?**

I thought I had explained that, danced around and wasn't too worried about the war at all, and until I say, until the Japs came into it.

- 27:00 **Did you want to go into the air force?**

Yeah, I did. That is a good leading question. I applied to go into the air force, join the air force and they wrote back saying that I must have an Intermediate Certificate to become a pilot or even to be in the air force. So I thought right, and I didn't have it, so I went to the Robert Taylor School of Coaching

- 27:30 in Melbourne to try and get my Intermediate, and while I'm down there learning all this I got a, I don't know if I was in the army or not then, but I got a letter from the air force later on to say that I could now join and I don't need an Intermediate, I can join it. I think the Japs might have come into now and they were getting panicky and they wanted more people in the air force.

- 28:00 So they said they would take me without the Intermediate, and I thought, I wasn't good enough in the

first place so I'm not good enough now, so I didn't bother. So I stuck with the army and I think it might have been a good thing. I might not be sitting here talking with you now if I was in the air force, who knows?

So in those years before you got involved in the army, daily life pretty much continued as normal? Was there

28:30 **rationing?**

Oh yes. Oh no, no, no. Rationing came in with the war. Rationing did start I think when German went into it. I think rationing started, but not as severe as when the Japanese came in. I'm not sure of that, but rationing was in, yes, and you had to get coupons to

29:00 buy your clothing and you had to get coupons to get butter, meat and some things you didn't need coupons for, but a lot of things you did. And you had to queue up, that was the worst part, the queuing up. They had the black market on the coupons. People started printing coupons on the black market. They were dealt with when they got caught. It wasn't

29:30 as free and easy as it could have been. Things were a bit tough then.

The general impression of the people around you, your family and friends, was the war was over there?

You would sit around and talk about it. Yeah, TV hadn't come in then. I think it was 1956 TV was in. You'd sit around the radio and listen to all

30:00 the news. Dad used to always like to listen to the news, and then he would turn around we would discuss it. We weren't very interested but Mum and Dad would talk about it and Watson, the eldest one, he'd talk to Essie. Len wasn't interested; Len was more interested in his physique. He was a fitness fanatic. No, that's about it. Essie

30:30 and the two eldest, a boy and a girl, and Dad and Mum would usually chat amongst themselves about it. It wasn't registering with us but it did later though.

Was the general impression that Hitler had done the wrong thing and had to be stopped?

Yes, yes, after he invaded Poland. Up to that point we just accepted things as they were and I think he got some,

31:00 I can't remember now. I think he got Germany and...

There was Austria and Sudetenland.

And Latvia and so on, the smaller ones. But when he got to the bigger ones, Poland, then that was the start of it, the rot set in then. Even today some bloke has been going around saying the Holocaust was a lot of rubbish, it never happened. How stupid can you get?

31:30 They reckon they never got to the moon, they reckon that was a joke too. I don't know, what are you suppose to believe these days?

Did you hear any stories of what had happened to Jews in Europe?

Oh yeah.

At that point before you enlisted?

Yes.

What sort of things did you hear?

What was in the paper. Mostly in the paper

32:00 what was there about the Jews being persecuted. 'Jew' written everywhere and wearing that yellow star on them if they were a Jew, and that they were being kicked around and all the rest of it. Yeah, all sorts of stories.

And what did you think about that?

We felt sorry for the Jew. They are human beings the same as everybody else. There is no need for that.

32:30 **You would have known a lot of in Caulfield?**

No, not at that time, no. There wasn't many Jews at all in Caulfield.

But your father was working with them in the kosher butchery?

No, he wasn't working with. That was the abattoirs that did that. Dad never had the abattoirs. He had the abattoirs in Spotswood, but when he had his shop that's when I went and saw the kosher come in, and no, there wasn't many Jews in

- 33:00 Caulfield at all at the time while we were there, but after the war, a different kettle of fish. They started moving in. Now after the war there was a move by the government to decentralise factories and send them out to Bendigo and Ballarat, Daylesford and Bairnsdale, all around the place to get people out away from the city, and what happened? The Jews came into St Kilda, Caulfield,
- 33:30 and so on, and then of course other people started to come back again and there was nowhere to go. It had already been taken up, and that's why things started to sprawl out from Melbourne, all around the place. The idea was to keep Melbourne and the environment around it to be a big business, you know, and pull some of these houses down and put up businesses, but it didn't work that way.
- 34:00 It went the other way. The Jews came in and started building double storey places. Anyhow that's water under the bridge, what's next?

Pearl Harbor. How did you hear about that and what was your reaction?

The reaction would be the same as when we heard about Princess Diana being killed. Shocked.

- 34:30 It was a shocking thing. They showed us films and everything, and so many ships went down, the [USS] Wisconsin, the [USS] Tennessee. Thousands of people lost their lives in that one all around. Yeah, it was a shocker, and the Japanese had moved as it was before that. They had moved down into, not
- 35:00 so much China, but Nanking which was part of China, on their way to Singapore and before they got to Singapore I think that Pearl Harbor happened. Then of course there was a mad rush to get recruits in straight away then. Then Singapore went and they got down through the islands, then to New Guinea. It was getting too close for comfort. Did you know that they did land, the Japanese did land?
- 35:30 They landed at Broome.

At Broome?

Yeah, they got in at Broome. Not landing as a big army.

Not an invasion?

An advance party sort of thing. They got in there.

And they got lost in the desert, didn't they?

I think they finished up pearl divers because they're still up there.

- 36:00 **So when you heard about Pearl Harbor did you think, hang on this is serious?**

Yes.

Did it make you sit up?

We were inclined to think, well, it's the Yanks' fight. We were inclined to think that way, but not a hundred per cent. You sort of think it's their war and when they started coming down and Darwin really capped it off.

- 36:30 Oh, and Sydney too. They had little subs [submarines] in there. Yes, so then it was real serious. It was time to do something about it.

So when you enlisted and when you were called up what was your feelings? Were you nervous, excited, happy?

No, I can't

- 37:00 say that I was excited, I can't say that I was nervous.

Scared?

No. I don't know what it was. I just knew something up here that I had got to do it. That's why I joined the AIF. Prior to that I was in the Militia and things were happening around me and I thought maybe it will go away and it didn't. It was getting closer. As I explained before about Jean and the gun and so on. Then

- 37:30 panic starting settling in a bit. We got a hell of fright one day down at Fisherman's Bend before I joined the AIF. We were all asleep in our tents and all of a sudden the search lights went on and I'm not sure if any Beaufort guns went off but there was an aeroplane flying around above Fisherman's Bend and all the searchlights went on and I thought, oh hell, a bomb is going to drop any minute. But it was a Yankee fellow and he forgot to call in.

- 38:00 A Yankee pilot, he could have been blown out of the air.

A close call.

Yeah. That frightened hell out of you. Also when I was on the Duntroon up to the islands, I was asleep on the deck. It was a hot day and I was half asleep and a Beaufort gun was just near me and they

decided to practise. Midday, and they opened up without any warning and I nearly shot off the top of the deck. It frightened hell out of me, boom, boom, boom.

38:30 They wonder why I'm partly deaf.

So firstly you were with the Militia and you mentioned you did training and they gave you broomsticks?

We didn't all have broomsticks, just a couple.

So the rest had guns?

To give us an idea how to slope arms and all this sort of stuff.

Can you go into a bit more detail about your training and what kind of things you did?

Well, most

39:00 most of the time, like the beginning, it was march, march, march, and get yourself fit. We had our PT, physical training of a morning. You got up in the morning, you get up when the bugle blows and the corporal of the day would come running around your tents and open your flap, "Wakey wakey." and wake you all up, and it would be stinking cold and you've got to get out straight away and line up outside the tent with your dressing gown on, or whatever,

39:30 and your towel and toothbrush and so on. You line up, after roll call, "Righto, dismissed." and you go straight down to the ablutions, have your shower and wash and shave and whatever. Back, make your bed up, your bed roll and make your bed nice. Then you have the cookhouse call and you go and have your breakfast and you wash up and come back again and make sure your tents are all straight. Then there is another call. You all line up outside your tent. It's tent

40:00 inspection. So the officer of the day comes around and inspects all your tents and he picks your blanket is not folded properly, "Fold it correctly." and that sort of rubbish. As if that is going to save your life. Then after that you may do a course of grenade throwing. It would be dummy grenades you throw, and I think I can still remember it. You're standing up there and you say, I forget

40:30 what the first call is, you grab the grenade, put your finger through the ring and you say, "Throw." You throw the thing; you duck, in so many seconds it will blow up. This is what I had to do at Fisherman's Bend.

Tape 4

00:30 **Just before the break you were explaining about grenade training and how you throw those?**

Oh yes well the first thing you learn is the make up of the grenade itself. It's shaped like a pineapple, they used to call them pineapples and like a pineapple the casing has little squares in it and where they join is the weak spot

01:00 and this is the part here that is the killer and when it explodes all those little squares fly out, and on top of it there was a lever, a steel lever and that's kept in place by a ring and you pull the ring out and you have got to have your hand on that particular thing otherwise

01:30 in four seconds that will blow up. So the thing is you hang on to the grenade with the ring sticking out there and you put your finger and you go one, two, pull the pin out and three, throw and drop, you drop down quick and lively because in four seconds it goes off and those things splatter everywhere, and the base plate which is the section the bottom

02:00 also goes backwards so if you have got your head up you are likely to get the base plate in your head as it comes back.

OK, so that was grenades?

That's grenades, yeah, and following on the grenade, no, I'll come to that later, but I learned how to throw grenades and I got pretty proficient at it.

02:30 So much so that one day different ones of us were given the authority to lead the group and each one had a chance to issue the order and so on, and there were other things that I did as well but this particular day it was my turn to do the grenades and I realised the importance of dropping down quick

03:00 and when I gave the order one fellow didn't duck quick enough and I blew him, went really right off. I said, "If that had been fair dinkum you would have been gone mate." I didn't realise that the major was right behind me listening to all this, and then we had to go and do a, I'm not sure about this, this happened at Seymour.

03:30 I had to do the baptism of fire. I think it was at Seymour, I did both of these. One was the bombs and the

other was machine guns, live machine gun rounds. I think it was at Seymour, and we had to go along a trench and they said, "Don't stick your head up, we are using live ammunition and to prove it I'll show you."

04:00 and he must have given a signal back to the gunner who fired. You could see it above the trenches, dirt flying out. So he said, "Right, there you are, it is live ammunition. Don't stick your head up." So he said, "Off you go in single file." and I'm not liking this. I'm a tall bloke too, so I'm ducked right down and it went off all right. The ammunition was flying over our heads, we could hear it and it was OK.

04:30 That one I passed OK, but then I had to go to the bombs and I didn't realise where they were and I think this is why I am partly deaf. We got our pack on and walked in normally across a field, you wouldn't know where the bomb was, and we got halfway across, all of us, there were ten of us, we got halfway across this field and all hell

05:00 broke loose. There is a bloody bomb went off just over by the door or something, a few feet away and a hell of a bang, and another one over here, and you can't run. It doesn't matter what happens, you just have to keep on going. So there we are, by gee, we were glad to get through that one.

So these were just a test of your nerves?

Yeah, it was training, the initial training.

05:30 If you get into a battlefield you will strike all this stuff and you have got to be prepared for it.

Did anyone ever get hurt?

If you run you run into trouble. No, not that I know. I will tell you in case I forget it, when we were in New Guinea there was a chap,

06:00 and its in my story that I am writing, that this fellow came to the hospital at Wewak I think, anyhow, I visited the hospital. It might have been Aitape and I met him there and he had his foot blown off. He had stood on a land mine or something, or a booby trap,

06:30 and I got to know him pretty well and one day I went there and he was crying his eyes out and I said, "What's wrong?" I forget his name now and I said, "What's wrong?" And he said, "I got a letter from my wife." and I read it and oh God, they were both ballroom dancers and he has lost his foot. She wrote back and said she didn't want a one legged dancer. She wants a divorce. I said, "Gee, you mongrel." He's there and she is down there not

07:00 not face to face and no guts. Anyhow he got very upset about that and so I visited him quite a lot after that until he went back home but he was pretty good by the time he had left. He had settled, he realised he didn't have any hope that there. That's just by the by in case I forget. And in the training there was all kinds of odd things, you had to walk across a rope and it was suspended by one rope and others holding it together and you have to

07:30 go across this rope without falling in with a full pack on a rifle on your back and climbing up over boards and ridges and all sorts of things and you learned commando stuff, unarmed combat, which came in handy one day for me, a few months back. Here I am at my age, I used it and I made the bloke yell. He said, "Don't you ever do that to me again."

08:00 I used the unarmed combat stuff and it come in handy.

You were attacked somewhere?

No, no, my next door neighbour actually, maybe eighteen months, two years ago. I was sitting down and he come back he put his right arm around me and I went. "Hey, hey, don't you bloody well do that to me again." I don't want blokes putting their arms around

08:30 my neck, and he went, "Oh, gee." and I thought, don't do that again Paul.

So when you were doing the training you were spending a lot of time away from home?

Yes, but when we were at Fisherman's Bend the leave was pretty good, but Bonegilla was

09:00 twice a month, two weekends in a month or something. Because Jean used to come up. When we got married she went up and there and worked at Albury until I moved out to Rooty Hill in New South Wales. Yeah, that was all right.

So what year did you get married?

1943.

And what was it like for Jean having you away?

09:30 Not much fun, not much fun at all. We wrote regularly. We numbered our letters, each letter we wrote, so if I sent off number 129, she would send the reply back to 129. So we knew which letter we were answering each time.

Because you were writing

10:00 **so many they might cross over?**

I reckon I would write about four times a week I would write to her, and of course then the letters would accumulate at the post office and would be backing up and she has a whole stack of letters and she had to get them in the right order. And it was great to get mail. When the mail call came in the camp and all the blokes would gather around and so and so Smith, and Verity, right, Smith, Smith, Verity,

10:30 Andrews, Johnson, Verity. They would all be banked up.

Did you have children by then?

Yeah, one girl yes, Jeanette.

Were you around when she was born?

Oh just for two or three times, that's all. I saw her in hospital

11:00 when she was born and I think I saw her again after that and I think I was off overseas. I didn't see too much of her, and of course when I come back she didn't know me. She didn't want to know me and I had to try all over gain to win her love back, and I still haven't got it. Oh dear.

You think there has always been a distance between you?

No, it's alright. She's just a bombastic girl, very bombastic.

11:30 She is like our Aunty Violet, when she walks in the room everybody trembles.

I was going to ask you about Aunty Violet, do you think her being so strict with you and getting you, bossing you around making you do chores, do you think that in a way prepared you for the army, that regimentation?

12:00 I didn't know that at the time, but I suppose you could put it down to that. It was just her manner, the old battle-axe.

You said she was quite callous?

With Len, I thought she was. Mum thought she was too, and Dad too. That was the only time that he went crook at her. "There is no need for that, Vi." he said, and just whoosh, a big gash in his head.

12:30 **Yeah, we were talking about Aunty Vi, do you feel that in any way she prepared you for World War II?**

No.

OK. Well getting back to the training, Jean mentioned before that your cousin came and visited at that time?

13:00 Yeah, in the Merchant Navy. He came to Caulfield and he came in and said, "I thought I would look you up." because he hadn't seen us, hadn't seen my mother for years, and he took his leave that night and he stayed for lunch and he went back to his boat and they headed out through the heads and late at night we got a knock on the door and here he is standing there in just he clothes he was wearing

13:30 and he said, "I'm sorry, but my boat has sunk and I want somewhere to stay overnight." so he stayed there. What had happened, they had struck a German mine outside the heads and sunk. One of his cabin fellows, he wanted to go back for something and he yelled out, "No, don't. Come on, leave it." and he went back and he didn't make it.

14:00 He went down with the ship.

So this is Port Phillip Bay and there was a German mine just outside the Heads?

Yeah. You don't know where they are. Even though the fight's going on over in Germany there was a German mine down there. Another little story while I think of it, a friend of ours is an Englishman and he was a sailor in a submarine and

14:30 he was stationed at Perth and the Japanese went to Broome and this is where the Japanese I was telling you about before, they went to Broome looking for the submarines. They had heard that's where the what's a name was. They were originally going to go there, the Australians, but they changed and brought down to Perth or some place near Perth. So he said they were lucky because they changed

15:00 at the last minute. Instead of being there, down to Perth, and they got the message but didn't get the second one. I don't know whether they got the Japs or not but they didn't get them anyhow.

OK, now I'm interested to know, we talked or you talked with Serge [interviewer] before about what you felt were the reasons

15:30 **that you fought in World War II. We are talking about politics now and the things that you**

fought for. At that time what did you think were fighting for?

Well, I thought at the time the reason I joined the AIF was to keep the Japanese from Australia. Keep them out of Australia, we didn't want them and yeah.

16:00 And that's it in a nutshell.

What were your feelings about the things that made Australia good, the freedom that we had here? What was your impression?

The freedom that we had here, I notice you used the past tense, had, the freedom that we had here. Yes, we had freedom of speech; you had restrictions on some things

16:30 at that time. You had to be careful with what you were saying, don't talk about the war years; you had to be careful what you were saying to people. It could be misinterpreted. All the foreign people in Australia had to learn to speak English. They were not allowed to speak in their own tongue because if they talked in their own tongue we don't understand them and they might be doing something to us. We don't know.

17:00 Did you know that?

I did, yeah.

That's one of the things, and I think it still should be today that if you want to come to this country you learn English first so we know what you want and you know what we want and there is no skulduggery, and I have mentioned before about the religions. What else can we talk about?

17:30 **What did you think of say Australia's freedom or style of society against say England's society?**

The Australia has got a sort of, England thinks Australia has an ocker type thing. I think it is wrong with the likes of Barry McKenzie, this fellow from Geelong, goes over there and gives the impression we are a lot of yahoos. We are not.

18:00 It is stupid, and these blokes going over boozing and drinking all the time and wacko and getting blotto over in America. What a great old opinion they must have of us. I don't go along with that at all. But then the proper thinking people think for themselves and say, "Well, I have struck some nice Australian people the same as in England." You strike a lot of nice people over there and a lot of ratbags too. No matter where you go you will find them.

18:30 But you don't have to glorify it. That's what we are doing here, glorifying ratbags. Next question?

That just makes me wonder were you much of a drinker?

I used to booze like mad. I will tell you a story. I never used to drink until I was a bricklayer and my father-in-law used to go the pub a lot, six o'clock closing and they used to always go and have a drink,

19:00 and about ten to six the barmaid would yell out, "Ten minutes, or fifteen minutes to go." and they would line up the beers all around the shelves and you would be parked underneath them, and they would just get stuck into them because at quarter past six you had to be out. So that is where all the drunks came from, you drink them too fast. But I never used to drink. I used to have a shandy, a lemonade first, then it was lemonade and beer and then beer and that was my undoing, thanks to my father-in-law,

19:30 thanks to my Dad.

Why, what was his influence?

Well I was going to the pub with him wasn't I, I was part of the gang.

Was he a big drinker?

Oh yes, he used to whack it down quick smart, but he was a good father to Jean though. There are two girls and he was a good father to both of them, and when he swore in front of the girls he would say, "Sorry, I was lost for an adjective."

Sorry?

When he swore in front of the girls he

20:00 would say, "I'm sorry, I was lost for an adjective." But yes, I'm not proud of the fact that I was a drinker. I got blotto quite a few times. But anyhow, one day I had a bottle of Abbotsford Blue Lager for export, and I drank it here I think,

20:30 and I drank it and about quarter of hour later, boy, did I get the biggest migraine that I have ever had and I'll tell you now, if I had've had a gun I would have blown my brains out. I was in that concrete toilet banging my head against the concrete, this way, (UNCLEAR) banging like mad with a damn headache. I would have blown my brains out if I had a gun, but I got rid of it all. But booze, no, it doesn't worry my now.

21:00 After that it cured me. I suppose I have had about two glasses a year at the most. I drink. If I have a fish meal I will have a bit of moselle with it and that's it, and I don't drink and I don't smoke

21:30 and I don't do the other thing either.

So when was that, when you had the turning point when you had the migraine?

About 1965 or something, about that.

So during the war or leading up to the war did you drink much then?

22:00 During the war I did. Well no, I didn't, not really, because when we were here and had the canteens I had a few beers. I never got drunk, not rotten drunk, happy but never drunk. When the bottled stuff, when we were overseas and we were rationed I didn't drink at all.

22:30 The bottles that were rationed to us, I was on rear guard when we landed at Aitape and there were some Yanks there and they said, "Have you got any beer." and I said, "No." and they said, "We'll give you six dollars a bottle for it." and I said I didn't have any, and I didn't either at the time, and the next day I was on rear guard and they said, "Here's your issue." two or four bottles of beer or something, and these Yanks came around again.

23:00 I said, "They are yours for six dollars. You are mad." and I sold it to them. I wouldn't pay that much for a damn beer, that is stupid, so that was that. I wouldn't say, I have been rotten drunk maybe once or twice.

So how long were you in training for?

23:30 Well, we had three months' call up and then we had numerous other things. I was training on the motors and I went to, I could drive, I had learned to drive from my uncle. He was not my real uncle but we called him Uncle Reg because his name was Verity from Werribee,

24:00 and he came over with a bull nose Morris in civilian life, and I learned to drive that so that was a start and in the army I was down at Mt. Martha and I went for my licence and the officer said to me, "I am going into Mornington, drive me in." and he got what he wanted and I come back again and he said, "OK you have passed."

24:30 I didn't park, I didn't have to do anything, any special stuff, I got it. So I got my licence, then from there I went to the driving and maintenance school at Kooyong Road in Caulfield to do the finer parts, to learn to repair things and so on. Then I went to the LHQ School at Seymour where I learned to drive tanks.

25:00 I got my track licence, got my motorbike licence and my truck licence and four wheel drive, so I got all them. Then they got me to do the school teaching. That was at Balcombe, the teaching,

25:30 and I tell you what, the driving instructors today are not bad, but I had to put these people through a terrain and when you are in the army you don't know what you are going to meet. You may go off track and if you are driving a four wheel drive you have to know what you are doing and the place

26:00 I had at Balcombe was in a valley. You come off the road down and you have to go up this hill. Now if you go sideways you go over and you roll and we were in Marm and Harringtons, an English type four wheel drive, and most of the fellow were right. I would take them down and I would do it myself first to show them what I wanted, and I said, "Now first gear all the way, don't change, don't try to."

26:30 and anyhow they would go down slowly and go up, don't accelerate too much, just go quietly and it will be all right and they did, but one fellow came along and he was mummy's boy too, and he got in and I could see that he was nervous straight away. I said, "Don't panic, just put it into first gear and you have got your four wheel drive in and just go slowly up.

27:00 Don't go to left or right." So down he goes and wow, when he got to the bottom I said, "Now go quietly." So he started to go up and turn to the left. I said, "No, take your foot off." and he went back. I said, "That's it. You hop out and come in my side." so I got in and took him back. I said, "You are finished son, that's mad."

He was too keen, go too fast?

No, he was nervous. I said to him after, "I'm sorry, but you have to imagine you have a truck load of people on board,

27:30 personnel, and you do that you are going to kill them and yourself with them." I was teaching AWAS, the Australian Women's Army Service, and different ones, I had to fail a few of them, one was an elderly type and just made the AWAS I think because she was pretty old, and she told me that her husband had been killed over in the Middle East. She said, "There is only one thing I want

28:00 in life now, is to get a licence so that I can drive an ambulance." I said, "Well do the right thing and do it correctly and you will pass." I didn't favour her at all, but she went through it all OK and she cried like mad when I told her it was OK. But that's what she wanted to do and she was keen and she was settled and she wasn't uptight. Anyhow, that's just

- 28:30 the old driving thing. But getting back to the beer, I remembered something, when we were at Balcombe we used to, not Mt Martha, Balcombe, wait a minute, it might have been Mt Martha, yeah, we had a tailor, he used to repair our trousers and he used to go into Mornington to get cottons and things and we used to go to a dance
- 29:00 at Hastings so there were a little group of us and we organised something, and the tailor was to go into the hotel and get a kit bag full of beer, we used to all put in, and he used buy cottons and come back and that was his excuse to go in drive in there, and I think somebody used to drive him in but the person that had the truck with the kit bag, he would go
- 29:30 and teach somebody to drive or something, so they would have an excuse to drive out to Hastings. They would drive out to Hastings and they would put the beer bottles around the spoutings of the shops because they were pretty low, and they put them all around near the dance hall. The locals knew don't touch it or else, because there was a gang of us, not that we would have done anything. But we would go to the dance and of course we'd have a beer, back into the dance,
- 30:00 another a few beers, and that went on. They never found out till this day. Now you all know about it. Next question?
- Well I was going to say the dancing was OK until the alcohol came in, so you obviously thought that alcohol ruined the dance?**
- Oh that was, I mentioned that to you. This was about,
- 30:30 we are getting back before the war now and I was a teenager and I formed a younger set called the Elsternwick Pals Younger Set, and we were in South Caulfield so we formed the Elsternwick Pals Younger Set. We used to meet in number 10 Beavis Street and they had a pretty big house and they had like a ballroom in there, and we used to meet there and have dances and we had trips to the snow and we raised money for the blind babies and children and the Red Cross and the Seeing Eye Dogs and all the rest of it,
- 31:00 and we would go on these trips and raise money and have fun, and the parents could see that it was run properly. There was no grog, no drinking, no smoking, until my second cousin turned up to one our turnouts with some whisky and the message went back to the parents, and closed over night, so that stunk because that was a nice little
- 31:30 club going and the charities were going to worthy causes and it took a bottle of whisky to stuff it up. So there you are, another lesson learned. Next question?
- So going back to the training, you were driving tanks and trucks?**
- Not so much the tanks. I only just got my licence. (UNCLEAR) got a tank licence in case.
- So there was a lot of**
- 32:00 **driving and a lot of motor pool and repair work. What other training did you do?**
- I did the unarmed combat and the usual bayonet practice with a bag stuffed full of straw. Of course we put the Japanese flag up on them stuff like that, or the face of a Japanese or something, or a German or whatever, a swastika.
- 32:30 That was added incentive. We were urged on by the warrant officer, he was the fellow with the big voice, and if you go there and just go like that and walk away, he would go, "Righto, back you go and this time let's see you do it. Keep that bloody thing in, withdraw." and so on.
- (UNCLEAR) make a war face?**
- Yeah.
- 33:00 I've got to admit I'm eighty-three now, and I have to try and think of all these things. I think it's parry, withdraw, thrust, withdraw, thrust, withdraw and bring the butt around and knock him down. Thrust into the guts or the
- 33:30 heart, withdraw, use the butt, knock him in the jaw to knock him down and when he is down stab him again and put your foot into him pull the bayonet out if it gets stuck on a bone. Nice stuff isn't it?
- How did they teach you unarmed combat?**
- Body to body, that was. If a man comes at you with a knife or a stick and he's a
- 34:00 right-handed man, that is the first action, that and grab the wrist and over, you grab the wrist and you put your arm through his like there, and bring it down and hold your right foot under his and bring it across and tip him over and once he is down you drop your knee into his chest.
- And were you good at it?**
- I was proficient at it.

34:30 You have got to be. I don't know about now. Poor old Paul, he suffered though.

You mentioned The Rape of Nanking, did you see any other films?

That's the one that sticks out the most. We did see other films on the Germans or the Jews. The Rape of Nanking was a real horrific film. It really sticks in your gizzard.

35:00 I will never forget that.

They must have given you talks about what was happening. What sort of things did they teach you?

Similar stuff, and what to be wary of all the time, and you don't be sloppy and walk into a building. Have a damn good look around before you go in, if you see any sign of life watch out, if you see any smoke watch out, if you see smoke go flat

35:30 to the ground. If it was a little bit of smoke, flat to the floor, it could be a grenade. It could be anything.

What sort of things did they teach you about Germany and Japan and what you were fighting for?

Oh you were fighting for freedom weren't you? If you don't fight for freedom you are giving up.

36:00 **So they didn't talk to you about that that much because that was fairly self-evident?**

Yes, they would give you lectures on things, health and VD [venereal disease]. With your enemies or the other places you go to you don't copulate with the natives in New Guinea. You don't

36:30 touch the nurses you don't, the same in Germany, you don't fraternise with the enemy, yep.

Did they issue you with anything to.....?

Yes. Bromide. Bromide, that takes away the urge

Any condoms?

You could get them

37:00 from the RAP [regimental aid post] if you wanted them, but that's like going to bed with a heavy pair of socks on.

What about VD creams and things?

That's up to the RAP. Well, I will give you another example. I was a corporal and it was my job to open up the tent this day and I had to wake them all

37:30 up, and the bugler sounded and I went to the flap and I said, "Wakey, wakey." and I got to one tent and poo, it stunk. It stunk like a wet blanket that has been wet and stunk for a couple of weeks and I thought something is wrong here and I mentioned it to the captain and they

38:00 paraded everyone in that tent and one was the cook. So they all had what they call a short arm inspection [inspection of genitalia]. He was the one, the cook. I won't go into details.

He had the clap?

Yep. He hadn't washed himself properly and he was a bit of pansy on top of that.

Could you describe

38:30 **short arm inspection?**

Yeah. Well I will tell you what, they had this short arm inspection and they all had their old fellows [penises] hanging out and this nurse come along and she was a very, very hygienically type and she come along with a ruler or a stick and lift the first one up and say, "OK." and she'd come to the next one and lift it up and say,

39:00 "It's a bit short, OK." and drop that. She came to one there and she lifted it up and said, "I bet that has feathered many a nest." and he said, "Yes, it's the first time it's been on a bloody perch though." There's your short arm inspection.

Did she actually use a ruler?

I don't know what she used.

39:30 That's a joke.

00:34 **So with your experience in the Second World War we were talking about training before, bayonets, grenades, and what I want to do is move towards the New Guinea area now. I understand you were attached to the 2/2nd Forestry?**

Yeah.

Is that what it was just called, 2/2nd Forestry?

2/2nd Australian Forestry Company, yeah.

01:00 **When were you attached to that unit? Was it when you were in PNG [Papua New Guinea] or was it before that?**

No, before that. I went up there with them.

And where were you first attached to them?

Good question, when did I join them?

01:30 **I mean what year at least?**

It may be in my pay book which is on the table back there. It's hard to say.

When did you go to PNG, was it '42 or '43?

Look, I will just unhook myself for a moment.

OK, sure. So when you got attached to this unit

02:00 **how long did you stay with them roughly before you left for PNG? How long were you attached to the 2/2nd Forestry Company?**

About four months.

Can you walk us through the training procedures you had?

No, I have already done that.

Did you already go through with ...?

Yes, the driving and maintenance and all that, and diesel. I learnt about the diesel motors and so on.

02:30 We had hell of a big diesel to drive the saws; I didn't really know what to do at all.

Were you looking forward to going to New Guinea?

We didn't know where we were going.

They didn't tell you?

No. It was just overseas. We knew we were going somewhere to the islands but I could have gone to Borneo.

03:00 As a matter of fact the 2/1st Division went to Borneo and the 2/3rd Division went to Darwin or vice versa. We could have finished up at Darwin or Borneo, who knows. As it was, it was up to New Guinea. We went by train to Townsville and we embarked on the Duntroon at Townsville and

03:30 went to Lae and then from Lae we got onto a launch, the River St Lawrence, and we went up to Madang. At each place we would stop and set up the mill. Then from Madang we went across to Karkar Island which is north of Madang about forty kilometres. On a very clear day

04:00 you can see it from Madang.

Was it a big island?

It was one volcano and at the base of the volcano it was a bit flat and that's where our mill was and our quarters. It wasn't an over-active volcano but sometimes you would get the rumblings.

So with Lae when you first landed there, can you tell us what you saw?

04:30 Yes, what we saw at Lae and every place we stopped at. The first thing you saw when you stepped off the boat was coconut trees blown to pieces from the shrapnel from the Yanks when they were driving the Japs out.

So this is well after the battle had been fought?

Well I think a few months after, and we had to go, and I suppose the surveying crowd went in early and found where the timber was, and then it was our job to set up the mill and cut

05:00 timber. I don't think we did it at Lae. We didn't cut timber at Lae I don't think. I think that was the only place that we didn't cut. I think we were waiting there to go up to Aitape and Karkar Island to make

sure the Japs were out before we got there. When we were at Aitape they were still getting Japs out of Wewak.

So you were stationed for how long in Lae?

That I couldn't tell you off hand. It wasn't too long.

- 05:30 Only a matter of a few weeks I think because I think what they were waiting on was the reports from the different localities if it was free of the enemy and what the timber was like. It wasn't much good going up there if it was only banana plantations and we had to go where the timber was. With Lae we left on a launch, there would be about thirty of us went up on a launch up to
- 06:00 Madang and we set up a mill at Madang and it was there that I got some timber and built a table in the tent. I had an axeman in my tent and there was Rex Izzard from Tasmania, Boof Wilson from Geelong and another tall fellow from Queensland I think, and a few other fellows, about six of us in the tent. Anyhow,
- 06:30 I built this table and we had our tent attached to a coconut tree. There was my bed, another bed and another bed and that corner was tied to a coconut tree, and the other ends were staked down with guy ropes, now this particular night it was very very still, not a sound or breath of air anywhere and I was asleep and all of a sudden
- 07:00 I got this funny feeling that there was something going on in the tent and people were shouting and so on and the next thing the lights went out, bang, I got knocked out and I come to and I saying, "Let me out, let me out." and I was all tangled up in my mosquito net and what had happened, these fellows being axemen had a sixth sense. They knew when a tree was coming down. I didn't hear a thing.
- 07:30 The coconut tree had been coming down it had been shot with shrapnel and gave up the ghost on this very still night, and the tree landed and hit the corner of the table. If the table hadn't been there I wouldn't be here now, and being a coconut tree its trunk was flexible it went like that, and gave a whip, and smashed the bed and hit my head. That's what it was all about. Finally they got me out of there and I think we slept
- 08:00 in a hut or something that night, a makeshift thing and in the morning I went and saw the RAP and complained of a headache and so on. I had aspirin for about a week and it just disappeared, but when I came back in civilian life I had to go and see an eye specialist and this is the eye that got hit and he said that my tear duct had been ruptured by that and that tear duct would weep for the rest of my life
- 08:30 in hot windy weather, which is still does today. That was Madang. Anyhow there wasn't much cutting in Madang, so then we went over with a LST, it's a landing ship tank, all back to front, not a tank ship landing.
- 09:00 Anyhow, we went over on that and there was a jetty there but it wasn't much good to us, it was only a short jetty and we all got off and set up house there. There used to be a plantation owner, it was a coconut plantation and there used to be an owner there so we utilised his quarters. Most of the men were up the top and I stayed underneath a big high stilt,
- 09:30 support on stilts sort of thing, on stumps up high. So I got underneath and put slats around there and enclosed myself in and made myself a little, and you wonder why I'm doing it? I'm one of those stupid people that say, "Yes sir, yes sir." when there is something to do and they wanted someone to be their unofficial recreational officer so I set myself
- 10:00 up as that. So by the time I set foot in Lae I was their unofficial recreational officer, as you will find out later. So my job was trying to get a (UNCLEAR) there. Well, their only (UNCLEAR) I could get at the time was to build a couple of tables for them to let them do their writing to write home so they put the tables up in their rooms and things like. They'd make up little shelves for their knickknacks and things. So
- 10:30 Karkar Island was a volcano. One day there the natives, the dogs and the birds all stopped. There wasn't a bird sound, there wasn't a dog barking, there was nothing, just the sound of the mill and then the natives took off and I thought, what the hell is going on, and the next thing, the
- 11:00 whole place moved. The whole mill went like that and back again. By doing that it threw the belt off. The machine is still going and the belt is flapping in mid air, so I had to get between that flap and turn the thing off. I had to push the valve. So I put the piece of timber or shovel or something and I pushed the belt across onto the no-drive so it kept back onto its normal spin, and going nowhere, didn't drive the saw, and so I pressed it off. What had happened, we had had an earthquake, not a tremor,
- 11:30 and the whole thing had moved and the natives knew it was coming we didn't.

How did they have this knowledge?

I'll tell you another thing. I was in charge of the natives too, and I was in charge of about twenty of them. There were about twelve of them that day and the kunai grass was about that high and I

- 12:00 had to clear an area to put the timber that was coming off, the sawn timber and I wanted them to cut

the grass down, so they got their machetes and cut the grass and then I said, "Rouse him deewhy." pointing to a little bit of a bush about as high as that. No, they wouldn't touch it, "No master." I said, "Rouse him!" no, wouldn't touch it. I said, "Oh, give me the bloody machete." so I grabbed his machete. I had no

12:30 shirt on, just a hat and trousers, and I went over and I cut it with one hit and it fell and knocked my hat off and I said, "There, him finished." and one little fellow came up and he started rubbing my back and said, "Himmy kai kai you." I said, "Oh bullshit." and next thing did it ever. I had only a sting tree. All this sting down my back and I went straight to the estuary of the Aitape River and lay down there and tried to get rid of it, na,

13:00 it wouldn't go. Went to the RAP and they put some oil on it and I had it for three days before it disappeared, so always listen to the natives, listen to the inhabitants.

Kunai grass can cause these things?

No, it wasn't a grass. It was a tree, a bush, it was a sting tree, and I heard a rumour and I don't know if it is true or not, but somebody may remember it, it was in Queensland

13:30 and this chap went into the bushes to have a poo and there was no paper, so he saw this nice wide leaf so he grabbed that and wiped his backside and he went off his brain. He had a sting tree leaf and he wiped his bum on it and he went crazy and I don't know what happened to him.

Where was this? He was from Queensland?

I don't know where he was from, but he was just one of the soldiers. It was just something I heard.

In PNG?

I don't know whether it was true or not, but why would they say that if it wasn't.

14:00 **So in Madang what sort of activities...?**

Madang?

Yeah, you went to Madang for a while, didn't you, from Lae to Madang?

That's where the tree whacked me on the head. Well we weren't there for very long, a month or two months.

When did you first come into contact with the natives?

14:30 **at Lae?**

Well, yes at Lae. I tell you what made me say yes like that. I was doing an ADS course, army education course on building a construction because I was going to be a builder when I come out, and I started to study and had all my books there and when this accident with the tree happened I think that was the next day we moved out.

15:00 No, it couldn't have been the next day hang. No, that's right, it was later on. We were moving out and I wasn't in the tent. I was away somewhere, I must have been at the mill or something and they were shifting camp to go to, this is at Lae I think.

15:30 Madang, Madang. That's right, we were going out to Karkar Island and the natives got all these papers of mine and choofed them off to the rubbish bin. I think they burnt them. I don't know where they went to, but they disappeared. Nobody knew where they went, so that was the end of my course.

You don't know why they did that?

I have no idea why. Surely somebody,

16:00 a white man, would have know they were of some value, anyhow they disappeared and that's the first time I came in contact with them I asked them what happened to them, but they didn't know anything about it. No understand.

So you found communication between you and them to be difficult?

Then I did, and then I got my little book on pidgin English. The Yanks had them. Our government didn't publish them, but the Yanks had them.

16:30 I procured one of them and I learned a bit of Malay, Malaysian and pidgin English.

Do you mean Melanesian or Malaysian?

Malaysian, Malaya, and I think "tidek bagus" is about the only one to come to mind at the moment. No good, tidek bagus. Anyhow,

17:00 then when I got to Aitape I got in charge of a whole lot of them then, but at Karkar I had a lot to look after there. But there is a lot to say about Karkar. I got friendly with one of these natives, Didday his

name was, and there was Miaow and Ungabar.

- 17:30 Three come to mind at the moment, and Didday seemed to be the friendly one of the lot of them, and we exchanged language type of thing and he loved to get Johnson's Baby Powder and he never got it off me but from someone else. Anyway, one night I'm writing a letter to my wife and it's dark. I've got the kerosene light going and it's dark, and remember I said I put slats around this thing, and all I could
- 18:00 hear was, "Master, master." and I looked up and all I could see was a pair of white eyes looking at me through the slats and it was Didday and I said, "What do you want?" And he said, "You have powder belong master?" And I said, "Oh yeah, all right." and I gave him the thing and he just shook it along his hand like that and just went [slaps forehead] and he had a white mark, that's all he wanted to do. Just did that and he passed it back. He decorated himself with a bit of white powder and it smelled nice.
- 18:30 Anyhow he invited me up to his village and I got leave from the captain and I got my haversack and put a tin of peaches in it and a bit of stuff to eat on the way, and we had to go up the side of this volcano and he told me how to go there, so I got to a certain point and there was no one in sight, I had come to a fork in the road and it was left or right.
- 19:00 I stopped here and the next thing there were two natives behind me. They had been watching me from a tree and they jumped down and told me go to the left and they escorted me. They wanted to take my rifle and I said no. They took my haversack instead. Never let the rifle out of your sight. So anyhow we started walking and by the time I got to the village there were about nine natives behind me. They were all up the trees watching me coming up the tracks. They must have done this to the Japs. Anyhow I got to the village and there were quite a few huts.
- 19:30 I suppose in all there would be about a hundred and fifty women and children and boys around. Anyhow, Didday's number one meri [Papuan female] was there and she was his wife, and he said, "You like tea, a cup of tea." and I said, "Oh yes." so he jabbered something to his number one meri and she
- 20:00 jabbered something to his number two meri and she took off and came back with a commode that they had got from the mission when the mission was there, and I said, "No, no tea, not for me."

They were making tea in a commode?

Yeah, in a pee pot. They got it from the missionaries when the Japs overran the place. So then I opened up the tin of peaches up

- 20:30 and I got my knife and I presented it to this number one meri and she backed away and Didday jabbered something and got real mad and she put it in her mouth straight away and she liked it, so I gave her the whole tin and passed it around everywhere so I got myself in there with these peaches. Yeah, they showed me around the village and told me how the Japs had raided the place and how they took to the bush when they came.
- 21:00 I think the missionaries were speared if I remember correctly.

By whom?

Not by the Japanese, but by the Japanese sympathisers, the natives. They were split. There were natives that went along with the Japs.

Did you meet any of them?

No, I wouldn't want to. If I would have found out I would have grabbed them and put them straight in. I think they might have got dealt with themselves by their own

- 21:30 people. Anyhow, what else happened in Karkar?

Because I heard that Australian troops were involved in a few massacres?

There could have been. I don't know.

Did you hear anything about it?

That's the first I have heard of it from you.

What was the name of those people, do you remember? Okiba people, I think they were Northern PNG, was it?

You are getting into Dutch New Guinea now.

Near Madang area?

No, higher.

- 22:00 You've got to go up past Aitape to be in Dutch New Guinea. Now of course it's Irian Jaya, Indonesian. They are getting closer and closer to us. Now, what were we onto?

You were talking about the natives.

There is another little item in respect of the natives.

22:30 You heard me say there was an axeman by the name of Boof Wilson from Geelong. One day there at Karkar I had these natives doing something, and Boof Wilson came in and wanted them to do something and this native said that I had already told him to do something and he was going to do what I asked him to do first, and Boof gave him a backhander

23:00 and I chastised Boof. I said, "You lay your hands off them. If you've got any complaints you come to me and you don't do that." The natives come up to me and said, "He is a bad man, Mr Boof is a bad man." Anyhow, they as much said something is going to happen to him, you know. So I didn't take any notice. When anything goes wrong in the bush with the axeman up there or the loggers there is usually a siren on one of

23:30 the tractors. So anyhow I'm working away at the mill and I heard this siren and I thought, oh hell what's going on? Something has happened up in the bush. And back they come and who do you think was on the stretcher? Boof Wilson. He had cut a tree and nobody had yelled out timber and he copped it, and he broke his legs or his shoulder and anyhow he went off his nut and they sent him back home

24:00 When he was brought in on the stretcher the natives were clapping their hands like mad. They knew something was going to happen. It was real spooky.

Do you reckon he had a curse on him, for sure?

Well why did they single him out, with all the axemen that were up there he was the one that got it? So it's a bit strange, stranger than fiction. Anyhow, another thing that happened either there or at Aitape, we were ready to pull out.

24:30 It must have been at Aitape, this one, because we had no MPs at Karkar Island, so I'll jump a bit and go to Aitape while this is fresh in my mind, but there was a couple of truckloads of food in boxes, tins and cans and all the rest of it piled up high on the edge of the Aitape River. It was in a clearing and myself and a couple of other fellows were walking around there and came back and saw this

25:00 and I said to the MP, "What's all this stuff there for? What's going to happen to that?" He said, "Oh we are going to burn it, we've had orders to burn it from high command." I said, "Why? Why don't you give it to the natives?" He said, "No, we can't do that. If we give it to the natives they won't work." which if you think about it, you give them the food which is what they work for, or a shilling or something so they can buy a lap lap, but if you give them the food they are being paid for nothing

25:30 so they burnt it, and so much for than. Then after the Japanese signed the surrender there was that much waste going on there. There was that plus there was the jeeps, they pushed the jeeps onto these landing ship things, what were they again?

Landing Ship Tanks, LSTs.

LSTs, they pushed all these jeeps on to the LSTs and take them out

26:00 towards Celio Island and drop them in, other than taking them back doing them up and selling them, no, it's not worth it. Chuck them in the sea. So there will be a lot of rotting jeeps and equipment between Celio Island the mainland. That went on for days.

Why didn't they give them to the Australians?

Not worth it, not even for them. By the time you pay the cost of shipping a jeep

26:30 down to Melbourne or Queensland, then you have to get it all cleaned up and make it roadworthy it wouldn't be worth it, so dump it. It's cheaper. Anyhow that's the way the economics work I suppose. Yes, so Karkar Island, we finished from there and then we moved to Aitape. Now at Aitape that was interesting

27:00 because that's where the war finished. We had a mill out amongst the sack sack palms and the mosquitoes were bad and we had nothing except the tents and we built the mill from the timber we could scrounge and everything else. We were out of Aitape a bit.

27:30 So anyhow, Aitape, we got settled and got the mill up and running and then of course as I said before, I was the unofficial recreational officer and there was a Major Burt from the Salvation Army stationed at Aitape. I found that out.

28:00 I found out through the Army Education Service that there were people there who could give lectures so we had no tent, so I asked Major Burt if it was possible to get a tent big enough for darts, so he said he said he would see what he could do and in a fortnight he rang through to say, "Yes, we've got one for you. The tent was as big a circus tent,

28:30 nearly as big as a circus tent. Then I had to get it put up and I couldn't get the voluntary labour, the blokes themselves to come and get off their backsides to come and put up the tent for their own use. So I went and saw the captain and told him all about it. So he ordered them and they all got stuck into it and put it up, and once again I built myself a little corner. I put the floor down and made myself

- 29:00 a little sleeping quarters right alongside a Japanese track that led into the scrub, they reckon it was all cleared and only a few weeks before we got there somebody, their number came up. They went in for a wee wee off the track and tripped up a booby trap. Well you could go up there but you must not go off the track. So anyhow, I got this thing built and
- 29:30 I got in touch with Major Burt again and he supplied us with darts and cards, drafts, PKs [chewing gum], whatever was going I got for them, writing paper from the Australian Comforts Fund, envelopes, pens, and arranged lectures and took them out to all the different films that were on.
- 30:00 I did that at the other place as well. I started at Lae, I got the idea about running the show and getting the pictures first and finding out what's on, going to the entertainment place and finding out what is on and when. So I used to tell them.
- 30:30 I used to put a little notice up, so and so is on, "Major Goes To Rio" or something is on at such and such a time at such and such a place, and we used to take them out there. And then at one stage there the axemen were in the back of the truck and there was a bit of an argument started with Boof Wilson and this other fellow from Queensland
- 31:00 and they were big fellows, and there were axes lying around on the back of the truck and we were just ready to move off and this blue [fight] started and they were thumping each other and everyone else jumped out of the back and I grabbed a couple of the axes and pulled them off in case they stuck into them. The captain came up and stopped it, and it was just after that that Boof went off his head. So that is just another one by the way. Off the beaten track again.
- 31:30 **Were they mainly big chaps, the axemen?**
- No. Rex Izzard from Tasmania, he was a small fellow. He was the first bloke I've ever had a fight with, fisticuffs.
- You had a fight?**
- Yeah, and you wouldn't believe it was over a boot. In the sawdust pit there was water in it and it got clogged up and he took his boots off and stood in there to get in and clean it out and he got one boot on
- 32:00 and just for a joke I moved one boot back out of his reach and he kept going back for it until he looked around and he said, "I'll have you." and I said, "Yeah, you're on." They always say, "I'll have you." It was suppose to be a joke on my part but it wasn't on his part. He jumped up and wanted to have a go there and then. I remember my father always saying if you get into a fight don't do it in front of people. Invite them around the back lane somewhere where there are just the two of you,
- 32:30 and you'll find that nine times out of then they will back down. So a few people had gathered around and I said, "Rex, come over here." and he said, "No, I will fight you here." I said, "No, come on over here in the sack sack palms." So we went to a clearing in there and it was no good, they all followed, "Fight, fight, fight." you know. So we got into it and he's a little bloke, poor little bugger. Anyhow we were fighting away and we had our corners too
- 33:00 and after a few minutes we had a break and I went to my corner and I said, "What am I doing wrong?" And he said, "You are not using your left." I said, "Right." In we go again. So I used my left and I stopped it and I said, "That's it." Rex said, "What's wrong?" I said, "Have a look at you. You are covered in blood." What had happened, I had give him a blood nose and in exchanging punches I'm hitting his blood and putting it back all over him. There was blood everywhere. Anyhow we gave it away and he went down to wash
- 33:30 himself and I come down with him and I said, "Think about it, Rex. Wasn't that stupid?" And he said, "What was it over?" I said, "Your stupid boot. I was only acting the fool and you threw out the challenge to me and I accepted. It's silly and we have got better things to do than stupid things like that." Anyhow, heat of the jungle. That's another little story.
- 34:00 What else happened? I did go over to Celio Island, that was a recreational island for the Americans to have a rest over there when they come out of the jungle they'd go over to Celio Island. They had themselves set up there with a canteen, refrigerators and everything, a real home away from home. We went over there for a while and made welcome and back we went again on these landing crafts. One of
- 34:30 fellows blew himself up, Sergeant Digby, he was a staff sergeant and he went out to get some fish using gelignite and he lit the thing and didn't see anything coming and it was ignited and he blew himself to bits. He was the one fatality that we had in our whole unit.
- What about land mines and things like that?**
- No, we didn't strike any. We
- 35:00 heard of them. We had people coming in with land mine wounds. We had Japanese coming in. At Aitape there was what was called Atagee Airstrip and I got friendly with the Australian crash crew and the chap in the tower was an American, Warren Allen, and I got friendly with the three of them and I got some of the timber for them to make a platform so they could sit out in the

- 35:30 sun. They had cardboard bomb cases and they filled them with dirt and put palms in them like a home away from home with these palms sitting back on seats watching the planes come in. The fellow in the tower, his job was to contact them as they came in and give them instructions. Anyhow, I should not have been up there talking to him because that's a dangerous job he's got. I did go up quite a few times, but this particular day I went up
- 36:00 and I was talking to him and I must have distracted him. He had already given an order to one plane and he said, "Circle and land to the east." and another one called in a few minutes later and he said, "Circle and land to the east." But no, he circled and landed to the west. So now you have two planes coming in head on, and as luck would have it Allen got the Aldis lamp and fired it at the one that should have been coming from the east, the last one coming from the
- 36:30 west, shot at him and he in turn went up straight like that. Just missed. It would have been a nice old bingle if they'd met. And the fellow that was flying the plane was a colonel and Allen was only a corporal and you ought have heard him pay the colonel out. He is entitled to do it. He paid him right out completely and got an apology from him.
- From the colonel, he got an apology?**
- He was wrong. Tried to land to the east, (UNCLEAR)
- 37:00 west, (UNCLEAR) east. They were head on. Anyhow, that's another little part of it. Another plane ran off the runway and we had to tow him back out again. More exciting there than at the mill. Yes, so then came VP Day [Victory in the Pacific] and we heard it there on the strip. So I'd
- 37:30 saved up all my ration, beer ration. I was saving it for that day. I didn't drink much at all, but I was saving for that. I think I had half a dozen saved up so I put it with them and had a couple of drinks, I suppose a bottle overall. But they got stoned and were letting off flares. Everybody, the Yanks as well, flares going everywhere because it was all over. I thought I'd be home in a month. No. I wasn't home until 1946.
- 38:00 I think it was 1946. 1945, near enough, the 10th of December 1945, and my VX number was VX103171, Australian Army, date of birth, the 11th of November 1920, place of birth, Newport Victoria, date of enlistment, 7th of September
- 38:30 1942, locality of enlistment, South Caulfield Victoria, place of enlistment, Mount Martha, wrong. AIF, that's right. Next of kin, Arthur Verity, my dad, he's gone. Date of discharge, 10th of December 1945, and posting the discharge was the 2/2nd Field Company. That was the one I was with just for discharge, the 2nd Corps. The 2nd Forestry was my main unit.
- 39:00 Then I got shifted to Wewak.

Tape 6

- 00:32 **We were talking about Wewak.**
- Wewak, oh yes. While I was at Aitape I heard the wife's next door neighbour's daughter had married Snowy, Snowy what's his name. Anyhow we will call him Snowy. He was a fair headed fellow so they called him Snowy, and he had arrived in Wewak
- 01:00 in a certain battalion and I thought oh great. I went AWL [absent without leave] and I got onto a plane and told a biscuit bomber [cargo plane] pilot I wanted to go to Wewak, was he going there. "Yes, I am going to be there for a little while and then I am coming back." I said, "Right, beaut." So he said, "I want you to kick the stuff out." and I said, "All right, fair enough." So I went up in a biscuit bomber and I kicked the supplies out over the mountains to some of the troops up there and then went down to Wewak
- 01:30 and I looked for this platoon, and sure enough I found him, Snowy Cooper. So I found him and we had quite a long talk and then I had to get back and that's the only time I went AWL to see Snowy and then we got transferred down to Wewak. I met him again there and had a few beers with him and talked and
- 02:00 there was no mill. There was a mill, but it wasn't ours. We were more or less waiting to go home now. Quite a few months had gone past now since we left Karkar and we knew eventually we would go home after this peace thing in the Pacific so we,
- 02:30 I finished up, I was what they call the regimental runner at this particular place in Wewak and the CO said to me one day, "I want to get rid of all those papers and stuff, make sure they are all burnt Jack, I want them all out of the road." and I said, "OK." and he said, "Get someone to do it for you. Don't you do it, I want you here." So I commandeered a bloke and I said, "I want you to take all those papers out
- 03:00 over the road from us into the sack sack palms and make sure you burn every one." and he said, "OK." I

said, "I don't care how long it takes, take all day if you want, just make sure they are all burnt". So he goes out there and he disappears into the sack sack palms with all the papers and I saw the smoke coming up and I thought, that's all right, and then about four o'clock in the afternoon he had gone back to his unit, and about four o'clock all hell let loose. There were

- 03:30 grenades going off. I had a base plate come right near me and I dropped to the floor and it whizzed passed me through the mouth and sides of the hut and there were incendiaries going off everywhere and the MPs came down to see what's going on and I said, "I know what's happened. I had orders to send this fellow to burn these papers and he had only lit them on top of a Japanese bomb dump".
- 04:00 All this stuff going off everywhere, talk about Guy Fawkes Day. Before all this happened I had already applied for an occupational release through AV Jennings and my occupational release came through. Now I had an old gramophone box with the old lift up lid on it and I've taken the gramophone out because it was broken and I'm using the box to put my papers in and I put this occupational release in it and put it up on the shelf
- 04:30 out of sight and the CO was an architect and he had applied for an occupational release too. So anyhow, I also joined the unit Ccdre which means I've got to go to Japan to wind up, help them over there but the wife was crook on that, that means another twelve months I'll be away. I said, no, that wasn't fair. So I shut up about that, and I shut up about the occupational release and anyhow, then
- 05:00 I heard that the Shropshire was coming in to pick up anyone on occupational release. So immediately out it comes and I showed it to the CO and he said, "Oh God, how long have you had that?" And I said, "For about two months." and he said, "I've applied for one and got knocked back. Anyhow." he said, "Good luck to you." and he had already drawn my plans for Karkar, the house I was going to build and call Karkar,
- 05:30 and I said, "I will build that house and if you are ever around pop in." He wouldn't know where to go anyhow. So anyhow, the Shropshire duly turned up and now I am worried about the unit cadre, they can pull me off any time off the boat, and before I get on the boat. So I am going up this rope ladder to get to the top and I got my feet on the boat, "Ah, now they can't touch me. I'm in the captain's hands now, aren't I?" So off we went home and on the way one of the sailors befriended me and said, "Would you like to sleep in a hammock and I said, "Yeah, I wouldn't mind."
- 06:00 So he put me in this hammock and I'm glad I got in it because when we got out in the deep sea the nose of the boat would go right down and all you could see was a wall of water. Then the water would go down and the next thing you would see would be blue sky, if I had been on the deck I would have been sick but being in a hammock you went with it, swayed with it, sort of equilibrium.
- 06:30 So that was alright, and when we arrived in Sydney everybody turned out. Little boats and yachts and all came out to give us a big welcome and we stayed at Wallgrove Camp for a couple of days then into the trains and back to Melbourne. I had rung the wife to tell her that I was coming and she was waiting on the Spencer Street platform, our train pulled in but nobody got off. We were told to stay on the train. The next thing we pulled out again and we finished up at Royal Park.
- 07:00 So now my wife's on the platform, thank goodness my brother had brought her over because they jumped into the car and went to Royal Park. I had to get all my papers and get discharged properly and he was the first one to greet me, and he had tears in his eyes because he saw this fellow greeting his son. Of course I wasn't his son, I'm his brother,
- 07:30 but he had tears in his eyes. He was the man who was the fit one of the family. He was a fitness fanatic and he was the first one in the family to die, not Dad or Mum, they went before him, but he was the first one of the boys and girls to die. He was fit but he died of myeloma, cancer of the bone marrow. So my own daughter didn't want a bar of me. She hadn't seen me for a while.
- 08:00 So that's about the round up of it, unless I can think of anything else.

I want to stick to New Guinea for this tape at least, I just find it very interesting, how did you find the environment you were in? Obviously it was all jungle, is this the first time you would have come in contact with jungle?

- 08:30 I tell you what, for a white man, three months is enough.

In the jungle?

Yeah. In New Guinea, jungle or even in Port Moresby because, it might be different now with your air-conditioning, but around the jungle and the plantations it is a steaming heat and a depressing heat.

- 09:00 One time I looked at the sky and everywhere you looked it was blue yet over the Tooraselli Mountains which were blue, over there you could hear rumblings, you think it's gun fire, a few cannons and stuff. But it wasn't. The next thing the sky is black and it is raining cats and dogs, and as fast as it comes it is gone, and now you've got rain and the heat on it and the steam coming up. You are having a Turkish bath every day
- 09:30 just about. You don't see too many fat people up there, they are all skinny. Even though we had, who was it? Blamey, General Blamey came up. That's something I forget to tell you at Karkar Island. We

were having our lunch and a special order came through that we had to stop our lunch and the axemen have got to go up and cut the timber because General Blamey wants to see us in action.

10:00 So we had to stop our lunch and I had to get the mill going and everybody had to do their job while General Blamey was there to see how we operated, and then we were cutting a sort of timber that had a cream circumference with a centre of purple. I've never seen it, a purple centre and cream the rest, and Blamey wanted some planks made out of that so that he could take that home on his launch. Also some other timber, he wanted teak, to make furniture with. General Blamey.

10:30 That was done, and they look after themselves, don't they?

He wasn't very well liked I understand?

No.

What did you think of him?

Well I never met the fellow, I only saw him that time but to me that was wrong. They are not like the old generals like back in the old days when a general will lead his army like Custer's Last Stand.

11:00 He's fighting with his men. Not these, they are all back room boys, play back home and issue orders like Hitler. Hitler wouldn't last five minutes if he went out to the front and fought with his men. It gives them inspiration if they go and lead their men, not lead on a telephone, or telegraph or whatever, now on the internet. No.

Speaking of that, did you ever feel guilty or eager to go to the front and fight alongside the infantry and not be in the forestry?

11:30 No, its just...

I know you felt you were doing your part?

I wasn't asked to go into forestry, I was put into forestry. Sorry, I asked to go into forestry, but in the other crowd, the supply columns, I wasn't asked. I was put in there. I asked to go in the engineers because learning all about cars and stuff

12:00 and being in the building trade they automatically put me under engineers. But infantry, well I was trained and if I had been in infantry I would have had to go and do it.

But that wasn't your preferred area?

No. You accept it. It's all right now. If someone asked you right now would you like to take a rifle and fight the fellow up the road here, both of you have a go.

12:30 You have got to kill him or he kills you. Would you do it? In this present day. You wouldn't do it, but if there is a war on and you know they are at your back door and you have to fight for survival then you'll do it. What else can we talk about?

In your environment, you were saying it's a damp heat.

13:00 **What characterised best, outside the heat, is there a sense of tiredness because it is so hot you are constantly feeling tired as a result of the work you are doing?**

The nights get a bit cold, so at least you get a good night's sleep. It gets cold at night time but not like here where you get a hot day and you get a hot night, but there it seems to get cool because you've got the sea all around.

13:30 The mountains break it a bit though. There are so many diseases up there. So many things you can get wrong. You can get beri beri, you have got to have fruit and stuff to keep beri beri away, dengue fever.

Have you seen people who've had dengue fever?

Yeah, we had one in our unit at Karkar. Just a mosquito we had there, he gave us the dengue fever, but he never gave us malaria but back to Wewak.

14:00 I was talking to Snowy one day and I felt this sting on my arm and a mosquito went straight up and down I went splat, and blood everywhere. I thought, you rotten little mongrel, it's probably malaria but as time went on nothing happened, but when I got discharged from the army after a couple of months it was a stinking hot day and I'm shivering, and so I drove the car down, I had a little AJS car,

14:30 I drove it down to my Dad's shop and he said, "Good God man, what's wrong with you?" I had a greatcoat on and it was a day like today. I said, "I'm cold and I'm shivering." He said, "You better get up to Repat in Kooyong Road." so I drove up to the repatriation hospital and the doctor saw me straight away and I said, "I want to be sick". He gave me a bowl and I brought up stuff like cooked minced steak,

15:00 and I hadn't had minced steak. So I bought all this up and he said, "You are off to Heidelberg son, you have got malaria". So I went to Heidelberg and they stuck me in a wheelchair and I was that thirsty and I said to the orderly, "Pull up here, I want to get a bottle of soft drink". He said, "No, you can't have that." I said, "I want a drink, I'm thirsty." and I had a little sip of pineapple and just went, "Errh",

straightaway.

15:30 That's how quick it worked. My stomach wouldn't take it and he said, "I told you". So after a while I was OK, and it was benign. It wasn't the one that was a repeat. It's a shocking feeling. But the wife didn't know anything about this and she was pregnant at the time too with Heather, so anyhow she heard the car coming up the hill in Gove Street

16:00 and this fellow gets out, a stranger, and he said, "Are you Jean?" And she said, "Yes." and he said, "I'm from the repatriation hospital in Kooyong Road. Jack's been taken to Heidelberg. He has got malaria." and he gave her the biggest shock she ever had. She rang there and they said that I would be OK in a day or so and would be back home. So you never know when it hits you, and that was just one little bugger at Wewak.

16:30 Talking about the heat and stuff up there.

Was the jungle a frightful place? You said you used to watch Tarzan a lot?

Tarzan seemed to have a bit of a gap between the trees, but up there you have stuff growing on the trees, undergrowth and that. The kunai grass grows from there, and sack sack palms are growing

17:00 everywhere and you are not short of things to eat up there, there are coconuts, paw paw, there are different types of berries and yams. You shouldn't go hungry once you know what you can eat and if you don't know what you can eat, ask a native and he will soon tell you.

How do they avoid all these diseases?

They get them. They don't live as long as us.

How long will they live?

Forty-five years and they are dead, in those days. It might be extended now.

17:30 **Did they get malaria as well?**

They get all sorts of stuff, beri beri, ulcers. I had an ulcer on my shin. That's what it was, an ulcer.

What were their sorts of remedies and cures for their problems?

The ANGAU, the Australian New Guinea Army [actually Administrative] Unit used to look after the natives, but with them they would have their own remedies for different things I suppose, leaves and stuff.

Did you ever try any?

No.

18:00 I tried the betel nut. They use a conban. It's a big long bean and they take the centre out of it and put lime in it and coral stuff, and chop it up and they poke it in there, and they got this green betel nut and they chew it and it makes your mouth feel like it's full of hair. I had a go, you are spitting all the time. Your mouth is full of hair,

18:30 and to counteract this they use lime. They stick this little reed in there and that's what makes them dopey, drugs them, and their mouth goes all red because of the betel nut and the lime. It brings out the blood or something. So they have blood all over their mouths and their eyes roll off their head. Like this stuff we've got here, marijuana. They were ahead of us with betel nut.

19:00 **Did a lot of the diggers try it in your unit?**

Oh, some of them tried it. We had jungle juice up there. We had one fellow making jungle juice out of raisins and sultanas and currants and stuff from the canteen and made his own. It was all fermented and sold it to the Yanks and they gave me a gallon bottle and said, "See if you can sell this to the Yanks". They didn't want it, they'd had enough of it. So I thought I would have a

19:30 try, so I took a little sip and oh it was strong. Poured a little on the table and put a match to it, whoosh, like methylated spirits, a blue flame, and they were drinking it.

Jungle juice. So what was it made out of, what sort of stuff did they use?

All sorts of stuff, rice, currants, anything that ferments, and it must have water in it somewhere because as it ferments it comes to a liquid and the liquid drops into a tube into a bottle

20:00 and that is the stuff they use. Mad.

So quite a few chaps used to drink this in your unit?

Abusing their system, abusing your stomach.

Did they get sick as a result of it?

Oh yes, and silly as a rabbit.

So I presume this would have been illegal?

Oh yeah. But they do all those things.

What about cigarettes? Did you ever have to improvise with cigarettes?

- 20:30 Ah yes, cigarettes. The army was the cause of me smoking. I had never smoked a cigarette until, where was it? I think it might have been Mt Martha, I may have started there. The Australian Comforts Fund gave out cigarettes; Craven As and then I got parcels up in New Guinea, one after the other with Craven A cigarettes in them. Puff puff. Now I'm a chronic asthmatic.
- 21:00 While I was, that back business with lifting the half filled drum of water, that caused my back to be, the disc to wear. Initially it was done by the water thing and then having to walk all the way back to the camp and the continuous rubbing
- 21:30 on a thing which is out of sync, it rubbed that off and inflamed it and I have had numerous X-rays on my back and I have a worn disc in my spine, and when I was laying bricks, it was silly. I could have gone back to butchering I suppose, but then you're lifting beef and stuff, but every year I would loose six weeks, maybe more, laid up with a crook back because of this
- 22:00 damn initial thing with the water can. So ulcer, my back, and cigarettes.

You have had a bit of tough time?

Now I have heart trouble. I have had it for a while now. Well, I've got a stent in my heart.

- 22:30 When was that? It must have been last year, April last year. I went to the, no, I had the flu and I'm in bed and my wife and my daughter went up to do the shopping up at Carrum Downs and our medical clinic is up there too in Hall Road.
- 23:00 So she went in to see the doctor to see if she could get a prescription to get me some medicine and he said, "No, I want Jack in here now." and she said, "He's in bed." So he said, "I'll fix it up". So he rang me up and I answered the phone and I said, "I'm in bed now." He said, "Get a taxi. I want you up here straightaway". So I got a taxi and went up and he saw me and checked me out and said, "Right, you are going to Baloora Hospital now, this afternoon." I said, "What about my wife? She won't know where I am."
- 23:30 As luck would have it, they got home before me and I told them I had to go to Baloora Hospital, so they had already arranged the taxi, the DVA [Department of Veterans' Affairs], so I went down to Baloora and while I am there, my doctor said, "Is there anyone down there who can look after you?" I said, "Dr Redstone." my heart specialist at that time. He had been treating me for eight years.
- 24:00 He never gave me an angiogram, always tablets. So I go down there and he's giving me Ventolin through the nose and mouth, oxygen, but he didn't say that the Ventolin was ten times stronger than what I normally have. So what happens? I have angina and it got the ward in a bit of a panic and got the nurses racing everywhere. So I get over that.
- 24:30 They rang him and he said to cut out the Ventolin. A bit late, but anyhow I got over the infection and I went back home and within a matter of hours in the early morning I got an ambulance and I'm off to the Frankston Hospital again and the doctors are ringing up and it's private, and I said, "Look, when you get in touch with them would you ask if I can see a cardiologist, Dr
- 25:00 Zeto". So he got in touch and he said, "Yes, it's OK, you can see him". So I got taken down there and he comes in the next morning and he said, "Have you ever had an angiogram?" I said, "No." "Well you are going to have one now." So back I went to Baloora Hospital and he did the angiogram and he came in and said, "Look at this." and he showed it to me. I've got a print in there, and there was a little pin hole in the main artery and he said, "Another week or so and you would have had a stroke or be dead".
- 25:30 He said, "I want you in St Vincent's Hospital on Tuesday". He had already made arrangements with the DVA and I got the taxi down there and he operated and put a stent in and the next day or the day after I was walking as good as gold. Instead of being puffing and blowing I walked as good as gold. He did say there was another blockage, but it wasn't as bad.
- 26:00 So as time went on this other one started to block up. It's only just recently I went back and had another angiogram down at Peninsula Private, they have it down there now, and he said, "Your stent is working OK and the other blockage seems to have disappeared". I'm on Plavex tablets which is a blood thinning agent. So as long as I keep taking that I'll be alright. As far as the asthma is concerned, that will never get any better.
- 26:30 I'm on Seratite puffs, I'm on, what's the other stuff. I shouldn't be taking half of this stuff. Seratite should be enough, but I've got another thing there which I take a puff of everyday, which I didn't do today either, and so, we're living on tablets and powders.

Can I ask you, there's a few more questions I've realised with PNG. The Japanese POWs [prisoners of war], did you ever get a chance to meet them?

- 27:00 Japanese POWs? When we were at Aitape they were on the airstrip. This plane came in. We might have been at Wewak. Anyway, wherever it was this plane came in and I saw all these natives and there were stretchers between two of them, I was the other side of the strip, and we weren't allowed to go over there and the plane landed and
- 27:30 the natives lifted up these stretchers and there were Japanese prisoners on them and they didn't walk nicely, they jogged along and one of them dropped it at the door, and the Japanese fell out so they piled him back on again. They were rough. That's the only Japs I saw. But my wife saw, she was going up to Albury and on the way back there was a train coming the other way, full
- 28:00 of Japanese prisoners. She said, "Their scarlet red coats and their yellow skin was a shocking mixture of colours". She said, "They were all grinning like Cheshire cats." and I said, "Yeah, that's what they are like". But I didn't see any Japanese up there, not face to face. But they did have at Aitape, there was an area there where we weren't allowed to go.
- 28:30 You could go so far and then there was guards, people there, guarding, and we asked them what was going on and they said, "We are waiting for the Japanese to come out. They are going to come out of here. It's the only way out now. They will give themselves up. Just wait there". Not too many gave themselves up, hara kiri. As bad as these damn stupid
- 29:00 Al Qaedas.
- I'm sorry?**
- As mad as the Al Qaedas, these terrorists that are blowing themselves up.
- Al Qaeda, right. Now, this is going to be a bit of a strange question, but how did the men in those environments alleviate their sexual frustration, in Lae, Madang, Karkar Island, Aitape?**
- Maybe they had wet dreams.
- 29:30 I don't know, I have never caught anybody masturbating.
- But that would have been basically, obviously there were no brothels?**
- I suppose that was the only thing they would do, but it wouldn't be within sight I wouldn't think. They would be very embarrassed if they got caught.
- With native women?**
- Oh that, I don't know about that. There was some talk of it, but once you see them you wouldn't touch them with a forty-foot pole.
- 30:00 Some would say, "You don't look at the mantelpiece when you are poking the fire".
- But you said that you heard rumours?**
- You hear rumours, but never actually.
- Can you tell us what those rumours were?**
- I wouldn't swear by it.
- That's OK. Can you tell us though what those rumours were?**
- 30:30 **I can't say for sure. I can say for sure I didn't hear anybody say that X did a native. It has been rumoured that the soldiers have done it to the natives, but I don't know how true that is. There were a lot of rumours going around as far as that subject is concerned.**
- 31:00 **No.**
- Weren't any of the women dressed up well?**
- Some were well endowed, breast-wise, but others were like razor strops you know. The Yanks put out a little cartoon of the women's breasts, one was turned up one, that was called an
- 31:30 anti aircraft, an ack-ack gun, and then you had others hanging down here, they were razor strops. Then others were little weeny ones, they were itty bitties. Some cartoonist did it all.
- I like the names, anti-aircraft guns.**
- Ack-acks. Then you had ones that had fallen right down and they were super droopers.
- 32:00 **There must have been some desperate diggers out there though in that case?**
- I think a lot went out with Mrs Palmer and her five daughters I think.
- What about nurses?**
- Well, that I don't know, I can't swear to that but I guess they may have done. I think the officers would

be in that one.

32:30 They wouldn't be touching the other ranks. I took a nurse out and I took an officer with me. I wasn't an officer. I wasn't even a corporal, just a sapper. Sister Coppoley and Sister, I scrubbed it off the internet. I had it on and I thought I'll leave that out and scrubbed it out. One comes from Geelong, that's how I got

33:00 talking to her. I was talking away and this officer, he was friendly with me, we decided we'd go out and have a bite to eat out in the bush somewhere, along the beach and chase butterflies. You can get the blue empress up there, a nice butterfly. So I went out with a bit of a net and tried to catch some but I got the guinea golds instead, there's plenty of them up there. I was the muggin, cooked up a bit of bacon and eggs,

33:30 a bit of a fire and that's all we did. My wife to this day says, "Don't tell me that's all you did, you chased butterflies" and I say, "We did, we chased butterflies and we had eggs and bacon on the beach and the officer had a revolver with him in case of any trouble". What's next on the agenda?

34:00 **When you were there, I'm sure you had a lot of time to yourself, personal time?**

Oh a lot of time.

What did you think about?

You'd either write letters or go to a theatre, the outdoor theatres or go to the recreation hut, tell yarns to your mates, swap stories, go to the hospital. I used to visit the hospital a lot.

Why was that?

I was their recreational officer and I used to take

34:30 stuff to them as well and talk to them. They'd want people to talk to. When you're in a hospital on your own and there's nobody to talk to, they're all sick. Who wants to talk to a sick person? You're sick, I'm sick, I'm not going to bother with you, you're not going to be bothered with me but one person comes along, a stranger and talks to you, you listen. We'd have long talks, this fellow and others there.

35:00 Major Bert, he was a big help, the Salvation Army fellow. We got letters from the army educational service to read. A lot of companies send you things even the Forestry Timber Industry of Australia sent all the members of all the forestry units a pound in their wages.

35:30 **How often did you get paid, fortnightly, monthly?**

Fortnightly.

So every fortnight you got a pound?

No, they gave us a pound, a donation of a pound.

One off.

Yeah. A pound in those days was a lot of money. I don't know what the equivalent is I suppose ten dollars.

Why did they do that?

Patriotic. Wish a few more had done the same thing.

36:00 **What did you do for them?**

Nothing, just that we are a forestry unit and they are timber mills in Australia, cutting timber for houses and stuff.

Did a lot of these chaps who were in the forestry company come back into?

Probably would. Rex Izzard would. Rex is over in Tassie. He was working the mills over in Tasmania. I think they've got a mill, Izzard brothers, over there.

36:30 **But you never worked in the mill that much did you?**

When it was my shift I'd be on the motors all the time.

This is even in PNG?

Yeah. I've got to maintain that motor and make sure it's got the fuel in it. When it stops, when there's a break, I've got to work. I've got to check everything, check the tension of the belt, put more grease on the greased areas, check the oils, make sure the oils are all right, the diesels got to be up to it.

37:00 You can't let a diesel heater run out on a diesel motor. You've got to keep it up otherwise you get the vacuums and it mucks up all your jets. You've got to keep it all in trim. Not only that, you've got to do the small ones, the sizing one, the little sizers and then you've got the saw doctor, you've got to look after his machinery too.

- 37:30 That's another thing which is different cutting timber down here to cutting timber in New Guinea, the timber up there has got shrapnel, bullets and once the saw hits one of those, bang, away goes the tooth, the edge goes off the tooth and that's when the saw doctor screams and swears like mad because it means another job for him. That saw has got to stop, be brought over to him, set it up, reset the teeth and sharpen them all again but the spare one goes on
- 38:00 in the meantime. He's kept busy when the shrapnel gets hit. Usually he'll inspect the log before it goes in and he can see where shrapnel has gone in and he'll get a tomahawk and cut around it until he can find it. Better that than run it through the saw. Sometimes they miss, get a bullet and it makes a mess of your saw tooth.
- 38:30 **Were there any accidents, anyone get hurt by accidents?**
- No, very close but no. Nobody got cut with an axe that I know of. Only that one Wilson, the tree fell on him. They went close but they had a
- 39:00 knack. They fed the piece of timber in and the piece that's no good, that's the one you've got to throw out to one side. You go right through it and it goes through then the tailer brings it out. This one's the header and the other one's the tailer, like a two up. He heads one in and the other fellow tails it out. The left hand side if he's cutting this side of the saw,
- 39:30 that side will be thrown out and this side will be pulled right back out and sent down this side. This piece is probably a bit of bark or something, we'll probably use that, throw it in the fire but today we use it, chew it up and used for mulch or something.

Tape 7

- 00:34 **Right I wanted to ask you before you started to tell us the story about you went to dinner at the village and I don't think you quite finished the story, you got to the point where you handed out the peaches?**
- Yes well there wasn't much else after that, just that they showed me around the village and they told me how they acquired that commode from the mission
- 01:00 and what happened to the missionaries, that they had been speared by these rogue natives, Japanese sympathisers. I don't know what happened to them. There wasn't much else. Three or four of them escorted me down the volcano, I didn't go right to the top and have a look in but I was half way up and it was getting pretty warm up there.
- 01:30 They've got this village right on the side of it and if ever it erupts they would cop it straight away but they have had rumblings recently in the 1990s and they tip it might go any old tick of the clock now.
- 02:00 There is nothing much else to tell that just about winds up Karkar. That's where I got my first wound, a varicose ulcer.
- What about I read somewhere a story with a scorpion?**
- Oh yes,
- 02:30 that was on the way up to the village at Karkar. We got to that fork in the road that we were talking about and I saw this black thing, it was about six or nine inches long, scorpions are usually a brownish orange colour but this one was jet black and it had two nippers on the front and two nippers on the back and it was looking at me and his nippers were going like that
- 03:00 and these natives come along, one with a spear and he speared it and he was jumping around for joy. He reckoned it was number one kayakay and he was going to take it back and eat it. I suppose it would taste like crayfish, I didn't want to try it.
- Did they cook it up while you were there?**
- No, he might have eaten it raw behind my back, I don't know.
- 03:30 They were very friendly, like children, all the time playing, they're jabbering away in their language and laughing like mad and probably having a joke on you and not knowing it.
- Did you get on well with them?**
- Yes I get on pretty well with all foreign people,
- 04:00 it's just that I don't like them trying to ram things down our throats, their way of living when they are in this country. If I go to their country like we're in New Guinea and I didn't listen to them about that sting tree, you listen to them and you don't tell them what to do, they tell you as far as those things are concerned and like if I was over in Italy I'm not going to tell them to start learning English so I can

understand them,

04:30 I would have to learn Italian so that I could understand them.

I mean they helped you with the work a lot, were they good workers?

Oh yes they got paid by ANGAU and no, not good workers. They work but very slowly, you can't work them up into a frenzy. They will do the work and you will get the odd one that is more willing than the others and

05:00 he carries the heavy load and they wake up to that, "Why should I be working heavy when this fellow is not doing as much as me?" so they don't do it. I can see they get a lot of disease cause they walk around bare footed which I suppose their feet would get hardened to it and

05:30 where there is water around they will have a splash in the water and they like soap and you give them soap and powder they like that, that's in those days, now they probably have stores up there and electricity and main roads and all the rest of it. I would like to go back to Karkar just to have a little look see I doubt if I ever will though.

Did you ever go back to New Guinea at all?

No,

06:00 I went to New Zealand. I never thought of Karkar and I don't think it would suit Jean or I to stay any length of time, it would only be a flying visit sort of thing, a day or two and I don't know if Karkar has accommodation or if I would have to go to Madang and stay at Madang

06:30 and fly over there and get a launch over there and stay one day and come back to Madang again, probably that's the way to do it. Anyway why, they would all be dead by now. They don't live very long, about forty five years, fifty and they look very old men at that age because of the heat, they don't last long.

And how did you refer to them?

By name, I knew their names, if I didn't know their names it would be boy or meri in the case of a woman.

07:00 **Why did they call the women meri?**

They call them meri two, Number One Meri and Number Two Meri. They don't say girlfriend, they say meri, I don't know why.

Did they use the betel nut much while they were working?

Yes, it seemed to drive them on to do the work,

07:30 sort of a pick me up but then it lets them down later when it wears off, dopey like marijuana.

Do they get sick from it?

I guess they do, I don't know but I suppose they would.

Did many of the soldiers use the betel nut?

Oh only

08:00 to try it out but I guarantee none of them stuck to it, not when you get a mouthful of hair, oh no.

Apart from the scorpion and you mentioned a few mosquitoes, did you see any other wildlife?

That was on Kakar. I didn't see any snakes there, there were geckos they are like little lizards, pale.

08:30 A snake, where did I get that snake from, I had a green tree snake. We had a warrant officer and he wasn't very popular. He had a garden with tomatoes in it. Now where was that, and I had this green tree snake, one of the natives gave it to me,

09:00 wasn't game to let it go. He had this green tree snake and he said, "You no kai kai you master, look". So I put my hand there. So he gave it to me and helped it off his hand and hooked it around mine, so I'm stuck with it now, about that long and I wasn't sure if it was a venomous one or not at the time, it wasn't, but this warrant officer had this tomato patch and I thought right, and I dropped it in there.

09:30 I don't know if he found it or not.

What about wild pigs?

Yes, yes, I used to go pig shooting and we got a boar one day in a trip. We set a trap at Aitape and we were on bully beef for quite a while and we caught this boar, quite a few of us and we got the local butcher,

- 10:00 the local butcher from the camp and he fixed him up and we had it but we shouldn't have. You should have a medical check before you do that but we were all right, we were lucky. It could have had TB [tuberculosis] or something like that. So from then on any more we thought any more we get we will get blood tested or something.
- 10:30 **Was it good eating?**
- Oh yeah it was like ordinary pork and better than bully beef but what annoyed me was the Yanks [Americans], it was like a home away from home, three course meals and roast potatoes and roast lamb and here we are eating rotten mashed potatoes and bully beef.
- 11:00 You know we were the lowest paid army in the world at that time, the lowest and today is the anniversary of the end of the war in Europe.
- Today is VE [Victory in Europe] Day?**
- Yes I saw it in the paper somewhere, the 15th August.
- 11:30 **'45.**
- No, 1945 was Japan. VE day was a couple of years before that wasn't it?
- Both in '45. Japan was a few months after.**
- Oh there you go. You live and learn, even though I was there.
- So how did you get on with the Americans?**
- All right, good with them. They are bladder skites but you take that.
- 12:00 **They boasted?**
- They boasted yeah, all the time but you just take that and put it down to ignorance.
- There must have been a lot of envy because of their higher pay and better food?**
- Yes and they got ice cream we never saw ice cream.
- 12:30 The only time we saw it was when we went to Celio Island and they gave us a slap up dinner and spoiled us. Only a couple of us went over. They'd give us an LST and we would go over.
- I wanted to ask you a little more about your work as a recreation officer, did you ever get films in or movies?**
- 13:00 Can I just read from this book?
- Oh no don't read it just jog your memory we don't want to see the top of your head while you are reading like that.**
- Pictures the sixteenth AAD 'Kings Row', an excellent film, I would like to see it again. The acting and storyline were great. Now these are the things I would let our unit know,
- 13:30 that Kings Row was on at the sixteenth AAD. And as I go through I will find out where the things are on, church today, we had church in the big marquee and I would arrange for Major Burke to come and give a talk. The 4th Infantry troop camp we had pictures called A Bed Time Story and went to the 2/3rd AGH 6th division
- 14:00 and saw Kings Row again. So that's the sort of thing I would do find out where the pictures are from the entertainment place and we would go and advertise, let them know and take them to the particular thing. One thing that did happen there was a radio station up there, one of the camps got a radio station going and I operated that for a while. I knew nothing about radio
- 14:30 but simple stuff, just turned it on and started talking and, "Now for those who want to hear such and such, here it is." and put on the record, go outside and have a smoke and come back in, "Any more requests? Here's a request from sergeant so and so." but that only lasted a couple of days for a bit of experience.
- 15:00 There was plenty of entertainment up there but there wouldn't have been for the front line people. They didn't get any entertainment unless they come back when they're relieved, then they get it. We had Gracie Fields [singer] up there and we had some of the Australian people came up and entertained.
- How was Gracie Fields?**
- Good,
- 15:30 she was great. She is gone now but she was a great entertainer and what's his name Bob Hope [comedian], he only entertained the Americans and we used to sneak in there and have a look at the back, way back and all you could see was Bob Hope about this big, you know way back on the edge of the valley and he's down there and we were way up there and all the Yanks in the middle.

16:00 He used to be well attended. No a lot of these entertainers from Australia they gave up their time to come up there and took a risk too, the risk was there all the time. Like today they would think twice about doing it I reckon. There's anti aircraft

16:30 missiles and so on. No, they were good and they tried to boost our morale.

What about sporting matches or competitions?

I organised little bob sets,

17:00 you put on the end of a table, a long piece of timber with holes in it and numbers and you pop the ball through and add up the score, there were plenty of table games. Table tennis, we played table tennis, we had one of those up there for them and board games, Monopoly, Snakes and Ladders, checkers.

Did you ever have matches between say football?

Yes, we did

17:30 with the table tennis, inter unit, one unit against our unit or two units would play up there. No I was kept busy with these things, always at everybody's beck and call. Even when one of the tenants in the cookhouse got crook I had to go and take his place, work in the cookhouse serving meals.

18:00 Jack-of-all-trades and master of none. And then after the war it was worse. Do you want to get on to that?

I'm not sure if you have been asked this but you mentioned something about the biscuit bombing?

Oh yes,

18:30 that wasn't much, kicking some parcels out of the biscuit bomber when I went AWL to Wewak to see my mate, I would hang on this thing at the back and push them out.

So they were food parcels?

The pilot lets you know when to do it and they would land to the forward troops. You know while we were at Aitape the Japanese

19:00 were still at Wewak and we had to wait till they got out of there and we went in and it was stated that if the full force of the Japanese had come down to Wewak they would have wiped the 9th Division out because they were pretty strong there the Japs, they held it for quite a while.

19:30 I think it was their last stand. It would have been a disaster for us if they had of taken it because they would have had a free shot at Moresby and come around there and bring the troops around there then Australia next and God knows what would have happened. There was a rumour some Japanese prisoners had told some Australian soldiers that

20:00 if Japan had of taken Australia that the Australian Aborigine would have been wiped out, annihilated, the Australians would have been working for the Japanese as coolies, that was the rumour and I don't know if that would be true or not. Another one was that even though the Japanese had lost the war they would still take over Australia now look at it today, have a look at everything, it's got Japanese

20:30 manufacture on it, they have taken over Australia, that's Japanese the camera? Yep there you go, Japanese TV, still that's in a peaceful way, that's not so bad but they said they would take it over, economically.

21:00 **So just tell me a little bit more about the biscuit bombing had you flown on many planes?**

No.

What was it like going up in the plane?

Oh it was just like going up in an elevator.

Flying over the jungle is pretty treacherous?

I hadn't been on a plane until then, the rest was boats, I went in by boat, even in peacetime.

21:30 That was the first time I went on a plane and it didn't worry me, just went up, like an elevator and along and then down again. The only time I really noticed in a plane was when I went to Sydney from Melbourne, Tullamarine Airport and of course that was a jet, the one I was on was a propeller one.

22:00 That might have made the difference, they have more of a long run and then up but the jets they go like that, a short run and up they go and keep climbing where as the biscuit bomber is not so bad, just goes up a little way and levels out.

With the doors wide open?

Oh yes but you are strapped in.

You mentioned before,

22:30 **I was going to ask when you were a rec officer did you ever play two up, organise two up [betting game using two coins]?**

Oh yeah I didn't organise any no but they would just get amongst themselves and play it.

For money?

Oh yeah. Before I went up to New Guinea we were at Balcombe and there was a big fire wood shortage in Melbourne,

23:00 people couldn't get enough firewood. Now what's the name of the river at Mallacoota? They had fishnets across there catching fish. We were to go up and they were going to put the fish in boxes and we were going to bring the fish back to Melbourne. We were helping somebody out, the government I suppose. Anyhow we were on our way, we had a convoy

23:30 of about seven or eight trucks and we got to Can River and the Can River Hotel is not far from Mallacoota and we found out the floods had come in and that the fish had got over the nets so the government, commander in their wisdom said seeing you are up there now we will get timber, get

24:00 the civilian people to cut a lot of timber and we were to bring it back on the trucks. So while we were waiting for that we were billeted around the hotel, not in it, around it, we were not allowed to go into the pub only certain times then you could have a few beers and come out. So in the meantime we played two up and that's the first time I won me first five pounds was playing two up at the Can River Hotel.

24:30 So then we unloaded the trucks and came back to Melbourne and I don't know where we unloaded it but we relieved the firewood shortage down here anyway for a while for the old people and back to camp and maintenance on our trucks. A little item that I thought of, there's lots of them but I just can't think of them, you have got to jog my memory.

25:00 **You mentioned before one of the chaps got blown up by some gelignite and obviously there were deaths from time to time, what happened when somebody died, did you have a funeral?**

I couldn't tell you what happened. They would have taken his body into headquarters I suppose and taken back to the mainland for burial.

25:30 **You didn't have any rituals of your own?**

No just that we would send cards of condolence to their relatives if possible. I don't know what the army did. I wasn't all that friendly with Sergeant Digby at the time, that was unfortunate but a silly thing to do, blow on gelignite.

26:00 **Was it a shock to you?**

Oh yeah he has done it before, gone out and got fish and when somebody told me I thought, "Oh yeah", but "Dinkum he's dead, blown himself up with gelignite".

And when the blokes came back from the front line, would come back for leave, did you talk to them much?

26:30 No. The only time I spoke to them was in hospital. You didn't see many of them at all. They were possibly at the theatre nights and things like that, probably in their own unit canteen somewhere but if they were injured and in hospital I would go and speak to them then and find out how things were and they wanted to talk to you they wanted someone to talk to.

27:00 They wanted to know what was happening on the outside world and you give them whatever information you can.

Did you have more access to the outside world?

Than them, yes. They'd probably have radios but they wouldn't be able to use radios on the front line because it would be a dead give away so they missed out on it and they have to get news from their people and get mail when the mail comes in.

27:30 **Did you ever get newspapers?**

Yeah, old editions. We had a Richmond and Essendon football match broadcast and Richmond beat Essendon, one of the semi-finals from years ago, we heard that on the radio. It was put on specially for the boys overseas.

And then you read about it

28:00 **months later?**

Yeah, then you would read about it a week later that Essendon got done.

You had quite a religious upbringing.

Mediocre.

But you went to church and so on, did you go to church when you were out there, New Guinea?

28:30 Oh Madang it was Christmas time and Christmas time you think about religion and, "What the hell can I do?" and I found out they were having a solemn High Mass the Catholics so I think, right, what's the name of the fellow, I can see him and we decided that we would go anyhow, he might have been a Catholic, I think he was. Anyhow, I went and I watched and it was impressive

29:00 but I didn't like this bull dust that they threw around.

The holy water?

No.

The incense.

The incense, didn't go on that. No it was quite impressive and the natives sang, they had a native choir there and they were very good, sang different things but I think that was the only one that I went to.

29:30 We had them at our own unit, I had the tent, the big marquee. We had Major Burke came in and some other colleagues came in, their religions and they had their services but not too many of our boys turned up, they were more interested in playing their games but that's about the extent of it.

30:00 **So you weren't particularly religious in the sense of going to church but did you think about God and heaven?**

Are you religious?

I was brought up religious.

Are you a Catholic?

Yes.

Right I'm a Protestant and I was baptised.

30:30 Did I believe in Jesus Christ to be the Lord Saviour blah blah? Yes I did and I was baptised when I was about fifteen or sixteen but today I wonder. I know the Bible says the devil will be loosed on the earth for a certain amount of time; well he has been loose on the earth for a long time, more so now,

31:00 if that's the case. I've seen it in the fifty-fifty column, why is it if there is a God that he allows all these children and people to be massacred by these idiots? Why does he allow that? Then the answer could come back well he doesn't allow that, but he did say, "Suffer little children to come unto me", and

31:30 he also said that he would loose the devil on the earth for a certain time to sort out the good and the bad I guess, then again why are there so many different religions, you shall have no other God before me, you will not worship idols. They're worshipping idols and having gods before them, they have Mohammad and all these stupid things.

32:00 Oh I don't know.

But when you were in the jungle, the stories that you were hearing?

Yeah, you looked to God, yes that's true. My daughter got very very ill at one stage, she had half her lung taken out and we prayed like hell for her to get better and nothing to happen to her, we prayed, she prayed, her husband prayed and he's an atheist

32:30 and so we looked to God then and she come through. Is this coincidence or is it God's work, we don't know. Am I religions I don't know.

Did you pray that the war would end and that you would come out of it safely?

Of course we did, yes in our little way. We go to bed and lay down and pray to God, we don't speak it, we think it. A prayer

33:00 in thought that these things will happen, free us all of evil and have a decent life, that family life will be good and so on and deliver us from evil for thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever.

It must have seemed very grim with Japan as you say knocking at our door,

33:30 **so grim to the point that you said Jean would get a shotgun.**

No it was a 22 rifle, it was grim at the time, that's around the time of the Nanking rape. That really

affected me, I don't know about other people, it affected me bad. I was in the army then and this was shown and I think it was more or less to get us really uptight and mad at the Japanese,

34:00 that we'd want to annihilate them and I thought they're knocking on the door of Wewak and New Guinea and then Darwin, I thought goodness. I told her, "Don't hesitate", she hates guns, "If it gets to the stage where they are right down here, right into Melbourne and you can see you've got no hope,

34:30 Jeanette first then you next". Jeanette wouldn't be able to shoot her mother, she was only a kid and I said, "Right between the eyes and you won't feel a thing" and thank goodness that didn't happened. That same rifle I had it up for quite a few years and I passed it in to the police when I was asked to.

Was that the amnesty after Port Arthur [location of massacre by a gunman]?

Yes

35:00 and I don't know whether it is a good thing or a bad thing, not having a gun to protect yourself, the laws are so stupid, if somebody comes to that door or somebody tries to rob the place and I chase them outside and catch them and perhaps they fall over and hurt themselves on a brick wall or something and get a crook back, they can sue me,

35:30 how stupid is that. They are robbing the place and they are going to sue me because they got hurt on my property. The whole law wants straightening out and so do these lawyers, big money lot.

Do you often wonder, you mentioned before about the Japanese economic invasion, do you often wonder what you fought for?

Yes that's right, we fought for democracy, freedom,

36:00 but the way things are going now with these do gooders they are overstepping the mark. My daughter is one of these heritage things, this is the daughter in Sydney, New South Wales and she is one of these heritage girls, slapping heritage on every darn thing they will be slapping on dog kennels next, you can't do that because it has a heritage thing slapped on it.

36:30 No, too much of that and too much of the Greens [political party]. I agree with the Greens but don't overstep the mark. I think these foresters once they pull out a tree they should plant three, not two, so that they have a three to one chance of one getting up and they should be replanted.

We don't want to go too far down the politics line.

37:00 **What about the general mateship of the blokes in your unit, how did people get on, were they close?**

Well I wouldn't say that they were buddy buddies but they were close. I don't know where they finished up, some of them might have continued the friendship right to this day, I don't know.

37:30 Myself, I know the peoples names and I can vaguely see their faces but no I don't know where they are or anything else. I would like to meet them and talk about old times but no the only one was Boof Wilson, there's one name, Rex Izzard is another. I have a couple of names in the book I am writing,

38:00 perhaps I could shoot a few of them off, times getting on now, they would probably be all dead by now. I'm lucky to be alive today, thanks to my heart specialist. Jumping the gun a bit, I got prostate cancer.

You mentioned that.

I'm lucky.

38:30 **What about homosexuals, were there any of those around?**

There were some around. You know what we used to do to them years ago? Kick the hell out of them, that's why in the present day they know how to fight and look after themselves.

39:00 I didn't do it but my father in law used to say, he come from South Melbourne and as soon as they saw a poof, as they called them, or a queer they would get stuck into him, give him a belting and try and straighten him out. They can't help it, if it's born in them they can't do much about that. Well can I give you an example? After my prostate I've got little ones [breasts] they have grown and I have been getting hot flushes

39:30 and I went and saw my urologist and I said, "What's going on? Since I've been castrated I've got these boobs and I'm getting these hot flushes." and he said, "Well what do you expect, your hormones are shot to bits, you are either a female or a male, it is on a balance. Some have a stronger male tendency and some have a stronger female tendency

40:00 so it's there all the time". He explained about these hormones and when your male parts are taken from you the female ones start to take over stronger, the male one is not there to defend itself but I am not a queer, God forbid!

40:30 **No one here is saying you are, we don't want to get beaten up!**

Tape 8

- 00:31 **All right we have pretty much come to the end of the war so tell me what happened after that, well first when you firstly when you first came back to Australia, your welcome?**
- Do you really want to know? Well when I first come back, as I explained before, the reception we received in Sydney was a hundred per cent to practically nothing in Melbourne.
- 01:00 Still, that's by the by. I went back to the bricklaying and I got a big set back with the Glen Iris Brick Company. As I said before I wanted to go back into building and I thought the first thing was to be a bricklayer, supply the bricks and the materials, you get a better price for the stuff then, it's a higher price because you've got to the bricks as well and I'll supply the bricks, the sand and the cement and the labour. So I rang up the brick
- 01:30 kilns to see if I could get an account with them to get started. I said, "I'm just back from overseas and I want to get back to bricklaying". The reply was, "I'm sorry young fellow, the big man's got it now, they have got control and you wouldn't have a hope, no way". That was my first set back and bingo that was it. So it really took the stuffing out of me to think that I had been away all this time and all these soldiers were away
- 02:00 fighting for their country, looking after these fellows, these fat cats and yet they couldn't turn round and give me credit to get me on my feet, back from the war. So needless to say I would not give a recommendation to Glen Iris Brick Company for those days. Sue me if you wish 'cause you'll get nothing.
- 02:30 **Didn't you say that you got, I have forgotten the words for it but you got documentation saying you were going to get employment with AV Jennings?**
- Yes the occupational release, I got that but I was trying to find out if they would assist me in that way so I knew which way I would take, I still worked for AV Jennings for quite a time and then I worked on my own just laying bricks because I couldn't get the other stuff,
- 03:00 the laying materials. So I went laying bricks all around Victoria and I took on contracting bricklaying and we moved down here to Frankston and there was nothing here in this estate there was no road outside there,
- 03:30 there was no footpath, there was no sewer, there was nothing, there was no shops, no school, not even a phone booth. So I got a whisper, I saw in the paper there was going to be some sand extraction and I had already put new Feltex carpet down on this floor, all over this house, I think it cost me eighteen hundred dollars or something.
- 04:00 Anyhow within twelve months it was all ruined because across the road wasn't built on and when it blew all the dry sand was coming through here, wrecked the floor, it sandblasted the windows and when I heard there was going to be a sand pit built further out I said no way, and so I mentioned this to council, I wrote a letter and said I objected to it and as it happened there was one of the
- 04:30 councillors from Seaford. He was against this sand pit and he came around and saw me and said he was against it and would back me all the way and he said the best way to do it was to form a Progress Association and I said, "What's that?" He said, "Well come to a meeting at Cannook and we'll show you." there was a progress association there. So I did, he took me over there and I took the fellow across the road as well and
- 05:00 he had just moved in, Jim Skinning. I took him with me and we stayed at this meeting and saw how it was conducted and so on, what it was all about, so we called for a public meeting for a Progress Association in this house. I had forty odd people turn up and they were outside there and I had to open all the windows so they could hear what was going. We explained what we were trying to do, so we formed a committee and we got cracking.
- 05:30 Through the Progress Association we finished up getting more roads put through. So yeah, we wrote letters to the Minister for Housing asking them that in future when they have an estate they put down the roads and the footpaths and all
- 06:00 amenities, gas, water and electric light before they even attempt to build a house and they took notice of us thank goodness, because now it is right throughout Victoria, so if you have an estate you must put down the roads, the footpaths and everything else before you can build on it which I think was a good move because then you don't have people driving underneath your bedroom windows to get to their house. Then we kicked on about the sewerage it was time to stop the septic tanks that stunk all over the place
- 06:30 so we finally got the health authorities behind us to get the council to put down sewerage and that was done. Got on to the PMG [Post Master General], the telephone people at the time, and had telephone boxes put all around the estate. We pushed for the shops and we pushed for the school and you ask for

it and we got it, we were like a little council of our own. In fact the local newsagent reckoned that

- 07:00 I was the unofficial Mayor of the Pines, any complaints came to me and I took them back to the council, so I was virtually a councillor in my own right. Anyhow I got myself very unpopular down here but popular with the people here. Then we had all these navy people, people occupying navy houses and army as well. They had a thing going that they looked after their nature strip and their lawns,
- 07:30 they were already put in for them, the navy and they had to look after them and if they didn't the navy would employ somebody to do it and what the navy would pay them it would come out of their wages, so they kept their houses in good nick [condition] so that was good. So we decided that the Progress Association would have a garden competition
- 08:00 and we had sponsors and one thing and another and giving different prizes out and the judge would be the Minister for Housing and his wife who happened to be Lindsay Thompson. He came here and he commented on the fireplace, he reckoned my fireplace was the best he had ever seen or something and thanked me very much for inviting him and his wife to take part in the judging. So anyhow he did judge a person up off Norfolk Crescent,
- 08:30 had a nice garden and nature strip and he won the prize but what happened next day, some morons poured sump oil all over his lawns. That's the mentality of people we've got round here.

The winner?

Yeah, poured oil because they were jealous. Anyhow, the Minister, he didn't know this but he started one right throughout the whole of Victoria, a garden competition, right from our Progress Association.

- 09:00 I stood for council three times but each time I got a report back to say I was in it to get some money out of it but they sent me broke, I went bankrupt by doing this Pines Progress Association. I would be at work with my bib and overalls on and I'd have a book down there with a pen. I would be working away labouring and all of a sudden I would think of something and out would come the book and I would write it down or I'd go and phone somebody, I would knock off early to go and do something.
- 09:30 No, it was interfering with my work and I didn't realise it, partly interfering with it. The rain helped to put the damper on it. Oh yes and then the kids, our kids had nowhere to go and nothing to do and I thought, "All right we'll try and get a hall".

How many kids did you have by now?

- 10:00 **Four, two boys and two girls. So we'll try and form a younger set, so we formed the Frankston and District Younger Set, raising money for Frankston Hospital and that went off quite well for a while. I was the president of that for quite a while 'til they decided that they wanted to run the show themselves. I thought, "Fair enough, okay, if they want that they can do it", so they nominated their own and went for about twelve months or so and that finally fizzled out. So then we formed another younger set**
- 10:30 **called the Anoona set and that was an aboriginal name, I don't know what it meant. The kids were about twelve or thirteen so we formed that one and that didn't last long and then we formed another one called the Just Us Club. How that come about, we live on a bend here as you know and these kids were just around next door and they were smoking, twelve years old and I said, "What are you kids doing there?" and they said, "Oh we're having a smoke so**
- 11:00 **our parents can't see us from the flats down there." and I said, "You shouldn't be smoking at twelve years old." "Oh, we're all right." I don't know where they got the cigarettes from. Anyhow I said, "Why don't you form yourselves a Younger Set and work for charity?" and they said, "What's charity?" So I explained it to them and said, "You come round here, we will have a little meeting in the garage and we'll work it out." So I spoke to them about the younger Set thing and about the charities and said, "Now there are different ones there is the Seeing Eye Dogs,**
- 11:30 **you could work for them. You could work for the Blind Babies, Red Cross, any of them." So they decided to work for the Seeing Eye Dogs and I took them out there to see them working and operating so they appreciated what they were going to do. So they ran little functions and raffles and one thing and another, raised funds and gave that to the Seeing Eye Dogs. They used to go ice-skating and roller-skating**
- 12:00 **but one day one group decides they wanted to go ice skating and the other group said they wanted to roller-skating so there was a stalemate. Anyhow there was a big upshot and that was the end of that little club, it finished too. We tried.**

Where did the name come from, Just Us?

Yes we were in the garage and I said, "What are you going to call yourselves?" and

- 12:30 there was two families. One was Lothians, and the other one, up the road here but just us, two families, quite a few kids, so they called it Just Us Club and a couple of other kids joined as well. They put on, the local fruiterer lent his tray truck and Jean and I put a big sheet of mesh reinforcing over it, wired it in so they couldn't come off and Jean and the kids, their colours were maroon and gold,

13:00 like the Lions Club, so Jean had the kids making rosettes and they decorated this float and we put it in the local Australia Day Parade. So they were on that, a great day for them, they enjoyed themselves and all got dressed up in maroon and gold things that mum made for them. She was always making things. So that was another episode finished.

**This section of transcript is embargoed
until 1 January 2034.**

15:18 **So after you first came back and you were settling in with**

15:30 **what was still very much a new wife and daughter, did you feel a sense of hope for the future, were you excited?**

Oh yes we had plans, I had plans to move down to Rosebud, to build a house down there and of course I got a lot of work down that way, but no it didn't eventuate, I had plenty of work in other places.

16:00 The tax man got to me, the tax man sent me bankrupt. During the time the brick work we had at Langathral, all the rain we had there I got way behind in the group certificate payments and I went to see the chief, the Commissioner of Taxation and who should it be but one of my captains of one of the companies.

16:30 Anyhow I met him and shook hands with him, "Struth stranger." talk about old times and he said, "You're in a bit of strife." and I said, "By the sound of things. I'm paying twenty dollars a week." and he said, "Well can you bump it up a bit?" and I said, "Yeah, I can make it twenty five." and he said, "All right, that's OK. Don't miss it though, otherwise there'll be trouble." and I said, "No, twenty five a week."

17:00 So I kept it up and within about three weeks I got a letter from the accountant, whose name happened to be Coin, an accountant and he said, "No, he wants fifty dollars a week." and I said, 'No, I can't afford it.' and they took me to court and declared me bankrupt and I said, "Well what do I do now, do I pay so much in the dollar?" and they said, "No", in fact it was an Indian fella who had me and he said, "No you don't have to pay so much in the dollar, what can you afford to pay?"

17:30 and I said, "I'll give you five dollars a week." Now I was paying them twenty five dollars a week, they knock it back, now I have to pay five dollars a week and they accepted it. That's our stupid government and their polices and regulations. Anyhow I kept on paying the five dollars for three years and that was it, I was free. So it's a stupid rule, anyhow that was it.

18:00 **I just wanted to ask you, you had a sister in the WAAAF [Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force] and a brother in the army as well?**

June, my sister was in the air force. She got St.Vitus' dance [epilepsy] and got discharged on medical grounds. My brother in law was in the airforce and

18:30 he has passed on and my other brother in law, Freda's husband, he has passed on, he was in the navy, he was a stoker in the navy. All my brothers in law, they have all gone. I've got one sister in law; she is the same age as me, that's about it.

19:00 **How did they fare with their wartime experience?**

Gerald, the air force fellow was in Morotai, in Dutch New Guinea. He spent most of his time up there, he was ground crew. I don't know what he did but he had a family of about five or six kids I think but they were mostly grown up when he passed away, heart trouble. He complained of a pain in his back and it was his heart. Don, the sailor, he had an artificial valve in his heart and it

19:30 malfunctioned and he kicked the bucket too.

Did you ever get involved in the RSL [Returned and Services League]?

I belong to the Frankston RSL, I was practically a charter member of the Mentone RSL, transferred to Frankston RSL.

I'm pretty much out of questions,

20:00 **actually, tell us about Red Faces?**

Well how did that happen. That's right I had formed the Frankston Senior Citizens Club and we had just started off and I thought we haven't got much money in the bank and we will have to get something going.

- 20:30 So I think I rang up Red Faces and they said, "Well bring your mandolin in and give us an audition." So I took a record in, Under the Double Eagle, and they said, "Oh good, a record is better than a tape." So they hung onto that and I played it.
- 21:00 The chaps that makes the comments, not John Blackman [comedian], anyhow he was there as one of the judges and he said, "This is the first time that I have had a mandolin on the show." and so anyhow I played it and he said, "That's good. You will hear from us." So on 10th March, 1984 I was in the studio. I was out the back in what they call the Green Room now
- 21:30 and Red Symons [TV performer] was there having a pie. I said, "Red, when I come on go easy on the old blokes, will you?" and he said, "Oh you could be so lucky." you know and then of course in the shed there was these teachers and they were all uptight and talking about what they were going to do, I don't know who they were, and these other two women. So anyhow the two women went on first
- 22:00 and I was on next and I thought, I'm not going to stand up and do it, I had a high chair sort of thing so I walked on with that and then of course you saw the rest and that's it. Then I got the cheque two hundred and fifty dollars, I gave them two hundred and I had fifty for myself which I thought was fair enough. Later on I had to use my car for some other thing I think it was a dance and I was in an accident
- 22:30 and it was to do with the club and I told them about it and the president said he would move that the repairs of two hundred dollars be reimbursed to Jack so I got the two hundred dollars back for the car repairs, not that I wanted it that way but that's how it worked out. Why should I pay for an accident that really wasn't my fault?

OK one more thing and this isn't so much a question

- 23:00 **but as this is an archive which is going to last for hopefully a hundred years or more it's going to be there for all Australians and people of all nations, is there any thing you would like to say to future generations or even this generation who don't know about the war, is there anything that you want to add or any message that you want to pass on?**
- 23:30 Three words that mean a hell of a lot, it doesn't mean your next door neighbour, it means the world, your neighbouring country, "Love thy neighbour". That's all I can say. You would have no wars and you would get on much better on this earth and be more prosperous if you love your neighbour. I don't mean kissy kissy stuff, just
- 24:00 appreciate them and tolerate them and those people who come in from overseas without permission as I have said before, do the right thing, if there is no embassy in your country, ask Australia, ask the Australian government to set up an embassy there if they possibly can so that you can be interrogated
- 24:30 or interviewed I should say or go to a neighbouring country that has an Australian embassy and do the right thing and we will accept you with open arms but another thing you want to do is learn English first before you get here so that we know what you are taking about and we can help you more.
- 25:00 The tape continues with Jack playing 'Put Your Hands Around Me Honey' on his mandolin.

INTERVIEW ENDS